



First Session - Thirty-Seventh Legislature

of the

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

**Official Report
(Hansard)**

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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Seventh Legislature

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, July 25, 2000

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAVERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

**PRESENTING REPORTS BY
STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES**

**Standing Committee on Law Amendments
Sixth Report**

Mr. Doug Martindale (Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Law Amendments): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the Sixth Report of the Committee on Law Amendments.

Madam Clerk (Patricia Chaychuk): Your Standing Committee on Law Amendments presents—

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Mr. Speaker: Dispense.

Your Standing Committee on Law Amendments presents the following as its Sixth Report.

Your committee met on Monday, July 24, 2000, at 10 a.m. in Room 255 of the Legislative Building to consider bills referred.

Your committee has considered:

Bill 13—The Taxicab Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les taxis

Bill 23—The Jury Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les jurés

Bill 25—The Interpretation and Consequential Amendments Act; Loi d'interprétation et modifications corrélatives

Bill 26—The Court of Queen's Bench Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la Cour du Banc de la Reine

Bill 27—The Correctional Services Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les services correctionnels

Bill 28—The Northern Affairs Amendment and Planning Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les Affaires du Nord et la Loi sur l'aménagement du territoire

Bill 30—The Social Services Administration Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les services sociaux

Bill 34—The Statute Law Amendment Act, 2000; Loi de 2000 modifiant diverses dispositions législatives

and has agreed to report the same without amendment.

Your committee has also considered:

Bill 32—The Victims' Rights Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les droits des victimes

and has agreed to report the same with the following amendments:

MOTION:

THAT the definition "victim" in the proposed subsection 1(1), as set out in section 4 of the Bill, be amended by adding "or is alleged to have been committed" after "committed" in the part before clause (a).

MOTION:

THAT the proposed section 12, as set out in section 4 of the Bill, be amended by adding the following after clause (k):

(k.1) the possible application by a Crown attorney to the court to designate a convicted person as a dangerous offender under subsection 753(1) of the Criminal Code (Canada);

MOTION:

THAT the proposed section 13, as set out in section 4 of the Bill, be amended

(a) by adding the following after clause (e):

(e.1) the date, time and place of an application by a Crown attorney to the court to designate a convicted person as a dangerous offender under subsection 753(1) of the Criminal Code (Canada); and

(b) in clause (f), by adding “, including the outcome of an application by a Crown attorney to the court to designate a convicted person as a dangerous offender under subsection 753(1) of the Criminal Code (Canada)” after “prosecution”.

Your committee has also considered:

Bill 33—The Highway Traffic Amendment and Consequential Amendments Act; Loi modifiant le Code de la route et modifications corrélatives

and has agreed to report the same with the following amendment:

MOTION:

THAT subsection 4(15) of the Bill be amended by adding the following after the proposed subsection 242.1(7.1.2):

Effect of revocation of previous seizure

242.1(7.1.3) For the purposes of subsections (7.1.1) and (7.1.2), the seizure of a vehicle shall not be considered as a previous seizure if

(a) the vehicle was released under subsection (1.4), (3.1) or (13);

(b) the seizure was revoked under subsection (5) or (6);

Your committee agreed not to complete clause by clause consideration of:

Bill 36—The Summary Convictions Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les poursuites sommaires

but to defer the completion of such consideration to a future meeting of the Committee.

Mr. Martindale: I move, seconded by the Honourable Member for Assiniboia (Mr. Rondeau), that the report of the Committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

Committee of Supply

Mr. Conrad Santos (Chairperson): Mr. Speaker, the Committee of Supply has adopted certain resolutions, directs me to report progress and asks leave to sit again.

I move, seconded by the Honourable Member for Selkirk (Mr. Dewar), that the report of the Committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS**Health Capital Projects**

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I have a statement for the House.

Today I would like to update the House on Health capital projects. At any given time dozens of capital projects are in various stages of planning and development. Today I am pleased to announce six of these projects are ready to make the final leap from blueprint to actual bricks and mortar. Within the next year we can expect to see ground being broken on each of these projects. As they move ahead, a number of health care facilities will gain much-needed improvements that address some of the system's greatest needs and priorities.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, Manitoba has the highest rate of people needing dialysis, and the number of new patients is growing by over 100 per year. That is why we are immediately moving ahead to make Seven Oaks Hospital a new site for dialysis service. The long-term plan is to make Seven Oaks the site of 30 stations capable of treating 180 patients. Construction will begin this September.

In August, construction will begin on a new emergency department to replace the crowded and inadequate facilities at Thompson General Hospital. The project will also bring CT scan capability to this region.

St. Boniface General Hospital is about to begin upgrades that will solve some serious deficiencies in obstetrical space. The project will make the space more functional and provide new facilities for single-room maternity care along the more supportive and natural environment for low-risk births.

New nursing homes will soon replace two old facilities that are badly in need of replacement, Bethesda Personal Care Home in Steinbach and parts of Villa Youville in Ste. Anne. I would like to note that the need to replace Villa Youville was identified and committed to in 1994. It is time to get on with construction. At the Taché Centre residents can look forward to a new dining facility. Right now, residents of this personal care home are being forced to eat either in their rooms or in the corridors outside the elevators. When construction begins in October, it will mean more than a new dining room for those who live at Taché. It will mean a better quality of life. For these capital projects the decision to proceed to tendering and construction was fairly straightforward. The planning process was well advanced and there was a need and pressing need for each upgrade. We just need to get on with the job of building.

* (13:35)

For projects in the early stage of planning, the decision to proceed can be more difficult. Planning for some of these projects begins several years before construction begins. During the planning period, technology is constantly advancing and the needs and pressures in the system are constantly shifting, and that brings us to the larger challenge.

When I became Health Minister last fall I saw a need for a more responsible, flexible and realistic approach to capital planning. The developments leading up to the last election had created an urgent need for change. In the two years leading up to the last election, the

Conservative administration announced approvals of 76 Health capital projects. This represents a fairly ambitious plan for the next several years. The binge of announcements was a sequel to the announcements preceding the 1995 election. At that time 94 projects said to be worth \$678.3 million were announced. In 1996, the capital construction program was put on hold. By the 1999 election, 27 of these projects promised in 1995 remained unbuilt. The process of Health capital construction in Manitoba has become unpredictable. Pre-election promises have become post-election disappointments. Decisions have sometimes been made on the basis of a variety of concerns other than was good for health care.

We do not want to continue that process. Instead of repeatedly promising projects that may never be realized, we are committed to a staged approval process that sees projects moving through three clear levels of approval. First, projects are approved in principle if they reflect community needs and the strategic direction of the RHA and the provincial health care system. Then more detailed planning begins. Next, the memorandum of understanding is reached between the RHA and the Government, clearing the way for working drawings, final estimates and other fine details. The final step is approval to proceed to tendering and construction. No project will reach this stage unless it continues to be relevant and vital. The six projects I described earlier have cleared this final hurdle.

Over the next several weeks we will be announcing to RHAs the status of all projects in the capital plan. I have spoken to CEOs and communicated the process. As projects move through this process Manitoba Health will be working with the RHAs to constantly re-evaluate proposals in the context of Manitoba's changing health care needs. We will be looking at whether a proposal still reflects the best way to deliver services to the community, whether it fits in with the province-wide strategy for development of the health care system, whether it has a strong business case, how well it stacks up against other projects competing for funding and whether it is affordable and practical in the context of the Government's current financial position.

These are reasonable and fair questions to ask of any expenditure of public money. In fact, it is our job to ask these questions. Another challenge is to face the need to strike a good balance between starting new projects and maintaining our existing facilities. These routine repairs may not have the headline-grabbing appeal of new projects, but they are absolutely essential. That is why we made an important improvement to the capital planning process. We are now committed to a long-term recurring allocation of funds for ongoing maintenance. Every year a substantial portion of the capital budget will be earmarked for repairs to existing buildings and infrastructure before capital planning begins. This year \$20 million of the health capital budget was set aside for this important maintenance work. It is a good way of ensuring that our existing assets are not allowed to crumble away.

We are getting on with the job of building for the future in health care in an orderly and planned way that makes the best use of resources and ensures that capital construction fits with the long-term delivery of services. The investment this government is making into Health capital construction this year is comparable to that made in previous years. We are also fixing the process so that it is more balanced, flexible and realistic. We will be working with Health authorities to build for the future in a way that is responsible and delivers the best possible services to the people of Manitoba. Thank you.

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): I would like to thank the Minister for his statement. Certainly, a number of times in Estimates we have been asking for this information to be tabled and the full detailed plan for capital construction. We have not been able to have that information forthcoming at a time when we are in Estimates and it gives the Health critic a valid opportunity to ask the questions. It is interesting to note.

We certainly do have a dialysis problem in this province. There is an increasing need for dialysis patients, but we also happen to have a shortage of trained staff. It is wonderful to talk about opening new units, but unless you can have the staff to adequately work in those units it makes for an interesting announcement.

We are also looking at the biggest nursing shortage we have seen in this province in a long time. Over 1100 nurses—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Driedger: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We certainly are seeing the biggest nursing shortage we have seen in a long time. When we left government, there were 600 vacancies in the province. There are now over 1100.

* (13:40)

Mr. Speaker, we also know that dialysis patients are being transferred to Kenora for treatment. The announcement also indicates that St. Boniface General Hospital is about to begin upgrades that will resolve serious deficiencies in obstetrical space. There are 17 beds sitting vacant right now at the women's centre. They are LDRP beds that have been waiting for some response from this government for several months now. Seventeen beds for women to come in and have their babies.

These beds have been available; staff are trained. The information we have is that all they are waiting for is \$300,000 from this government to address some electrical and other issues. These beds have been sitting vacant for some time now, and what it is doing is creating a situation that is putting mothers at risk.

Mr. Speaker, we are seeing anti-partum moms being kept at home in the community when they should be in the hospital, but because those beds are not open these anti-partum moms are being left at home and at risk. We are seeing postpartum moms being sent home too early because of the need for beds at the women's centre, including one mother who had to go home early when in fact she had to leave twins in the hospital. She was sent home far too soon for a mother that has just had twins and then had to have the inconvenience of coming back.

Mr. Speaker, there have been a lot of broken health care promises made by this minister: the hiring of 100 full-time nurses, the opening of

100 full-time beds, the end of hallway medicine, when we are still seeing patients in the hallway.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order. The Honourable Member for Charleswood has the floor.

Mrs. Driedger: While the Government may sit and clap about hallway medicine, it still exists. In fact, Dr. Ralph Wong from St. Boniface General Hospital asks why his patients routinely wait in emergency longer than 24 hours in order to be admitted, including one cancer patient who waited 72 hours before admission. They have not ended hallway medicine by a long shot, despite the unequivocal black and white promise that hallway medicine would end the beginning of April. It has not ended.

I will end my comments by also indicating there were a lot of commitments to construction, including that of the Misericordia, 180 beds; Tabor Home, Morden; Salem Home, Winkler; Emerson. This minister certainly does need to address whether or not we are going to be seeing all previous approved projects now discontinued.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Driedger: In waiting for the tabling of the capital plan, we look forward to seeing a five-year plan. This particular minister has been pretty adamant over the last number of years that what he would like to see is the tabling of a five-year plan. So I am anticipating that is what he is going to bring forward and maintain the past commitments that were made to health care.

* (13:45)

There are a lot of challenges in health care, and we look forward to seeing some of them resolved, including what we understand to be a wait of over 10 000 people waiting right now for ultrasound. That has doubled under this government.

With those comments—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I would ask the co-operation of all honourable members. The Honourable Member for Charleswood was just wrapping up. Order, please.

Mrs. Driedger: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I will wrap up by indicating the waiting lists for ultrasound are up; in fact, they have doubled, CT scans are up and bone scans are up. The only one that has come down in this past year is MRIs, due largely to the fact that we had put an MRI machine in at St. Boniface Hospital.

So we do await the positive things that could happen in health care, but right now what we are seeing are broken health care promises by this minister and this government.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I would once again ask co-operation from all honourable members.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): I ask for leave to speak on the Minister's statement.

Mr. Speaker: Does the Honourable Member have leave? *[Agreed]*

Mr. Gerrard: I am pleased to hear the Minister of Health (Mr. Chomiak) outline his six capital projects that were announced today. I am glad to hear that the Minister recognized that there was a need for improved capital planning in the health care area. I look forward to watching the results of his process and seeing in fact if it is effective and if it works better than what we had before.

I am also encouraged that the Health Minister has in his capital planning some ongoing maintenance as part of the overall effort for capital planning. I look forward to seeing how this works in the future over the next several years.

The investment that is announced today in dialysis, I note with interest, clearly it is important, but I would urge the health care minister to work very hard on the early treatment of kidney disease, because indeed in prevention and in very early treatment we can very considerably prolong the period before people need dialysis and improve the lifestyle, the

quality of care and indeed the cost of health care. So this is an important area to emphasize as well.

I note that there are still significant waiting lists in many areas, and I look forward to the Health Minister's report on an ongoing basis and progress in this area.

* (13:50)

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: Prior to Oral Questions, I would like to draw the attention of all honourable members to the gallery where we have with us today Win Gardner who is accompanied by Shannon, Carla and Erin Trail from Victoria, British Columbia, who are the guests of the Honourable Member for Fort Whyte (Mr. Loewen).

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Public Schools Act Amendments—Withdrawal

Mrs. Joy Smith (Fort Garry): Mr. Speaker, almost 100 municipalities, the Manitoba Chamber of Commerce, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business and three-quarters of all the school divisions across Manitoba have joined forces to condemn Bill 42. In spite of the Education Minister's claim to have an extensive consultation process, it is clear that Manitobans do not want this bill to go through.

Mr. Speaker, given that his colleague the Minister of Labour (Ms. Barrett) appears to be withdrawing her legislation, will this Minister of Education follow her lead and withdraw Bill 42?

Hon. Drew Caldwell (Minister of Education and Training): I appreciate the Member's question, and I must say that the fearmongering undertaken by the Member is quite prodigious in the province. We have numerous examples of this sort of thing occurring in this legislation and others, but the facts are that the explosion in property taxation that took place during the 1990s is directly linked to the massive offloading of multimillions of dollars in the public school system, and we on this side of the

House will not entertain that sort of explosion again.

Amendments—Impact on Property Taxes

Mrs. Joy Smith (Fort Garry): Mr. Speaker, can the Minister offer Manitobans any guarantee that property taxes will not increase when Bill 42 goes through?

Hon. Drew Caldwell (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, it has given me a lot of pleasure in the past to read into the record the year after year multimillion dollar cuts to the public school system that the members opposite offered up to the taxpayers of the province of Manitoba during the 1990s. I am tempted to do it again, because it illustrates very clearly the lack of direction and in fact the real attack the members opposite undertook on the public school system. So I will guarantee that this government will not implement budgets which, year after year, pull multimillion dollars out of the public school system.

Mrs. Smith: Mr. Speaker, how can this minister continue to talk about the past when we are living in the present? Can this minister deny that almost 100 municipalities, the Manitoba Chamber of Commerce, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business and three-quarters of all the school divisions across this province are fearmongering because they are afraid of what is going to be happening to the taxpayers when Bill 42 goes through?

Mr. Caldwell: Mr. Speaker, I certainly understand the concerns of municipal officials and school trustees, of the public on this particular matter.

Mr. Speaker, I certainly understand the concerns. I was a municipal official myself and understand local taxation issues very well. I understand very well, when the Province takes \$30 million out of the public school system, that local property taxpayers are incumbent to put \$30 million in. I am aware that when the provincial government takes \$20 million out of the public school system, local taxpayers are responsible for putting \$20 million more in.

I am well aware that year after year of multimillion dollar cuts perpetrated on the taxpayers of the province of Manitoba by the members opposite led to an explosion in property taxation in the province of Manitoba to historic levels. We will not, on this watch, see such an explosion again.

Labour Relations Act Amendments—Withdrawal

Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (Interim Leader of the Official Opposition): We have seen by the legislative agenda that has been introduced by this government that the union bosses are indeed writing their legislative package and developing the economic policy for this government. We have moved back to the Dark Ages.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order. The Honourable Interim Leader of the Official Opposition has the floor.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The business community has expressed very legitimate concerns about Bill 44 and how regressive it is and what it is going to do to the economy of the province of Manitoba. We all know that business is the economic engine that drives prosperity in our province.

* (13:55)

Can the Deputy Premier (Ms. Friesen) today indicate clearly to the business community that the union boss legislation that has been developed and introduced in this House will be withdrawn by her government?

Hon. Becky Barrett (Minister of Labour): I am glad that the Interim Leader of the Official Opposition asked that question because it provides me with the opportunity to straighten out, on the record, for the people of Manitoba an incorrect inference or an incorrect statement that was first put on the record earlier by the Member for Fort Garry (Mrs. Smith) that we have any intention whatsoever of withdrawing Bill 44. There is nothing that is further from our minds.

Mr. Speaker, I think that the Interim Leader of the Official Opposition should check with the

Member for Tuxedo (Mr. Filmon) before she references a return to the Dark Ages, when the majority of the changes in Bill 44 are a return to the first eight years of the former government, are a return to the labour legislation of Sterling Lyon and Duff Roblin.

Mrs. Mitchelson: It is clear that the ideological hidebound decisions and policy decisions, legislative decisions, made by this government and introduced by this government are a slap in the face to the business community and to workers in Manitoba.

Now that the Minister of Labour has indicated clearly that she will not listen to the business community, the community that drives the economy in this province, will she at least have some consideration for the workers in the province who will lose their democratic right to a secret ballot as a result of their legislation?

Ms. Barrett: Mr. Speaker, we introduced Bill 44, I believe it was three weeks ago in the Legislature. We are prepared to send it to committee to hear from the people of Manitoba at that time. To this date, no one from the Opposition has spoken a word in debate on Bill 44. If they are so interested in getting it into committee and getting the people of Manitoba to speak on this piece of legislation, which we are interested in doing, then they will pass it into committee as soon as possible so we can listen to the people of Manitoba.

Amendments

Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (Interim Leader of the Official Opposition): Mr. Speaker, we see a minister who brought in a piece of legislation in the last days of the session, or what they thought might be the last days of the session, without including it in their election promises, without including it in the Throne Speech, without talking to the business community about it. I ask the Minister of Labour: How can she honestly sit here and say that we should be debating a piece of legislation that has only been on the table for a few weeks and the business community was not even informed?

Hon. Becky Barrett (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, the Interim Leader of the Official

Opposition should not need any lessons in how a Legislature operates, but I will share with her the fact that once a bill has been introduced for second reading, and I spoke on this piece of legislation and said in my speech we were prepared to listen to the Opposition and prepared to take it to committee, once that happened, the Opposition has had upwards of three weeks now to debate the legislation in second reading. It does not require an inordinate amount of time. Most of the elements in Bill 44, far from being "ideological hidebound decisions," from the Interim Leader's earlier question, are elements that were found in the "ideological hidebound decisions" of Sterling Lyon, Douglas Campbell and the Member for Tuxedo (Mr. Filmon).

Labour Relations Act Amendments—Withdrawal

Mr. Ron Schuler (Springfield): In the last 24 hours, this government has received more than 300 faxes from members of the Canadian Federation of Independent Business. In the letter it states: Much of this legislation has been developed without any consultation with small- and medium-sized business and has serious negative implications. And they say, "Bill 44 must be withdrawn." I ask the Minister of Labour: Do the honourable thing, Minister, and withdraw Bill 44.

* (14:00)

Hon. Becky Barrett (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, there were consultations. The Labour Management Review Committee had the issues that were raised that are found in Bill 44. What we are looking for is some debate in the Legislature on second reading; we have seen not a single member of the Opposition get up and speak on this piece of legislation. Failing that, if they do not have anything to say in debate, then let us send it to committee so we can hear from the people of Manitoba.

Mr. Schuler: Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister if she has read today's *Free Press*, where it says: "The NDP Government might be ready to backtrack on its proposed labour law changes."

I ask the Minister, among others calling for her to withdraw it, do the right thing, Minister, and withdraw Bill 44.

Ms. Barrett: Mr. Speaker, what we have said in this House and in public is that we want to put every piece of legislation, and in particular Bill 44, the amendments to The Labour Relations Act, to committee so we can hear from the public, unlike the former government who did not even listen to the Labour Management Review Committee in 1996 when they came up with some very hard-thought, compromised consensus positions, not one of which found its way into Bill 26.

Unlike the former government, we want to keep an open mind and listen to all of the presentations. Unfortunately, the people of Manitoba are not being given an opportunity to make their views heard at committee, because the Opposition will not debate it and send it on to committee.

Mr. Schuler: Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask this Minister of Labour if she read the LMRC letter that was sent to her that says that there may be a potential risk to the provincial economy.

I ask this Minister: Will the Minister do what is best for Manitoba and withdraw Bill 44, and do it right away?

Ms. Barrett: Mr. Speaker, Manitoba is unique among provincial jurisdictions in Canada in that we require public hearings for every single piece of legislation that goes before this Legislature. We on this side of the House expect to listen. Unlike the members of the former government, we will listen to the productive suggestions that come from the people of Manitoba, to the concerns that people have about the Bill, to the things that people think are a positive statement in Bill 44. We are prepared to listen to the people of Manitoba, and I beg the Opposition to debate this piece of legislation. Do the right thing and send it to committee.

Labour Relations Act Amendments—Picket Line Violence

Mr. Harold Gilleshammer (Minnedosa): Mr. Speaker, one of the foundations of our society is

our unified condemnation of violence in all its forms. Now, within Bill 44, we have a clause forcing employers to reinstate employees who, during a strike, committed violent or criminal acts.

I would ask the Deputy Premier (Ms. Friesen): What kind of signal is her government sending to Manitobans by forcing employers to reinstate these employees? I would ask the Deputy Premier to answer that.

Hon. Becky Barrett (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, I think it is reprehensible, absolutely reprehensible for the members to put on record today, as they did yesterday, the concept of forcing. There is nowhere in Bill 44 in section 12(2) that forces an employer to rehire an employee after a strike or lockout. What this section in Bill 44 is going to do is to return the legislation back to those "ideological hidebound" years of the former Premier, the current member for Tuxedo (Mr. Filmon).

It says the Labour Board has the authority to look at all of the facts of a situation that occurred on a strike or a lockout line, and the Labour Board will determine whether an employee should be reinstated. In cases where the Criminal Code has been violated, the Criminal Code and other civil and legal avenues are certainly available, as they have been, Mr. Speaker, from 1976 to 1996. This is exactly the same wording of the legislation that was good enough for Sterling Lyon and Gary Filmon.

Mr. Gilleshammer: Mr. Speaker, the Throne Speech made a commitment to create safer workplaces. This was a Throne Speech that neglected to mention this legislation.

I would ask the Deputy Premier (Ms. Friesen) to reconcile the forcing of employers to reinstate these employees with the comments made in the Throne Speech.

Ms. Barrett: Mr. Speaker, I am glad that the Member has spoken out about safer workplaces, because we are very proud of the fact that in this new budget, our budget that was presented this spring, we were able to hire and are in the final process of hiring eight workplace safety and health inspectors. So I am very glad that the

Member recognizes that positive move on the part of the Government of Manitoba.

Again, as I stated earlier, Mr. Speaker, there is no forcing of any employer to hire back any employee. The Labour Board looks at the situation and makes a determination. I might add that since 1973 there has been one incident that went to the Labour Board under the former legislation.

Mr. Gilleshammer: I would again ask the Deputy Premier if she does not understand, by amending section 12(2) of The Labour Relations Act, that the Government will be encouraging instances of picket line violence.

Ms. Barrett: Mr. Speaker, obviously the Member did not listen to my answer to the previous two questions. I will reiterate.

There is no forcing an employer to rehire anyone after a strike or lockout. The Labour Board, should there be an issue, will look at all the facts and make a determination. The criminal justice system is still in play. Other civil and legal elements are still in play. It is the same legislation that was good enough for Sterling Lyon and the Member for Tuxedo (Mr. Filmon). It certainly should be good enough for the Member for Minnedosa.

Labour Relations Act Amendments—Binding Arbitration

Mr. Darren Praznik (Lac du Bonnet): Mr. Speaker, I would like the Minister of Labour to focus her attention on what is the most, I believe, significant change that she is bringing about, one that was changed by the Filmon administration in the early 1990s because it did not represent a balance or fairness, and that is what she is now proposing which is compulsory binding arbitration to settle strikes after 60 days but only compulsory if the union chooses, not if it is asked for, requested by the employer.

* (14:10)

I would like to ask the Minister today, given that she is bringing in a mechanism that has different triggers for employers versus employees, if she could provide us the names today of

all of the business organizations who called for that particular change.

Hon. Becky Barrett (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, the Labour Management Review Committee recognized the fact, as have most Manitobans, that, in the decade of the 1990s, 29 work stoppages or strikes or lockouts lasted for over 60 days. In two instances, they lasted well over a year. In one instance, they lasted almost two years. This has led, in just those strikes and lockouts, to a situation where we in the province of Manitoba, management, business, workers, the taxpayers, the society as a whole, families, lost 635 000-plus days to strikes and lockouts lasting over 60 days.

We do not believe that that is what we should be doing. We believe that Bill 44 will provide a balanced approach to labour relations, will strengthen labour relations for all of the people in Manitoba.

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Speaker, I have to ask the Minister, if she really believes what she is telling Manitobans, why then in this bill did she not make this mechanism available to employers to call upon without having a veto by the unionized employees? Why is the trigger for the union to use the mechanism different than the trigger for the employers? Why is she inconsistent? If she really cares about ending strikes or walkouts, why is it not equally compulsory if the employer requests it?

Where is the balance, Madam Minister?

Ms. Barrett: I would like to acknowledge and thank the Member for Lac du Bonnet for his implicit support for the concept of an alternate dispute resolution mechanism, which is what we are talking about here. There are many issues, particularly in regard to the alternate dispute resolution mechanism, that are very complicated, that require a great deal of discussion and dialogue. I would like to ask the Opposition once again to engage in that debate, to raise the issues, to speak to the issues in the Legislative Assembly, not in the 30 seconds available for either questions or answers in Question Period, but actually debate the Bill and send it to committee, so we can have a reasoned public discussion about these issues.

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Speaker, this MLA has always supported balance, not imbalance as the Minister of Labour has brought in in this legislation.

I would like to ask the Minister of Labour: Does she not believe that if she really, really wanted to bring in balance, as she said, that any mechanism that was really intended to reduce days lost to strikes or lockouts would be equally applicable to both employer and employee? Does she not believe that if an employer wanted to use this, even if the union did not, they should also have the right to invoke this without it being vetoed by someone else? Where is the balance, Madam Minister?

Ms. Barrett: Mr. Speaker, I am glad, once again, that the Member has agreed that this piece of legislation—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Point of Order

Mr. Praznik: The Minister may have no answer to the question about balance because it is not balanced, and she will not admit that. So rather than just dealing with the issue, she tries to imply that this member somehow supports her unbalanced, one-sided proposal. I want to say very clearly on the record, as an MLA and as a former minister of Labour, I always supported balanced mechanisms that both sides could access. That is not what she has here, and I can assure her that this MLA will not be voting for this one-sided mechanism to appease her friends in the leadership of the labour movement.

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Government House Leader, on the same point of order.

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader): I think it is very unfortunate, Mr. Speaker, that on an alleged point of order, a member gets up, abuses the point of order, the whole foundation of that, its role in the Assembly, to get up and make a speech on the matter that is the subject of the question. I ask that you call the Member to order, remind him

that is not a point of order. He cited no rule, no citation whatsoever.

Mr. Speaker: Order. The Honourable Official Opposition House Leader, on the same point of order, with new information.

Mr. Marcel Laurendeau (Opposition House Leader): Mr. Speaker, on the Member's point of order, *Beauchesne's* 417: "Answers to questions should be as brief as possible, deal with the matter raised and should not provoke debate."

Mr. Speaker, if the Minister is going to put false information on the record, she is going to provoke debate in this House. And when this minister decides she wants to be the House Leader and start calling bills in this House, all she has to do is tell the House Leader today to step aside, and I am sure he will, and then she can call the orders for this House, and she can decide when we are going to debate the Bill. But until she becomes the House Leader, she should sit there and do the job she has been designated to, and that is the Minister of Labour.

Mr. Speaker: Order. On the point of order raised by the Honourable Member for Lac du Bonnet, the Honourable Member does not have a point of order.

I would like to take this opportunity to remind the House about the purpose of points of order. A point of order is to be used to draw to the Speaker's attention any departure from the rules or practices of the House or to raise concerns about unparliamentary language. A point of order should not be used to ask a question, to dispute the accuracy of facts, to clarify remarks which have been misquoted or misunderstood, to move a motion, to raise a point of order on a point of order. I would ask the co-operation of all honourable members.

* * *

Ms. Barrett: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do hope I get more than two words out before I am called on again, but if the Member is saying what I heard him say, that he is in favour of balanced labour legislation, then he will support Bill 44.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order. Question Period is a time to share information, and it is very, very difficult to hear the questions and to hear the answers. I would ask once again the co-operation of all honourable members.

Sustainable Development Act Procurement Guidelines

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Justice (Mr. Mackintosh), a minister known for his tough talk toward those who break the laws of Manitoba.

It has become quite apparent that members of his own government have broken provincial laws by failing to deliver a sustainable development procurement policy by July 1, by failing to have a complete Sustainable Development Strategy by July 1, by failing to call a meeting of the Round Table on Sustainable Development in more than one year.

I ask the Minister of Justice what he is doing to address the lawbreakers in his own government.

* (14:20)

Hon. Oscar Lathlin (Minister of Conservation): Mr. Speaker, I rose to answer this question from the Member for River Heights because for quite a while now in this Chamber the Member has continually stood up to proclaim that The Sustainable Development Act has been broken. Almost every day he gets up and he says you have broken the law because certain conditions have not been met.

Well, I would like to advise the Member that there are six provisions in the Act that are time bound. Four of them have to do with the future. I mean, you know, what can I do about that? All I can do is plan to meet those deadlines that are for the future. Two provisions have to do with the July 1 deadline, and that is what the Member keeps referring to.

Mr. Speaker, on June 26, I presented our government's implementation plan for sustainable development in Manitoba.

Mr. Gerrard: My supplementary to the Minister of Justice (Mr. Mackintosh): When it is quite clear under the statutes that the July 1 deadline was not met for presenting the procurement policy, I ask the Minister why does he employ a double standard. Why is he ready to fine individuals \$500 when they do not pick up their mail in five days, yet not carry through on admonishing these colleagues to obey the laws of this province?

Mr. Lathlin: Mr. Speaker, once again, I would like to advise the Member here is the strategy that I presented to the Chamber on June 26. He keeps saying that we have broken the law, but here is the strategy that we presented to the House on June 26.

Mr. Speaker: Order. The Honourable Member for Lac du Bonnet, on a point of order.

Point of Order

Mr. Darren Praznik (Deputy Opposition House Leader): Yes, Mr. Speaker. I believe the document the Member has quoted should be tabled if he is going to refer to it in any way before the House, unless in fact it has been made public.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Praznik: Is it a public document?

Mr. Speaker: Order. The Honourable Government House Leader, on the same point of order.

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, it is unfortunate the Opposition has not been listening, but it is my understanding, in advice to me, that particular document was in fact tabled. It was made available to all members of the House and, as well, I believe the Minister again has advised the House that the document has been tabled. It is already the property of the Legislature.

Mr. Speaker: On the point of order raised by the Honourable Member for Lac du Bonnet, he does not have a point of order. *Beauchesne's* cites unless it is a private letter, then that would have to be tabled.

* * *

Mr. Gerrard: My second supplementary to the Minister of Justice: Since it is quite clear that the requirements of The Sustainable Development Act were not met, I wonder why the Minister is so lax when it comes to members of his own government and yet so tough on ordinary citizens who do not pick up their mail within five days.

Mr. Lathlin: For example, the Act states that the Lieutenant-Governor-in-Council shall, within two years after the coming into force of this act, establish a Sustainable Development Strategy for Manitoba. We have done that. The Minister shall cause sustainability indicators to be established within three years after coming into force. We will do that. The Minister shall cause a sustainability report to be prepared, based on sustainability indicators, within four years after their establishment. We will meet those deadlines again.

The Member talks about the procurement strategy. Cabinet shall, within two years of the coming into force of the Act, establish sustainable development procurement guidelines. We will table those guidelines in the fall. Two years, we have two years.

Labour Relations Act Amendments—Justification

Mr. Jim Penner (Steinbach): Mr. Speaker, back to business. History proves that trying to make the poor rich by making the rich poor has never worked, so a return to the days of Howard Pawley should not be the Government's goal since Manitoba's economy hit rock bottom with Pawley at the helm.

Why has the Minister of Labour gone against her leader's campaign promises to have a good relationship with business and to keep what the former government got right by returning Manitoba to the ineptitude of the Pawley era?

Hon. Becky Barrett (Minister of Labour): First we had "ideological hidebound decisions" and "back to the Dark Ages" as descriptors for legislation that was on the books and worked very well through the Duff Roblin era, the Sterling Lyon era and the Gary Filmon era. Now we have another comment from the Opposition.

Mr. Speaker, Bill 44 is designed to restore balance. The majority of the proposals that found their way into Bill 44 reflect partial or complete consensus on the part of the Labour Management Review Committee. What we would very much like to do, and I think the people of Manitoba would very much like to have us do as legislators, is to debate the Bill in the House in second reading and then take that bill to public hearings so we can hear and listen to all sides of this issue, these very complicated issues.

Is that too much to ask, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Jim Penner: Mr. Speaker, "balance" is a new term. We found out in Estimates that there is negative balance and positive balance. Does the Minister expect to go forward in today's world by going backwards to one of the darkest parts of Manitoba's economic history? Is that negative balance?

Ms. Barrett: I will not go back to the dark days of 1992 and 1993 in this province. I will not go back to the acute protracted restraint of the Sterling Lyon era. These measures in Bill 44 are designed to restore the balance that was present in the labour relations climate through the years of Duff Roblin, Howard Pawley, Sterling Lyon and Gary Filmon.

Mr. Jim Penner: Mr. Speaker, it is the year 2000 and we still want to know: Does the Minister of Labour support the union bosses who want their lives made easier, or hardworking Manitobans who want their democratic rights and freedoms to a secret ballot?

Ms. Barrett: Mr. Speaker, we believe that Bill 44 is a balanced, reasonable approach to labour relations that will strengthen the free collective bargaining process in the province of Manitoba, will strengthen the economy and will make Manitoba a more positive place for people who are currently here, those workers and their families who are currently here, those employers and their families who are currently here and employers who may be considering coming to the province of Manitoba. We believe this is a very positive, forward-looking piece of legis-

lation and would like to get the public's input through public committee hearings, if we could get the Opposition on side on that.

Workplace Safety and Health Act Amendments

Mr. Leonard Derkach (Russell): Mr. Speaker, it is now very clear that no soul in the business community is safe from this NDP Government's assault against small-business people and entrepreneurs. In addition to Bill 44, there is now talk even more destructive legislation is about to be introduced.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to quote from the newsletter from the CFIB which says, in reference to the Minister: The Minister has indicated that she is considering making directors of corporations criminally liable for offences under The Workplace Safety and Health Act in cases where due diligence is not used. *[interjection]* And the Minister, from her seat, says, oh, how horrible. I want to ask this minister whether she will confirm when she will be introducing this legislation, as company headquarters in Manitoba will need some warning time in order to move their headquarters.

* (14:30)

Hon. Becky Barrett (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, I find it very interesting that the Member would suggest that people should not be liable for situations that they have knowingly brought about or knowingly not ameliorated when they had the opportunity. From their seats, over the last few weeks, the members have spoken up very loudly on behalf of "workers' rights."

All we are going to be doing in this legislation, which has not been tabled in the House yet but will be in due course, is to ensure that workers' health and welfare is protected. In those very, very, very few instances where directors of corporations are proven to have been liable, either through acts of omission or acts of commission, when they should have known better and did nothing, we think that is only fair and balanced for all of the people of Manitoba,

most particularly the workers. Workers and employers should be happy that there is good, solid workplace safety legislation in this province.

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister if she can explain how many jobs this legislation change, which she is planning, will cost Manitoba, or does she even care?

Ms. Barrett: I would just like to ask the Member if he is seriously considering the fact that we should go back to Westray, that we should go back to Poulin's, that we should go back to the salt mines, that we should go back into conditions in mines where they had to have canaries to go into the mine ahead of the workers to find out when there were poisonous gases.

Mr. Speaker, it is unconscionable that this member is, for a moment, suggesting that we are not concerned with workers' rights and lives. If one worker's life is saved or one worker's quality of life is protected through this piece of legislation that will require people who should know, or should have known, or should have done something and did not, were criminally negligent, they will be charged, as they legitimately should be. We are in favour of protecting the health and well-being of our Manitoba workers, and that can only be good for all Manitobans. I am appalled at his comments in this regard.

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Speaker, there is not a single member in this Legislature who is not concerned about the rights of workers in this province. This is draconian legislation that this minister is looking at.

I want to ask the Minister how she and her government will compensate for the vast decrease in tax revenue when the corporate sector leaves the province due to a punitive change made by this NDP Government.

Ms. Barrett: I would like to suggest, Mr. Speaker, that if the Opposition's economic strategy is to bring Third World economic conditions, working conditions, to the province of Manitoba, then they need to look only into the mirror as to why they lost the election. We are concerned about workers' safety and health. This

legislation will only address those situations where directors can be proven to be criminally negligent in what they did do or criminally negligent in what they did not do that they should have known. We refuse to be part of a government that will allow a Westray or a Poulin's to happen in this province.

Mr. Speaker: Time for Oral Questions has expired.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Manitoba Amateur Golf Championship

Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (Interim Leader of the Official Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I want all members of the Legislature to know, and to hopefully share the pride that I share when I learned that a constituent of mine captured the Manitoba Amateur Golf Championship on the weekend. I would like to congratulate Kevin Kotyk, a 17-year-old student at River East Collegiate for his well-deserved victory at the Pinawa Golf Course.

I have had the opportunity to watch Kevin grow up in our community and be involved in our local community club, and I just want to indicate how very proud we are in River East constituency of his accomplishments.

Kevin joins a very noteworthy group of Manitoba amateur champions. His name now joins notable former champions such as Terry Hashimoto, Rob McMillan, Todd Fanning and Glen Hnatiuk.

With his victory, Kevin became one of the youngest Manitoba Amateur Golf Champions ever. Kevin will now be representing Manitoba in the Canadian Amateur Championship held next week in Edmonton. Congratulations to him and the other golfers who will make up Team Manitoba. I am sure that they will proudly represent our province very well. Thank you.

Manitoba Stampede and Exhibition

Ms. Nancy Allan (St. Vital): Mr. Speaker, this past week I had the opportunity to attend the opening ceremonies of the 37th annual Manitoba Stampede and Exhibition in Morris, Manitoba.

This four-day event attracts over 30 000 visitors to Morris. The afternoon I attended the Morris Stampede there were visitors from all over the world in the stands with me that afternoon, including visitors from Holland, England, New Zealand and South Africa.

It is important to remember this agricultural fair emphasizes the day-to-day excellence achieved by Manitoba farmers and thrills audiences with bareback riding, saddle bronc, steer wrestling, barrel racing, chariot and chuckwagon races.

Over the years, this stampede has been an important venue to showcase the best of agriculture, food and rural hospitality in Manitoba. It provides a vehicle to promote agriculture in this area, as well as celebrate achievements in 4-H, youth, and related sectors. The stampede provides exposure for Morris and southern Manitoba as a progressive centre of agricultural activity and its importance in the local economy is well understood, as demonstrated by the large contingent of dedicated volunteers from the many communities surrounding Morris.

Manitoba Agriculture and Food works closely with the Valley Agricultural Society to support new initiatives, and the provincial agricultural society program provides funding for innovative projects that demonstrate significant industry benefits and promotes agricultural commodities produced in Manitoba.

On behalf of the Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk), I congratulate the Valley Agricultural Society for over a century of work in this area, and the Morris Stampede organizers for showcasing agriculture in Manitoba.

* (14:40)

Western Canadian Blind Golf Championship

Mr. Frank Pitura (Morris): Mr. Speaker, on Monday I had the honour of attending the opening of the Western Canadian Blind Golf Championship. The day started with an early morning breakfast at the Kingswood Golf and Country Club, at which I brought greetings on behalf of the Morris constituency.

Following the opening breakfast, I was challenged to try my hand at blind golfing. With a blindfold over my eyes I took a couple of swings, actually hitting the ball, but in entirely the wrong direction. The experience illustrated to me just how challenging the sport must be to the blind. It is indeed an accomplishment for those who are able to overcome their handicap to excel at this endeavour. The Western Canadian Blind Golf Championship is a very special event, and I want to thank all of those involved for bringing the tournament here. Participants from a number of different countries including Japan, Ireland and Canada took part.

On behalf of all members of this Chamber, I want to congratulate the golfers on their great efforts and the organizers and volunteers who made it happen, and a great big thank you to the Charleswood-Tuxedo Lions Club who were the lead sponsors of the tournament.

Last Post Fund

Mr. Jim Rondeau (Assiniboia): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about the Last Post Fund I attended on July 16, 2000. It was really an impressive ceremony. What happened was there was a columbarium that was dedicated on behalf of those people who served as veterans in the war or served in our armed forces in peacetime. It was very important because we owe so much to our veterans who through their devotion to duty gave us the liberty and freedom we now enjoy as Canadians. They have given us the lead, and they have served across the world and done a lot in wartime and peacetime that we can all be thankful for and our country can be thankful for.

This structure that was dedicated on that day will stand as a fitting tribute to their valour and sacrifice. It is also important that as they passed to their final reward, we ensure they are laid to rest with honour, respect and dignity, providing for them in death what they fought to give us in life. I commend the board of the Manitoba Branch of the Last Post Fund, Larson Memorials and a lot of people who gave of their time, the volunteers and those who worked towards this final project being finished. I am certain that this compassion, the dedication and the commitment that they showed to this project will really help

the friends and families and the history of Manitoba which we all can appreciate.

Thank you very, very much for all of those people who helped on this valuable project.

St. Cyril and Methodius Church

Mr. Edward Helwer (Gimli): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise today, and it was my pleasure to attend the Mass and picnic last Sunday, July 23, celebrating the designation of Gimli's St. Cyril and Methodius Church as a heritage site. St. Cyril and Methodius Church was constructed in 1904 by Gimli's first Polish homesteaders. The church still stands today on its original site located west of Gimli on Highway 231. The original log structure burned to the ground and was rebuilt in 1909. The second church, struck by lightning in 1917 was rebuilt in 1921 with volunteer labour. This effort was a testament to the dedication and determination of the people of the surrounding communities.

So, too, was the effort to preserve this important part of Gimli's heritage. Paul Artyshko, his wife Grace and Joannie Bartmanovich formed the St. Cyril and Methodius Church Heritage Incorporated in order to salvage and preserve the landmark building. I want to congratulate them for their effort and their vision. I also congratulate all those who helped them to ensure that the St. Cyril and Methodius Church became a heritage site. So I commend, therefore, their efforts to protect and preserve this important part of Gimli's and Manitoba's history. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Committee Changes

Mr. Peter Dyck (Pembina): I move, seconded by the Honourable Member for Minnedosa (Mr. Gilleshammer), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Law Amendments, July 26, 10 a.m., be amended as follows: Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Praznik) for Fort Garry (Mrs. Smith); Southdale (Mr. Reimer) for Russell (Mr. Derkach); Morris (Mr. Pitura) for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Fauschou); and Seine River (Mrs. Dacquay) for Springfield (Mr. Schuler).

Motion agreed to.

Mr. Dyck: I move, seconded by the Honourable Member for Seine River (Mrs. Dacquay), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Public Utilities and Natural Resources, July 26, 10 a.m., be amended as follows: Charleswood (Mrs. Driedger) for Lakeside (Mr. Enns); Minnedosa (Mr. Gilleshammer) for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Fauschou); Fort Whyte (Mr. Loewen) for Emerson (Mr. Jack Penner); and Steinbach (Mr. Jim Penner) for Southdale (Mr. Reimer).

Motion agreed to.

Mr. Gregory Dewar (Selkirk): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Member for Wellington (Mr. Santos), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Public Utilities and Natural Resources be amended as follows: Elmwood (Mr. Maloway) for Riel (Ms. Asper).

Motion agreed to.

Mr. Dewar: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Member for Wellington (Mr. Santos), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Law Amendments for Wednesday, July 26, at 10 a.m., be amended as follows: St. Johns (Mr. Mackintosh) for Brandon East (Mr. Caldwell); Lord Roberts (Ms. McGifford) for Inkster (Ms. Barrett); Assiniboia (Mr. Rondeau) for Riel (Ms. Asper); Wellington (Mr. Santos) for St. Vital (Ms. Allan); Interlake (Mr. Nevakshonoff) for Transcona (Mr. Reid); Dauphin-Roblin (Mr. Struthers) for Brandon West (Mr. Smith); La Verendrye (Mr. Lemieux) for Burrows (Mr. Martindale).

Motion agreed to.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

House Business

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I would like to advise, in addition to the bills previously referred to the Public Utilities and Natural Resources Committee for July 26, at 10 a.m., that the following bills will also be considered: Bills 29 and 37.

Mr. Speaker: It has been advised that, in addition to the bills previously referred to the Public Utilities and Natural Resources Committee for July 26, at 10 a.m., that the following bills will also be considered: Bills 29 and 37. [*Agreed*]

Mr. Mackintosh: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger), that Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair and the House resolve itself into a committee to consider of the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty.

Motion agreed to.

**COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY
(Concurrent Sections)**

CONSERVATION

* (14:50)

Mr. Chairperson (Harry Schellenberg): Order, please. Will the Committee of Supply please come to order. This afternoon this section of the Committee of Supply meeting in Room 254 will resume consideration of the Estimates of the Department of Conservation.

When the Committee last sat, it had been considering items on page 43 of the Estimates book, 12.4.(f)(3) Less: Recoverable from other appropriations (\$95,000). Shall the line pass?

Mr. Marcel Laurendeau (St. Norbert): Mr. Chairperson, before we start passing all the lines, I have just one question. Some people might think it is laughable, but some of my constituents are taking it very seriously.

We have got a problem with Thompson turkeys, the crows and the ravens that are getting very strong in our area. A constituent phoned me this morning and asked me the question if they are on an endangered list, or a no-shoot-'em, or are they allowed to kill them within the city limits? They are really becoming pests. They are eating all the eggs from the local songbirds, and we would like to find a way or a mechanism of removing them and also the wild turkeys. We have probably got a herd of over 300 and 400 in

my community right now, and it is becoming a problem.

I am just wondering if the Minister could give me a hint on how to get rid of both the Thompson turkeys or the crows and the wild turkeys.

Hon. Oscar Lathlin (Minister of Conservation): Mr. Chairman, I am given to understand that the crow and the raven are actually not on the endangered list. However, if these birds are on your own private property, in order to protect your property, I understand that you are free to scare them away.

It is apparently all right to dispose of them if they are on your property and they are damaging your property.

Mr. Chairperson: 12.4.(f)(3) Less: Recoverable from other appropriations (\$95,000)—pass.

12.4.(g) Land Mapping Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$496,500—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$240,200—pass.

Resolution 12.4: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$5,990,200 for Conservation, Land Information Centre, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2001.

Resolution agreed to.

12.5. Environmental Stewardship (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$2,343,000—pass; (b) Other Expenditures \$764,000—pass; (c) Grant Assistance \$83,500—pass.

Resolution 12.5: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$3,190,500 for Conservation, Environmental Stewardship, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2001.

Resolution agreed to.

* (15:00)

12.6. Environmental Management (a) Environmental Operations (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$5,012,600—pass; (2) Other

Expenditures \$1,507,800—pass; (3) Grant Assistance \$900—pass.

6.(b) Environmental Management (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$1,523,900—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$1,933,000—pass.

6.(c) Clean Environment Commission (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$292,000—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$177,200—pass.

Resolution 12.6: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$10,447,400 for Conservation, Environmental Management, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2001.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 12.7: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$1,145,900 for Conservation, International Institute for Sustainable Development, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2001.

Resolution agreed to.

12.8. Infrastructure and Minor Capital Projects (a) Equipment \$460,600—pass; (b) Water Projects \$4,565,400—pass; (c) Park Facilities \$4,189,300—pass; (d) Less: Recoverable from Capital Initiatives.

Resolution 12.8: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$9,215,300 for Conservation, Infrastructure and Minor Capital Projects, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2001.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 12.9: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$2,418,700 for Conservation, Amortization of Capital Assets, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2001.

Resolution agreed to.

12.10. Flood Proofing Programs, Capital Grants \$12,685,600—pass; Infrastructure \$17,078,200. Shall the line pass?

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): The infrastructure here deals primarily with the dikes. Does this for the flooding?

Mr. Lathlin: Yes, that is the flood proofing, what is being done on community ring dikes, et cetera.

Mr. Gerrard: I note with pleasure that there has been some progress and that the dike, for example, in Rosenort seems now to be proceeding. But I wonder if you can tell me of the I think it was 13 dikes that were planned: How many of those are now underway and how many are still yet to come?

Mr. Lathlin: I do not have that information right at my fingertips, but I would propose to the Member that we gave a report not that long ago, I believe. We gave a progress status for each project. I would like to propose to the Member that I would do the same thing this time round and give him the information as soon as I can.

Mr. Gerrard: Can the Minister inform the Committee when he expects to have all the projects completed?

Mr. Lathlin: The time frame for these is completion for 2003. It is a five-year program.

Mr. Gerrard: Because of the situation, in particular in southwestern Manitoba, where it is not only dikes but other irrigation and drainage measures which are of particular importance, I wonder if the Minister has any allocation for drainage or irrigation or water management infrastructure in southwestern Manitoba.

Mr. Lathlin: This program which we have just finished talking about is for the Red River Valley. There is no money earmarked at this time, I think, for southwest Manitoba.

Mr. Gerrard: I thank the Minister for his clarification. I am curious, given the circumstances in southwestern Manitoba, the fact that we are significantly behind, for example, Saskatchewan and Alberta on irrigation infrastructure, and that there is a need clearly in a number of areas for drainage and water management on an improved basis in southwestern Manitoba, whether the Minister, if not

any funds allocated, has feasibility studies, other studies underway which would lead toward the potential for such infrastructure investments in the future.

Mr. Lathlin: The short answer to that question is that there are no funds earmarked for irrigation projects for southwestern Manitoba at this time.

Mr. Gerrard: There have been, out of the Red River Valley flood, some circumstances, and I remember flooding around Lake Manitoba, the Dauphin River circumstance. There was some discussion at the time in terms of infrastructure which relates to prevention of flooding, not only along the Red River Valley, but there, because, of course, as one changes the outflow from the Assiniboine into Lake Manitoba, you have the potential to flood communities downstream.

* (15:10)

I wonder if there are any plans or dollars earmarked for flood infrastructure, water management infrastructure, along the corridor from the Assiniboine to the Portage diversion, up to Lake Manitoba and in the outflow toward Lake Winnipeg.

Mr. Lathlin: Currently, there are no funds earmarked for any programming for that part of the province, on Lake Manitoba and Lake Dauphin.

Mr. Gerrard: One other area that there are concerns about in relationship to the—it is in the Red River waterway—would be in the R.M. of La Broquerie where there has been a lot of concern in changes in water management which have led to increase runoff and water problems. For example, in the recent heavy rains, we saw significant water damage and water problems in the R.M. of La Broquerie. I am just wondering if there are any plans at this point, or funds allocated in terms of water management infrastructure in the R.M. of La Broquerie.

Mr. Lathlin: Maybe I could start off by advising the Member that, as he knows, we just passed in committee the Water Rights bill, which would go a long way to alleviate some of the problems. I think that, during the hearings

process, we advised the public and also the Committee that we are also gearing up for a more comprehensive water management review for all of Manitoba, not just southern Manitoba. I have only been here a short time, but it has become very clear to me that there is uncontrolled drainage work, protecting your land, and so forth, runoff water in the spring, and also the rain. Everyone does their part, I guess, to protect their property. I would probably do the same thing too.

The net effect of that uncontrolled drainage work is that people are negatively impacted downstream. I look at Lake Manitoba, for example, I was there visiting the Fairford First Nation not that long ago, and those people cannot even dig graves when they have funerals because as soon as they go two feet into the ground, water comes up. But they have had that problem ever since some drainage work was done on the south basin of Lake Manitoba. Just the other day, I met with a group who are planning to further put a pipe into Lake Manitoba. Of course, what that will do is it will just exacerbate Fairford First Nation's already real bad water situation. So that is what happens when there is uncontrolled drainage work all over the place.

Our efforts will be focussed this coming fall towards trying to come up with a more balanced approach to water management. The communities the Member talks about will more than likely be part of the consultation process. Indeed we are meeting some of those communities right now. Apparently a study was being done for Rat River and so forth, but nothing has been made definitive yet. So I look forward to the consultation process that we are putting in place for the fall to determine what is the best policy that we can come up with in order to manage water, whether it is ground water or surface water, potable water.

I should also mention to the Member that I was up north last weekend. I am telling you, it is bone dry up in those rivers and lakes up north. Then I come down here and people are crying because there is too much water. But I think I have become familiar or made to understand why there is such a vast difference between

water levels, say, at Clearwater Lake, Cormorant Lake, compared to down south.

In other parts of the province and in the country it is too dry. In some parts of the country it is too wet. Then there are even those, learned people, professional people, who predict that in time we are going to be short of potable water. So we have a big, big job ahead of us.

Mr. Chairperson: 12.10 Infrastructure \$17,078,200—pass.

Resolution 12.10: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$29,763,800 for Conservation, Flood Proofing Programs, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2001.

Resolution agreed to.

The last item to be considered for the Estimates of the Department of Conservation is item 12.1(a) Minister's Salary. At this point we request that the Minister's staff leave the table for the consideration of this item.

12.1. Administration and Finance (a) Minister's Salary \$27,300. Shall the line pass?

Mr. Gerrard: Just a couple of questions. I would like to follow up some of the discussion yesterday which related to the Minister's plans for creeks like Sturgeon Creek, which appear to have had contamination by E. coli. When we are dealing with creeks which come into the city of Winnipeg, the situation may be a little different from creeks other places, but, nevertheless, they need to be taken clearly with some seriousness.

I just wondered what your planning approach was for creeks like Sturgeon Creek.

* (15:20)

Mr. Lathlin: As I advised the Member yesterday, we are currently taking samples strategically along the river. In other words, there is a sample being taken at a certain point on the river, and then downstream we are taking another sample. Then it is a process of elimination, I guess. If we do not find anything here, then we move on. Where we might find a

concentration of whatever the contaminants are, then I think it will be easier to determine what the root cause of the contamination is.

So far, maybe there is a report on my desk right now, but as of this morning I had not received a report yet. We are looking at whether the contaminants come from the run-off from the land into the river.

I mean, I was saying to our people in the Department, that, you know, for me, any river that goes through the city of Winnipeg is pretty vulnerable. There are all kinds of contaminants that could enter the river system, even coming close to the city of Winnipeg, but once you are in the city of Winnipeg the river is pretty vulnerable. So we are looking at that. We are treating it very seriously. As soon as we can determine what the real cause of the problem is then we can formalize a plan of action.

Mr. Gerrard: Were there any other of creeks and streams similarly with a big spike in the E. coli levels?

Mr. Lathlin: There are no other streams or rivers or creeks. I can advise the Member that some of these investigations that we are doing are initiated, like, we go in there and if we find something that does not look right we investigate. Some of them turn out to be okay. In some cases we have had to, as a precautionary measure, we have asked people to boil water. In some cases, in camping grounds we have actually shut off the well so that people do not drink water from there. But so far we have not had a major, major problem.

I think the main reason we are doing that is to make sure that we do not run into the same problems as were experienced in the province of Ontario in Walkerton. People are very, very aware of what happened in Ontario. so therefore any little thing that is there, people want to investigate, because we do not want to go through the same thing here in Manitoba.

Mr. Gerrard: I would just add I was out at Sturgeon Creek this morning. One of the local residents was saying that the condition of Sturgeon Creek in his memory going back 40

years had never been this bad in terms of the problem that exists at the moment.

Mr. Lathlin: Yes, as a matter of fact, I think in the case of Sturgeon Creek, how we became aware of the problem there is from people phoning our offices and letting us know and our going there to investigate. But I recall a while back, even in The Pas, there is a place called Bracken Dam. I do not know if the Member is aware of it. It is Bracken Dam. It is a dam across Birch River, which goes into Carrot River. Carrot River of course is a tributary of the Saskatchewan River.

Anyway, right at the dam we had found just tons and tons of dead fish one summer. When the conservation officers were alerted and started investigating, the results of their investigation showed that because there was no oxygen left, the fish died. One of the initial causes that our people look at is lack of oxygen, but, no, not that I am aware of as I am sitting here, there are no other rivers and streams that might have that problem.

Mr. Gerrard: Thank you.

Mr. Chairperson: 12.1(a) Minister's Salary \$27,300—pass.

Resolution 12.1: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$6,380,100 for Conservation, Administration and Finance, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2001.

Resolution agreed to.

This concludes the Estimates for the Department of Conservation.

Is it the will of the Committee to recess for the next round of Estimates for Aboriginal and Northern Affairs? *[Agreed]*

The Committee recessed at 3:26 p.m.

The Committee resumed at 3:31 p.m.

ABORIGINAL AND NORTHERN AFFAIRS

Mr. Chairperson (Harry Schellenberg): Order, please. Will the Committee of Supply please come to order. This afternoon this section of the Committee of Supply will resume consideration of the Estimates of the Department of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs in Room 254.

When the Committee last sat, it had been considering item 19.2.(g)(1) on page 24 of the Estimates book.

Item 19.2. Aboriginal and Northern Affairs Operations (g) Agreements Management and Co-ordination (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$712,100—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$174,400—pass; (3) Northern Flood Agreement \$1,355,000—pass.

2.(h) Aboriginal Affairs Secretariat (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$450,800—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$228,700—pass; (3) Aboriginal Development Programs \$2,003,600—pass; (4) Aboriginal Economic and Resource Development Fund \$1,000,000—pass; (5) Partners for Careers \$200,000—pass.

2.(j) Communities Economic Development Fund \$1,500,200—pass.

Resolution 19.2: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$19,592,700 for Aboriginal and Northern Affairs, Aboriginal and Northern Affairs Operations, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2001.

Resolution agreed to.

19.3. Capital Grants (a) Northern Communities \$2,379,600—pass; (b) Community Access and Resource Roads \$235,000—pass; (c) Less: Recoverable from Capital Initiatives.

Resolution 19.3: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$2,614,600 for Aboriginal and Northern Affairs, Capital Grants, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2001.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 19.4: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$135,000 for Aboriginal and Northern Affairs, Amortization of Capital Assets, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2001.

Resolution agreed to.

The last item to be considered for the Estimates of the Department of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs is item 19.1.(a) Minister's Salary. At this point, we request that the Minister's staff leave the table for the consideration of this item.

19.1.(a) Minister's Salary \$27,300—pass.

Resolution 19.1: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$873,900 for Aboriginal and Northern Affairs, Aboriginal and Northern Affairs Executive, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2001.

Resolution agreed to.

This completes the Estimates of the Department of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs.

The next set of Estimates that will be considered by this section of the Committee of Supply is the Estimates of the department of Status of Women.

Shall we briefly recess to allow the Minister and her critic to have the opportunity to prepare for the commencement of the next set of Estimates? *[Agreed]*

The Committee recessed at 3:38 p.m.

The Committee resumed at 3:44 p.m.

STATUS OF WOMEN

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

considering the Estimates of the department of Status of Women.

Does the Honourable Minister responsible for Status of Women have an opening statement?

Hon. Diane McGifford (Minister responsible for the Status of Women): Yes, Mr. Chair, I do.

Today, I am pleased to have the opportunity to present the Estimates for the Department of the Status of Women for the fiscal year 2000-2001. The Status of Women includes the Manitoba Women's Directorate and the Manitoba Women's Advisory Council. I will speak first of the activities of the Women's Directorate and then to those of the Advisory Council.

The Women's Directorate works within government to influence government decision making through research support, policy development and evaluation of government programs, policies and legislation, in order to determine their impact on women. It also interacts with various departments of government, the business sector, the community and federal-provincial territorial ministries of the Status of Women, to raise awareness of the reality of women's lives and to ensure that the differential impact of proposed programs and services, employment practices or other initiatives is considered.

To focus its activities and to support government priorities, the Directorate has developed five goals that represent its priority areas over the next five years. These goals are: to enhance the capacity for Manitoba women to attain economic self-sufficiency and/or economic security, to foster awareness and further enhance the Government of Manitoba's efforts to provide a violence-free environment for women and children, to raise awareness of women's health issues and advocate for the recognition of women's needs in public health policy, to facilitate opportunities that promote positive and strategic directions for youth, to educate government decision makers about the potential differential impacts of government policies and programs. Now I am going to address each of these issues.

Economic self-sufficiency and/or economic security. One key to women's empowerment in today's society is, of course, the ability to use a computer and to be able to access the Internet. Almost two thirds of the jobs in Manitoba today require basic computer literacy. As a result, computer literacy is fast becoming a requirement for employability; yet, many adult women are not computer literate. If women are to participate fully in today's technology-oriented workplace, they need encouragement and support. There are four initiatives to meet these needs.

The Women's Directorate has developed a basic computer training program for women with the support of the Employment and Training Services Branch of Manitoba Education and Training. Power Up aims to maximize women's employment opportunities through knowledge of computers and the Internet. Addressing skill shortages by providing flexible education and training options is a priority concern shared by Manitoba business and government. Power Up teaches basic word processing and Internet access to women across Manitoba in 15 hours of training over a 5-week period. Over 4200 women have registered for the program since March of 1999, and to date more than 2300 have completed their training.

Trade Up to Your Future. This is a pre-employment trades training program for women developed in partnership with Manitoba Education and Training Employment and Training Services Branch, Tech Voc High School and the Alliance of Manufacturers and Exporters. This program offers five months of shops training, upgrading classes and workplace readiness, followed by thirty weeks of workplace experience, preparing women for entry to apprenticeship programs in high-skill, high-demand jobs.

The first pilot project began in September of 1999 and a second is planned for September of 2000. We are very pleased with the success of this program. Most women are fully employed in their chosen fields—welding, machining and electrical work—in full-time permanent jobs. The Directorate recognizes that today's youth, and female youth in particular, face unique challenges. While progress has been made in many areas, much remains to be done to assist

the next generation of women to achieve full equality with their male counterparts, including economic equality.

With a view to encouraging young women in their teens to begin thinking about financial security, the Directorate has developed Invest in Yourself. This incorporates an information booklet, which offers advice on creating a secure financial foundation. It is intended to be used with a curriculum guide that will soon be offered in high school consumer math programs. Phases two and three of this initiative will include discussions with Education and Training program development to include the material and other courses of study and offering the program to organizations which work with and offer programs for girls. I might add parenthetically, that this is one of the first things that I worked on when I was appointed minister, and I was very pleased to do that with the Directorate.

* (15:50)

A STEP student has been hired to make presentations to girls in middle schools on the importance of continuing studies in math and science, plus keeping open the doors to a broad spectrum of training and career choices.

The Training for Tomorrow Scholarship Awards Program. This program gives 50 \$1,000-scholarships each year to women entering 2-year diploma programs in math, science and technology courses at the province's community colleges. To date, 241 scholarships have been awarded, and tracking of graduates shows that over 90 percent of recipients are employed in training related jobs.

Women are increasingly seeking self-employment. Community and economic development are priorities for this government. Toward that end, in the budget speech, Minister Selinger announced the TEAM program. This pilot project to promote microenterprise development in northern areas will include a distinct component to ensure women's participation in the TEAM project. The Women's Directorate will be working with officials from the Community Economic Development Fund

and Aboriginal and Northern Affairs to develop this aspect of the program.

To support women in their own business, the Women's Directorate has developed a mentorship program for business women. The program offers women an opportunity to interact with other business owners who offer guidance in developing and maintaining viable businesses. The Directorate has also produced a quick reference for women entrepreneurs which describes programs and services available through the provincial government for those women interested in starting their own businesses. This booklet is available in government offices across the province.

Together with colleagues across the country, Status of Women ministries are developing a strategic framework on women's economic security and independence to help guide the work of our ministries. The Women's Directorate has taken an active role in this federal, provincial and territorial initiative.

Our second major goal is to foster awareness and further enhance the Government of Manitoba's efforts to provide a violence-free environment for women and children. The Directorate works to promote a strong coordinated approach to public policy development and strategies to address violence against women. Toward this end, the Directorate partners with federal-provincial-territorial counterparts to promote and share strategies that offer support to victims and provide a strong system response.

Most recently, the national focus has been on the important area of prevention. The Directorate helped to develop a strategic framework to prevent violence against women, which was released jointly by ministers responsible for the Status of Women. Its purpose was to establish common goals, principles and directions to guide policy and program development.

Locally, the Directorate participates in interdepartmental committees that deal with violence issues such as the Family Violence Court steering committee and the domestic violence and stalking protection, prevention and

consequential amendments act development committee. It also sits on the interdepartmental committee on family violence prevention, chaired by the family violence prevention program and the change of identity in life-threatening situations committee. The Directorate co-chairs with a community representative the domestic violence community committee.

Most recently, the Directorate conducted a gender-inclusive analysis of the victims' bill of rights legislation to help ensure that it contemplates the circumstances of women victims as well as males since women are more likely than males to be criminally victimized by someone they know.

Neighbourhoods Alive!, a new initiative recently announced by our government, is a long-term community-based development strategy which will provide community organizations with the support they need to build their neighbourhoods. It will focus on housing, employment and training, education and recreation, as well as safety and crime prevention. The Directorate's Keeping Safe at Work campaign will support Neighbourhoods Alive! by contributing to preventing criminal victimization of women in the workplace or on their way to and from work. The campaign was developed in partnership with CIBC, the RCMP police and Winnipeg Police Service. The Directorate has partnered with Workplace Safety and Health and Justice to address the sizeable demand for Keeping Safe sessions within the next year.

Our third goal is to facilitate opportunities that promote positive and strategic directions for youth. While more young women are completing high school and entering universities and colleges than ever before, not all of their endeavours are positive. Young women as a group are alarmingly inactive, and they represent the only group in Canadian society where smoking is on the increase. The Take the Challenge initiative launched by the Women's Directorate focusses on promoting healthy and positive directions for young women. It includes encouraging young women to stay physically active, develop healthy eating habits, stay in school and make their educational choices for

themselves, which will in turn lead to their economic independence.

Initiatives include Do It For You in which a university student made presentations on active living, disease prevention and body images to elementary and middle schools throughout Winnipeg. One thousand girls between the ages of ten and seventeen participated in the discussion and completed a survey examining their physical activity patterns. Do It For You was so successful that the Directorate is now working with the Recreation and Wellness Promotion Branch in the Department of Culture, Heritage and Tourism to expand the initiative to include a much wider rural and northern component for the spring of 2000.

To raise awareness of the importance of recreation and physical activity and the barriers to participation which face young girls, the Directorate, in partnership with the Recreation and Wellness Promotion Branch, introduced Speak Up. This initiative consists of a speakers bureau composed of Manitoba women from various backgrounds and occupations recruited to act as ambassadors to carry the message and includes strategies to overcome barriers.

One strategy, promoted by the speakers bureau and the Directorate is On the Move, a non-competitive, alternative physical activity model emphasizing fun, social skill building and recreational activities. Together with the Recreation and Wellness Promotion Branch and the Manitoba Fitness Council, the Directorate has created opportunities in several communities for young girls to participate in the program. The Canadian Association for the Advancement of Women in Sport funded several pilot projects.

Fourth goal: To raise the awareness of women's health issues and advocate for public health policy which recognizes women's needs in public health policy. Health care is our biggest challenge in government, and Manitoba's highest priority. The Directorate has been actively involved in working with Manitoba Health to raise awareness within government of women's lives and women's unique role in the delivery of health care, both regarding their families and the community.

In our efforts to address the shortage of nurses, we are very aware that too often women provide supportive care to their loved ones at the bedside and in nursing homes. Long term, this work can have an impact on the health of the caregivers themselves. As well, women's health care must be understood and included in health care delivery.

Towards this end, the Directorate and Manitoba Health have been developing a province-wide women's health strategy. Recently, the Directorate undertook to present a day-long training session to rural health authority staff, highlighting the importance of incorporating a gendered perspective into the community health needs assessments.

The Directorate has also partnered with the Manitoba Clinic to develop programs for women's health. The Maximizing Osteoporosis Management in Manitoba project, known as MOM, works to improve the osteoporosis care for women who have the highest risk of developing this disease. The Lily [*phonetic*] Women's Learning Centre will be a state-of-the-art women's learning centre in Winnipeg, designed to provide counselling, literature, audio-visual aids and Internet services. Its purpose is to assist women in learning about their own health. Ultimately, Learning Centre staff will travel to locations around the province, making presentations and sharing information with women outside Winnipeg. The Directorate serves on the steering committee for both of these projects.

* (16:00)

Fifth goal: To educate government decision makers about the potential differential impacts of government actions. As part of its mandate to promote women's equal participation in society and the workplace and to inform government with regard to policy development, the Directorate, by means of a gender-inclusive analysis, seeks to identify the differential impacts on women of government legislation policies and programs. Gender-inclusive analysis respects and appreciates diversity among women and recognizes the different roles, life experiences, economic and social circumstances facing women and men.

The Beijing Platform for Action and the Beijing Declaration developed at the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995 strongly emphasized the importance of gender-inclusive analysis in developing public policy and programs. The Women's Directorate has developed a training program to assist government program developers and policy makers in implementing a gender-inclusive analysis. To date, the Directorate has offered both general and group-specific training. As well, the Directorate has analyzed key legislation such as the important victims' bill of rights in order to ensure that it reflects the circumstances of women.

Government's record: Our government is committed to furthering women's progress to full equality, economic, social and legal equality within our society, as well as the work and initiatives undertaken by the Women's Directorate.

We are advancing because of initiatives in other departments such as Family Services' Building Independence program and the increased funding to aid victims of violence. Building Independence will help women move from social assistance to the labour force and participate in their communities. This program will provide people with the tools they need to achieve their goals. The program includes a new work incentive which increases the earning exemption to \$115 and includes an additional 25 percent of net monthly earnings beyond the basic exemption. We believe that this positive approach is an excellent way to help women achieve economic independence. In this spirit, we will begin July 1 to pass the increase in the National Child Benefit to families on social assistance.

Another key to the achievement of economic independence is access to affordable, quality child care. To this end, this government has implemented the unit funding model to help centres generate equitable revenue for all funded child care facilities. One important feature of this approach is enabling centres to increase salaries to child care workers, thereby addressing the problem of low wages and attracting additional workers. We have increased the number of child care spaces to 20 000 and subsidized spaces to a total of 11 000, for a total

budget figure of \$62.9 million for this fiscal year, an increase of \$9.1 million.

The Healthy Child Initiative will provide \$13 million for services such as parent-child centres, prenatal and early childhood nutrition, all of which contribute to the well-being of women and their families.

In November, 1999, my colleagues, the Honourable Tim Sale, the Honourable Gord Mackintosh, and I announced \$424,000 in increased funding to community-based domestic violence prevention services and women's shelters. This year's budget includes a 2% increase to salaries for all positions in shelters, women's resource centres and second-stage housing programs and a 2% increase in vacation pay benefits.

Manitoba Justice has hired four new Crown attorneys, and will be hiring more specialized Justice staff, for example, probation officers and victim and witness support persons. The purpose is to ensure swifter responses.

The increase of \$75 in the property tax credit and the new lower income tax rates for low-income families will leave more money in the pockets of Manitobans and remove 15 000 low-income families from the tax rolls. These measures will be of particular value to women, especially those single-parent families headed by women and struggling with poverty.

As we move forward in our mandate, this government will continue to demonstrate our dedication to making Manitoba a thriving community in which all of us can live, work and raise our families.

I now have a few remarks to make about the work of the Manitoba Advisory Council. The Manitoba Women's Advisory Council is the other branch within the Status of Women. Its role is to be an arm's length advisory body to government on issues of concern to women and to their families. The council's work to enhance the status of Manitoba women is accomplished by promoting women's equal participation in society and facilitating change in economic, legal and social structures.

This has been a transitional year for the Manitoba Women's Advisory Council, as a new chairperson was appointed in January of this year. Kim Clare, presently the Director and Associate Professor of the Inner City Social Work Program, Winnipeg Education Centre, brings to council a wealth of knowledge in the educational and social science fields. Keith Louise Fulton, Associate Professor of English and Co-ordinator of Women's Studies at the University of Winnipeg, was appointed as a council member at the same time. Both of these women are educators, strong feminists and have made extensive contribution to the lives and rights of women.

Under new leadership, the Council is working on the development of a strategic plan and evaluating its future direction. Currently, the Advisory Council is comprised of 14 government-appointed members—pardon me, 15, we just appointed an additional person—who are representative of Manitoba's diverse population base and geographic distribution. Council's work focusses on improving the lives, welfare and status of women.

There are five major areas where council concentrates its efforts on behalf of women: first, council facilitates the building of effective and collaborative partnerships among women, community organizations and government departments; second, council assists in better educating the community on research and issues that affect the formation of public policy which has an impact on women and their families; third, council provides recommendations to government in support of the development of gender-sensitive policies and legislation; four, council serves as a clearing house to provincial communities by sharing information on events, resources, and programs of interest to women; five, council functions as a storefront operation that provides administrative support to not-for-profit women's organizations and acts as a referral base to women seeking help with problems.

Council has worked diligently over the past year to accomplish these work goals, and in doing so, to better the lives of women. Council facilitated the building of effective and collaborative partnerships among women, com-

munity groups and government by liaising with over 400 individuals and organizations, continuing to do outreach to all regions of the province, attending over 87 community events, workshops and conferences, participating on several multidisciplinary steering committees and public awareness campaigns, maintaining a mailing list of over 2000 individuals and organizations, sharing best practices and information on issues of common concern with the provincial and territorial coalition of women's advisory councils, and participating in national conferences to learn and gain a national perspective on issues. For example, council initiated and is hosting a meeting of the provincial and territorial women's advisory councils and other provincial counterparts working to enhance the status of women. This will be held on September 17 and 18, 2000, in conjunction with the Women's World March 2000. The purpose of the meeting is to share best practices and develop a national agenda on issues of concern to women.

* (16:10)

Council has also undertaken work to educate the public better on the issues and research developments affecting the formation of public policy. Last year, council organized Lunch and Learn, community informal presentations held monthly, which have drawn 20 to 60 participants per session. Topics include: Herb Gardening for Better Health; Walking for Better Health; Paying Yourself First—Essential Financial Tips; Girls as Victims in Perpetrators of Violence; The Domestic Violence and Stalking Prevention, Protection and Compensation and Consequential Amendments Acts; Midwifery; A Model of Female Leadership; Changes in Child Care, Gender Bias, and Employment Insurance.

Council has also offered community-based informational workshops. The second annual senior living well workshop, held over the lunch hour and featuring presentations on the proper use of medications, the art and role of storytelling and physical fitness as a benefit of folk dancing, is one example. It was attended by 40 participants.

Council provided information and made recommendations to government on a variety of

issues identified by the community as areas of concern. This was accomplished by giving voice to women's concerns and focussing on community liaison and outreach to women in Manitoba. As a result, the Council's priority issues are adolescent women, for example, issues like teen pregnancy, child care, the economic status of women. For example, the Council has been very interested in the GPI, and, of course, interested in poverty, violence against women, women's health and wellness.

Council's work has also focussed on the following: Aboriginal women's issues, Beyond Beijing, consultation with rural women, human rights, public policy, senior women's issues, sexism in the media, the sexual exploitation of children, single parenting, women and the justice system, women's education and training needs, women's health and wellness, women who experience multiple disadvantages.

Some of the services provided last year by the Council in its role as the provincial clearing house or informational resource to the community include the publication and distribution of a resource guide called *Parenting on Your Own: A Handbook for One Parent Families*, the provision of a weekly *Did You Know Facts*, and e-mail on information and community events of interest to women sent to approximately 200 community members, the provision of sponsorships to individuals of low income to attend informational sessions and community events of interest to women.

It also provided sponsors with nutritional breaks and tables at all events and provided informational resources. The Council provided expertise and consultation as well as participation on planning committees for community-driven events and a one-stop library resource with Internet accessible to the public.

Fifthly, the Council has worked to ensure maximum access for individual women and women's organizations. Council operated as a storefront operation by providing administrative support to women's not-for-profit organizations, acting as a referral base accessed by hundreds of women. The Council has expanded its work on these five major areas to include some new initiatives: the expansion of its consultative role

and the recognition of the contributions of women to the quality of life in Manitoba.

Council has undertaken a number of ground-breaking initiatives. For example, the annual sunrise breakfast to mark the anniversary date of the Montreal massacre attended, by the way, by over 150 people this year. In collaboration with government departments, community members and service providers and non-profit organizations, the Council has worked and continues to work on the following: a public awareness campaign on domestic violence that resulted in the development of TV spots, tracking the impact of health reform on women's health, a public awareness campaign on teen pregnancy that resulted in the development of a TV ad campaign, a child care regulatory review process, the planning of a symposium on the economic status of women in partnership with the Women's Directorate, public development on harassment and abuse in sports, a national children's agenda, policy development to address the sexual exploitation of children that resulted in the presentation of a report to the Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger), the development of a centre for excellence for children's well-being, the development of a Web site to interconnect agencies working with women's business owners, the plight of incarcerated women.

To recognize the contributions that Manitobans, particularly women, have made to their communities, the Council has undertaken to encourage and support the nomination of women for prestigious awards. It has also sponsored the events and a number of women to attend them. Council successfully nominated two winners, Youth for Christ and Penny Roy of St. Pierre-Jolys for the Manitoba Justice Crime Prevention Awards.

As far as future directions, the Council will continue to work with the community on issues of concern to women and their families by providing recommendations to government to support the development of gender-sensitive policies in legislation, public education on research and issues affecting women, informational sessions and events of interest to women, consultation expertise and participation on planning committees for community events of interest to women, support services to

individuals and non-profit women's organizations, information and referral services to women accessing Council's office for assistance, a weekly fax and e-mail list of information and upcoming events to women's organizations and interested community members and a one-stop library resource and Internet access to the public.

After another productive year, the Council looks forward to the challenge of improving the status of Manitoba women by advising government on issues of concern to women. Participating in the women's community, the Council will continue to play a key role in the advancement of women's equality.

In conclusion, I am proud of both the Women's Directorate and the Women's Advisory Council. They have worked effectively to bring information to Manitoba women and to inform government on women's issues of concern. I know both departments will continue to work towards the goal of ensuring equal opportunities and equal participation for all Manitoba women.

Mr. Chairperson: We thank the Minister responsible for the Status of Women for those comments. Does the official opposition critic, the Member for Seine River, have any opening comments?

Mrs. Louise Dacquay (Seine River): Yes, Mr. Chair. I just want to make a few general comments. I do not have a lengthy formal presentation to read. I was given to understand that we had very limited time in this section to be able to afford other departments an opportunity to pass their Estimates. I would prefer that we do move into some direct questioning.

I recognize that the Minister in her opening remarks identified the six main goals of the Manitoba Women's Directorate as outlined on page 3 of the Supplementary Information on the Status of Women. Although the wording was changed somewhat, I believe that the intent is still the same and comparable to the six main goals as outlined on page 3. I will be asking some questions relative to that. I also want to commend the Women's Directorate for the good work that they continue to do and look forward to learning more about the specific initiatives,

some of which the Minister outlined in her opening comments, some of which I have no information on at all, and look forward to receiving.

Mr. Chairperson: We will just move right into the Estimates of the Status of Women.

On page 136 of the Main Estimates book, Resolution 22.1 Status of Women (a) Manitoba Women's Advisory Council (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$177,300.

Will all the staff come forward, please. We will ask the Minister to introduce the staff.

Ms. McGifford: I would like to introduce the staff from the Women's Directorate. First of all, to my immediate left Theresa Harvey Pruden, who is the ADM for the Status of Women and also from the Women's Directorate. With her is Ruth Mitchell from the Women's Directorate. Seated beside Ruth is Sue Barnsley, who is the Executive Director of the Manitoba Women's Advisory Council. Seated beside Sue, in the blue, is Kim Clare, who is the chair of the Advisory Council.

* (16:20)

Mr. Chair, I wonder if at this time I might ask the critic if she wishes to go through the Estimates line by line or what process she wishes to follow, because it could affect staff as well as her and me.

Mrs. Dacquay: I do have some general questions. I could defer asking them, but I do want to do some line-by-line questioning of specifically some of the differences in amounts year over year. I wanted to ask some questions relative to, I guess, both the Advisory Council and the Women's Directorate, but I believe both are represented here. Is that correct?

Ms. McGifford: Yes, we have people both from the Directorate and from the Advisory Council. It was just merely a question of process to see if anything was more accommodating to the critic.

Mr. Chairperson: Is it the will of the Committee just to go line by line, or have a global discussion?

Mrs. Dacquay: I think the Minister has indicated there would be some latitude and flexibility allowable. So if I am asking a question in an inappropriate place, I would be prepared to move my question to a more appropriate line, but I think we can start initially with the lines. I am conscious of the time as well. My colleague has critic responsibilities in the Chamber, and she has some questions that she also wishes to ask. So I will start and ask a couple of questions, and then I will defer to the Member for Fort Garry (Mrs. Smith).

Ms. McGifford: The strategy outlined by the Member for Seine River is fine with us.

Mrs. Dacquay: I understand that your line by line is going to start with 22.1.(a).

Mr. Chairperson: That is correct. Yes.

Mrs. Dacquay: I will start with my questioning relative to ~~that~~ first line identified in the Budget, the Manitoba Women's Advisory Council. My question is ~~there~~ is a very slight increase year over year. I ~~assume~~ that is for statutory increases ~~there~~, and ~~could~~ I please have a breakdown of the number of employees and their respective positions?

Ms. McGifford: Well, I understand that there is an increase in the managerial staff and that is due to merit increases. The Executive Director is the managerial position and the professional technical position would be the policy analyst and then there are 1.75, as the Member can see, administrative support people in the Department. So there are 3.75 people in the Manitoba Women's Advisory Council. Remarkable considering the work they do.

Mrs. Dacquay: Yes, that indeed is commendable that 3.75 staff years can fulfil the responsibilities of this department.

Can the Minister please tell me, I know Sue is the Director, who has the policy analyst position, and who holds the administrative support position?

Ms. McGifford: Yes, of course I can answer that question. The policy analyst is Betty Nordrum who has recently changed her last

name to Betty Nordrum-Owen. The two administrative assistants are Norma Jean Ciglar, who is a SW-005, and Linda Saelens, who is an SW-004. As I indicated earlier, the Chairperson is Kim Clare who is with us today.

Mrs. Dacquay: I am wondering now if the Minister would be flexible enough to allow my colleague from Fort Garry to ask questions.

Ms. McGifford: Yes, Mr. Chairman, that would be fine with us.

Mrs. Joy Smith (Fort Garry): Madam Minister, I appreciate being able to intercede, and I am delighted to meet the ladies from this council. It is wonderful to see women so active in government affairs.

I did have a question for you, because on my recent conference to Prince Edward Island there were a couple of members from the opposite side of the House there and one member in particular made a couple of comments. I just wanted to see if it was a comment made by an individual who maybe spoke out of turn or maybe someone reflecting a policy statement. I doubted it was, but I wanted to bring it up because the comment was made. We were sitting around a table with people from all across Canada, Madam Minister, and one of the colleagues made the statement that quoted some Bible verses and then said that he was confused because men ruled over women and turned to my colleague and said women are taking over things if we let them. Now we just sort of looked at each other and I turned to him and I said I beg your pardon, and that was about the end of the conversation.

But seeing as this is the Status of Women, I was sitting there at a national conference where representation was made from a member from the opposite side of the House and these comments were made, and I felt as a woman, these comments were actually made on public record. I do not have a copy of it as of yet, but it will arrive. I thought that the Minister would be interested in the comment. What I need to clarify is: Is this a reflection of an ambience, a new policy, or was it just some careless words that were said? I was quite taken aback. I believe, as I am sure you do, that women and men are equal

and do equal jobs in the business world and certainly in the Government. I thought it was inappropriate for such comments to be made any place, let alone at a national conference. So people sort of looked at each other and raised eyebrows, but I thought it was inappropriate. Could the Minister please comment on this?

* (16:30)

Ms. McGifford: Mr. Chair, I will comment very briefly. I think I have been talking at some length about the work that the Women's Directorate do and the work that the Manitoba Women's Advisory Council do. I think I have been indicating that both departments are committed to the equal and full participation of women in our society, and I think I talked about commitment in the economic sphere, in the domestic sphere, in the social sphere.

I do want to assure the Member for Fort Garry that I have been personally active in the women's movement for too many years than I wish to remember because it just seems to go on and on. No matter how much work one does, there is always more work to do. So I do want to assure her of my ongoing support to the full and equal participation of women. It has been one of the goals in my life. It is one of the things that brought me to politics. It is one of the things that I continue to work on.

I do not know who this person is. I do not know the context, and I really do not want to comment on comments reported to have been made by one of my colleagues at another event. But I do respect the Member for Fort Garry's wanting to know of this government's commitment, and that, I can assure her, is, in fact, a reality.

Mrs. Smith: I thank the Minister very much for that comment. Seeing as the comments were put on public record, when I do get a copy of it, perhaps, Madam Minister, I could give you a copy of that. Perhaps sitting around the caucus table, the Minister could appropriately suggest that when we are at national conferences that women not be put down in this manner. I am sure the intent was not to do that. I would assume the intent was not to do that.

Madam Minister, I have spent many years as a junior high mathematics teacher in a world of men and having to do a very good job, and I am very supportive of men and women in the public field. I know the Minister would not think it appropriate to make comments about men in that area either. If you would be so kind, Mr. Chair, to advise the Minister that I could pass on the public comments to her. Seeing as we represented Manitoba—there were four of us who represented Manitoba—I think we do have to be appropriate in our remarks. I would like to inform the Minister that the four representatives from Manitoba, except for this one incident, I think represented Manitoba very much. In particular, I did not make an issue of it at the conference because I thought that it was not appropriate to do that, but there were a couple of comments made and eyebrows raised.

So, Mr. Chair, giving the Minister I think the actual comments when they come, perhaps the Minister could sit quietly with the Member and talk to the person involved and suggest very strongly that we are very careful about how we address women and women's issues at a public conference or in private. Thank you.

Ms. McGifford: I will certainly look forward to receiving the information from the Member for Fort Garry, but I invite her, as well, to address this individual. I think two voices are always better than one. I do not know who the individual is. I will, in due course, learn who that person is and read the remarks. I am sure the Member for Fort Garry might want to take the opportunity, as well, to address this member.

Perhaps we could leave it at that. However, if the Member wishes to continue the conversation, I would be happy to do that as well.

Mrs. Smith: I thank the Minister very much for those comments. I think her suggestion is very well advised. I think it would be a great idea for maybe the two of us to sit down with this individual. I have deliberately not named the individual, but I would like to sit down—and in places, I have to reiterate, where we represent Manitoba we want to stand united.

We may be sitting on separate sides of the House, but we are united in the fact that we are

all women and we have worked very hard to be where we are. I acknowledge the man's role is equally as important. I just want to make sure that it is clear on the record that we are all in this together.

Ms. McGifford: Well, just one final comment. I do not know whether my strategy will be to sit down. It might be to stand up and wag my finger, I do not know yet. I was suggesting that both of us may wish to behave as we see fit. But I thank, again, the Member for her being here this afternoon.

Mrs. Smith: My point was not how we do it but that we do it together in a respectful manner, and I thank the Minister for that.

Mrs. Dacquay: On page 3 under the Manitoba Women's Directorate, there are two very specific goals. One is No. 2: that facilitates opportunities that promote healthy lifestyle choices for youth, and No. 5: women's health issues and advocate for recognition of women's needs in public health policy.

To that end, as I believe the Minister is aware, particularly the women on the Opposition side of the House were very concerned that when the new Healthy Child Initiative was struck, that there were no women, female Cabinet ministers sitting at that table.

My question to the Minister is: Has the Minister raised this with the Premier (Mr. Doer) and the members of that committee to see if there could be some rethinking that perhaps in her role as Minister responsible for the Status of Women, the Committee could be expanded so that she could be included on that committee?

I feel strongly that women bring a different perspective to a number of issues. I am not questioning the capability or the credibility of any of the ministers at the table. I just, personally, and I know it is the feeling of the female members on the opposition side, feel that perhaps the women's and children's perspective would be better represented if indeed the Minister, in particular, were at the table, but if that is not possible, any female minister.

Ms. McGifford: Well, I thank the Member for her advice. I think that it is good advice. I think that I may well talk to the Premier (Mr. Doer) about it. It is something that has been on my agenda. I am sure that the Member understands that this is an initiatory year and that I have a very rigorous and demanding schedule. But it is something that has been at the back of my mind. I thank the Member for bringing it to the front.

Mrs. Dacquay: I thank the Minister for her response. I am encouraged by the fact I recognize that when you are new in a role, particularly a cabinet minister or Speaker or whatever, there is lots to learn in a very short period of time. Then when you are thrust immediately into session, there are additional responsibilities as well, and one never has enough hours in the day. But I am encouraged by the Minister's response and that she will assume some responsibility for broaching the issue. If she needs any assistance in being extremely persuasive, I am sure that the women on our side of the House would be more than prepared to offer support in any way we could.

Ms. McGifford: Yes, just briefly, I think that as the Member probably knows, the way cabinet committees work is that there are usually more positions than there are people. I have every confidence that the Premier will respond very positively to the idea that I should sit on that committee.

* (16:40)

Mrs. Dacquay: Relative now to the health issues, particularly health issues for women, when the Minister was in opposition, she periodically asked questions of the then minister of Health regarding cervical cancer screening and the lack of a program. Additionally in May I believe of last year, she introduced a Member's Resolution No. 10 in which she was requesting that provincial cervical cancer screening be put in place.

I have made a number of inquiries. I understand the program is not yet in place. My question to the Minister is: Has she met with the Minister of Health (Mr. Chomiak) to once again promote this very overdue and very urgent

program for the benefit of all women in Manitoba?

Ms. McGifford: Mr. Chair, just to respond first of all to the Member's inquiry as to whether I have met with the Minister of Health, I have met with the Minister of Health on several occasions and on several issues. My staff do assure me that the Cervical Cancer Screening Program was announced last fall and it is rolling out, which I take to mean that it is not completely up and running, but it is in the process. It is on its way to being so. So we see that as an important initiative. I am sure the Member agrees that cervical cancer screening is extremely important.

Mrs. Dacquay: Does the Minister have any time lines for the commencement of this program?

Ms. McGifford: Mr. Chair, staff advise me that the Cervical Cancer Screening Program has two components. One is the public education component. The public education component will encourage women to seek cervical cancer screening. The second one is a visitation program. By that it is visitation throughout the province in the sense that the travelling mammogram breast screening unit travelled throughout the province. Staff advise me that this will be up and running at the point of completion by the end of the calendar year.

I might add that I am sure if the Member wanted more exact information, the Minister of Health (Mr. Chomiak) would welcome a letter from her seeking, or, alternately, my staff would be quite willing to seek that information for the Member and send it to her when they have it, if she would like.

Mrs. Dacquay: I thank the Minister for that response. I particularly thank the staff for their indication of support and assistance. I plan to ask the Minister in Health Estimates. I have just not had an opportunity to get in there yet, but I will be asking the Minister of Health. I just did not want to go in there without first consulting with the Minister to see if indeed, because of her personal concerns and issues raised when she was in opposition, she had indeed pursued it. If I understand the response correctly, the public information campaign would precede the actual screening program. Can the Minister indicate

what type of information, not in terms of necessarily content, but just sort of generically, what the information will include and what the process for dissemination of that information will be?

Ms. McGifford: The two parts of the program, the public education component and the visitation component, will be rolled out concurrently and are being rolled out concurrently so that neither public education nor visitation is being lionised, but they are viewed as equal.

Some of the challenges, as I am sure the Member understands, in education and in public education are reaching those groups who need the education, or whose need is greatest. Aboriginal women are apparently quite at risk, presumably because they do not seek the tests as frequently as some other groups of women might. So the education component will strive to make itself available and accessible to these women.

One of the struggles, of course, is to find information that is appropriate, that is culturally sensitive. Efforts are being made in this regard. The information will be basically talking to women about the importance of having the cervical test and urging them to have the cervical test. I am told that the information will be by pamphlet and not likely to be, at this point anyway, video or television information.

Mrs. Dacquay: Is the Women's Directorate currently advocating for any other public health policies that there is some urgency for, that they feel have not been previously addressed?

Ms. McGifford: The Women's Directorate is currently working collaboratively with the Department of Health on a comprehensive health strategy for women. The goal of the work here is to ensure that the needs of women are taken into consideration by regional health authorities when they do their planning.

Mrs. Dacquay: Does the Minister or the Directorate have any concerns relative to the number of female physicians that are currently practising in Manitoba? Does she have a position relative to preference for more female

practitioners? I speak specifically now from some women I have spoken to who feel very intimidated by male practitioners, particularly when it comes to their hygienic health. I know that, at one point in time, and I do not know what the current statistics are, there was a push to encourage more female practitioners.

* (16:50)

Ms. McGifford: I share the concerns of the Member opposite. I know many women, sometimes for cultural reasons, sometimes for personal reasons, do prefer to see women physicians. I certainly understand that. In fact, I have a female physician myself, for what it is worth. I will just put that down. I am advised by the Directorate that 50 percent of the current graduates are women and that women are well represented among family physicians in the province, although we could always do with more women. Let us all encourage women to become doctors and to provide services for women.

That is perhaps an interesting initiative that we could pass on to the Advisory Council. I can see Kim is listening. I certainly concur that we need as many women as women need to provide the services that women want from women. Maybe I will just be quiet now.

Mrs. Dacquay: I appreciate the Minister's response. It is a very sensitive issue. Many women have very strong feelings relative to that. They ignore going for regular check-ups, even as a preventive measure.

Having had the luxury of finding a female practitioner, I feel that they feel much more comfortable with—quite often they have a family doctor, and they just pursue that family doctor for years on end. As they age, in particular, they should become more conscious of annual physicals, et cetera. They sometimes brush that aside because they do find it embarrassing and intimidating. I have a female practitioner, and I am much more diligent in pursuing my regular physicals than I was, I have to confess, when I had a male practitioner. I think it is just part and parcel of a woman's chemistry somehow.

I will move now to another issue that I want to address, and that is the safe environment for women and a violence-free environment. Recently the issue that was first raised relative to the video game classification. That legislation was passed only, as I recall, when the Minister was in opposition. She did not feel that the video game classification was defined clearly enough. It is now raising its ugly head. I understand that British Columbia has introduced legislation more recently to deal with this. It is becoming ever increasingly an issue in the community.

Many parents, even though they are well-intended and think they are very devoted to overseeing their children's activities, find that it does not take very long sometimes to click down and find some of this information or for a friend to give them a copy of this video that they use when Mom and Dad are not around. I know there are even more, in my opinion, graphic, violent, and pornographic videos available that seem to be able to be very readily accessible. Has the Minister been working with the Directorate and cabinet to deal with this issue?

Ms. McGifford: Well, first of all, we had better back up because, indeed, no legislation was passed on video game classification. I believe it was about a year ago that the issue was part and parcel of deliberations in the Legislature. I believe what happened was there was some legislation that would allow the classification of DVDs and other kind of media. I did, as the Member knows, speak several times about the importance, in my opinion, of classifying video games. I did considerable research on video games, and discovered that video games are classified, for example, in Australia, and video games are classified in Britain.

What the former minister of, and then it was called Culture, Heritage and Citizenship, advocated for was the industry-based classification and a public awareness scheme. In other words, she was working to bring to the attention of parents the information that is available on all video games whether they are rented. Now I think it is available on all. Most of them, the majority, whether they are rented or whether they are sold, there is a line that gives some advice on that video game. The former minister was working on a public awareness campaign so

that there were various displays in stores that rented videos, and I think more often than in stores that sold videos. I did a little research at the time. I cannot remember seeing any of the classifications. I think E, S, C or B, were the names of this industry-based rating system. I cannot remember seeing any information in any of the stores that sold videos, for example, K-Mart or whatever. I do not know the names of stores because my husband does all the shopping.

Leaving that aside, yes, I am very concerned about video game classification. I have not worked with the Directorate. The department that I am working with is the Film Classification Board that would ultimately be the body that would classify video games. I have asked staff to keep in close contact with colleagues in B.C. We are following very, very intently what happens in B.C., and we will certainly be examining that. So I have not worked with the Directorate on this issue. It is something that we could certainly get advice from the Directorate about, however, or from the Advisory Council. So thank you for bringing it up.

Mrs. Dacquay: Thank you to the Minister. I recognize that there is probably some difficulty around the technicalities of implementing a classification program, as I understand it, for videos. It is much easier with movies than it is with the actual video games.

You indicated that the former minister was working on an awareness program for parents. Was that directive being initiated through the Women's Directorate? What is the status of that, if that is the case?

Ms. McGifford: Mr. Chair, that was a timed initiative that was conducted through the Department of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship. I do not believe that the Women's Directorate or the Manitoba Advisory Council were ever brought into those deliberations.

The Member makes an interesting point and that is distinguishing between video games and videos, because, of course, video games are more easily, I suppose, transferable than videos, or people tend to buy video games more readily than they might buy videos. For example, a

person could go to an area where there is no classification at all, buy several video games and come back here. Now a person could do that with videos too, and therefore avoid the classification system that prevails in Manitoba. I have no facts to base this on, but I would think that an individual would be more likely to buy video games than videos.

One of the other complexities with video games is they can be downloaded from the Net. So, yes, there are technical difficulties in the classification of video games, but other jurisdictions are working on it. That is why I am very interested in seeing what evolves in B.C. and studying it very seriously in this province.

* (17:00)

Mrs. Dacquay: I believe when I was listening to her opening remarks, she identified some initiatives through the Women's Directorate, new programs I am not familiar with. I wonder if that information could be made available to me? I guess my question is, if they are specifically new programs that vary from previous programs, could the Minister identify what they are? There were a couple. It may just be that I do not have that specific information.

Ms. McGifford: Of course, we have mentioned Trade Up to Your Future, which is a trades program for women. The one that is brand-new, and I think I did indicate that in reading, was the Power Up computer and Internet training initiative, pardon me, the Invest in Yourself, the one I talked about as being financial intelligence, literacy, expertise. Literacy is probably the best word for young women since young women are notoriously unconcerned about their financial futures.

If the Member would like a copy of the materials, we would certainly be willing to send those to her.

Mrs. Dacquay: I would like to thank the Minister, and I would sincerely appreciate receiving that information.

Also, she identified a bursary program towards a two-year diploma program at the community college, and I wonder if I could have

that information. Also, I have a question with regard to that. Is that program age restricted, number one, is my first question? Secondly, is that information disseminated through the high schools in particular?

Ms. McGifford: No, it is not age restrictive. The material goes to Seniors 1 through 4. Also, it is available through the community colleges. There is a pamphlet, brochure, booklet which we will send to the Member when we send other materials.

Mrs. Dacquay: I also wanted to know if the mentorship program for women in business that the Minister spoke about has had changes made to it, or is it comparable to the former program?

Ms. McGifford: Mr. Chair, I was very pleased to announce the mentorship program for women entrepreneurs. It was one of the first things that I did as Minister for the Status of Women.

The announcement was made in October, which is Manitoba Women in Business Week. No, it has not changed since then. There may be changes. We are always in the process of learning and refining our ideas and ways of working. If the Member wishes to keep apprised of any changes, we will endeavour to keep her informed.

Mrs. Dacquay: My next question is, and I do not know if this practice is followed or not, but does the Women's Directorate make all of this information, particularly when there are new programs, readily available to all members of the Legislative Assembly?

Ms. McGifford: Certainly, Mr. Chair. These are public documents, and anybody who requests them of the Directorate is certainly welcome to those materials.

Mrs. Dacquay: I guess my question is more specific than that. I am aware of that, but, as we all know, MLAs are very busy. Some read the news releases and everything that comes across their desk more thoroughly than other members. I am just wondering, because I feel strongly about these initiatives and programs, if just as a matter of advice, that perhaps, or a matter of practice, the Directorate ensure that MLAs

receive any of this printed information. Some of us know who to call and how to get this information. Others, as I say, do not necessarily know that. I know periodically, at least in my instance, I do get calls from women wanting to know what program is available and how they access that program or what the criteria are for that program.

Ms. McGifford: I certainly have all the materials available in my constituency office, for example, because women drop by, and they are interested in this material and what is happening. I think, if MLAs really want the material for their constituency offices or for their own purposes, they will make the effort to find out about it and obtain it.

Having said that, the Directorate does advise me that it is not really a problem to make it available to MLAs. It is just that I have questions about sending over, I do not know how many different pamphlets we have, 57 times and them not being used. Why do we not ask the Member opposite to speak to her caucus? We can send her examples of everything that is available, and you might send a memo around to members of your caucus. Those who are interested could put in a request, and then we could fill it. That certainly is something that the Directorate would be prepared to do.

Mrs. Dacquay: Just for fear of the Minister misunderstanding my request, my request was specifically for new initiatives. I know some programs are ongoing, and I think most of us who have concerns or who have concerned constituents have made ourselves available of that. I have to confess that, when the Minister mentioned a couple of the most recent initiatives, I do not feel well versed on those initiatives. It was just in the form of a suggestion when some of this new material becomes available.

Ms. McGifford: Apparently, I am told that all new programs are described in *About Women*, which goes out twice a year. So members can be apprised through that, but we will be very pleased to send any copies of materials to do with any new initiatives to the Member so that she has them and knows about those programs. I think it is important that all Manitobans have the

opportunity to find out about the work we are doing.

* (17:10)

Mrs. Dacquay: Also, in the Minister's introductory statement, and I will read Hansard to get all of the specifics and details later, she mentioned a meeting or a conference in conjunction with the Women's Walk scheduled for September 17 and 18. Sorry, I did not note this. Is this a directive of the Women's Directorate or the Women's Advisory Council, or are they both involved, and can she give me a few more specifics?

Ms. McGifford: It is the initiative of the Manitoba Women's Advisory Council, but the Women's Directorate is peripherally involved. My understanding is that the walk is on the Sunday, which is September 16, and that the conference will take place two days after that, the 18th of September, so two days after but one day.

Mrs. Dacquay: Is there information available on that, in terms of program and program costs, et cetera?

Ms. McGifford: Mr. Chair, this is not a public meeting. It is a meeting of the coalition of advisory councils, provincial, territorial, and meeting in Winnipeg this time. There are no costs. It is being sponsored by the Manitoba Women's Advisory Council here in Winnipeg. It is not a public conference, although I am sure that I will receive information on what takes place, and I could certainly share it with the Member.

Mrs. Dacquay: I am prepared to move now to the actual 22.1. appropriation, so we need to pass 22.1.(a), I believe, and I have one question on 22.1.(b).

Mr. Chairperson: We will turn to page 136 of our Main Estimates book. Resolution 22.1. Status of Women (a) Manitoba Women's Advisory Council (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$177,300—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$119,400. Shall the line pass?

Mrs. Dacquay: Once again, I have the supplement only, not the full book. I just wonder if the Chairman can provide me some assistance. I am on page 8 in the Supplementary Information. My next line indicates 22.1.(b), which is the Manitoba Women's Directorate staffing line, 493.1. The first figure I agree with, and we passed it, but now my next line is different.

Mr. Chairperson: I would like to inform the Member that that is the next line under Women's Directorate. We will come to that. We first have to pass 22.1.(a)(2) Other Expenditures before we do that line.

22.1. Status of Women (a) Manitoba Women's Advisory Council (2) Other Expenditures \$119,400—pass.

We will move on to 22.1. (b) Women's Directorate (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$493,100. Shall the line pass?

Mrs. Dacquay: Could the Minister please explain why there is a slight decrease year over year in the total Salaries and Employee Benefits line?

Ms. McGifford: Mr. Chair, it is to do with the reversal of the two-day salary accrual and changes in employee benefits.

Mr. Chairperson: Line 22.1. (b) Women's Directorate (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$493,100—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$215,500. Shall the line pass?

Mrs. Dacquay: Under Other Operating there is a reasonable reduction. I wondered if the Minister could explain what constitutes that reduction year over year.

Ms. McGifford: There was \$59,000 in non-recurring expenditures for a women's conference that took place before the Pan Am Games last year, and also a 5% government-wide reduction of the average cost of the last four years of program promotion expenditures which was 1.7, for a total of 60.7.

Mr. Chairperson: Line 22.1. Status of Women (b) Women's Directorate (2) Other Expenditures \$215,500—pass; (3) Grants \$104,000—pass.

Resolution 22.1: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$1,109,300 for the Status of Women for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2001.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 22.2: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$27,900 for the Status of Women, Amortization of Capital Assets \$27,900 for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2001.

Resolution agreed to.

This concludes the—oh, question first?

Mrs. Dacquay: If I may, Mr. Chair, I would just like to put a brief statement on the record. I do not want it to be perceived in any way that I did not do justice to the Status of Women. I probably could have spent three days on some of these lines, but with due fairness to my colleagues and other departments that have not been given an overview by the respective critics, I just wanted to say that it is not that I (a) was not prepared or (b) was not willing. It is just, in fairness to my colleagues, I have been asked to be co-operative and not spend as much time as I dearly would have liked to have had on questions in both Status of Women and Advisory Council. I would like to thank the Minister for her co-operation and her responsiveness to some of the issues that I thought were priority issues, in my opinion, that I raised.

Mr. Chairperson: This concludes the Estimates for the Status of Women.

We will now continue with the Estimates of the Civil Service Commission.

Is it the will of the Committee to recess until the Minister and critic arrive? *[Agreed]* Thank you. We will recess for about five minutes.

The Committee recessed at 5:20 p.m.

The Committee resumed at 5:23 p.m.

CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION

Mr. Chairperson (Harry Schellenberg): Would the Committee of Supply please come to order. This section of the Committee of Supply will be considering the Estimates of the Department of the Civil Service Commission.

Does the Honourable Minister responsible for the Civil Service Commission have an opening statement?

Hon. Becky Barrett (Minister responsible for the Civil Service): Mr. Chair, I have a brief opening statement.

In introducing the Budget Estimates for the Civil Service Commission for 2000-2001, I draw attention to the Supplementary Estimates information which have been provided and contain a good deal of organizational program and financial information to assist the members of the Estimates review now before us.

Members will note that the responsibilities of the Civil Service Commission for 2000-2001 have changed from previous years. As a result of an organizational change, the Labour Relations Division has been transferred from the Civil Service Commission to the Department of Finance, and now reports to the Treasury Board Secretariat. This transfer gives the Minister of Finance full control and accountability over the significant financial impacts associated with the collective bargaining, pension and employee benefits administration, position classification and other compensation related issues, all of which are housed within the Labour Relations Division.

The Civil Service Commission retains its responsibilities under The Civil Service Act for oversight of the merit principle, the quasi-judicial appeal function, recruitment and staffing, employment equity, employee assistance, organization and staff development and support to the central Human Resource Management Information System.

As a result of the transfer of the Labour Relations Division, 22 full-time equivalents,

\$1,237,400 in salary and \$318,100 in operating expenses have been transferred to the Department of Finance.

This leaves the Civil Service Commission with a total of 70 full-time equivalents. However, it should be noted that 32 of these are utilized for hiring interns for government's various management internship initiatives. As a result, this direct staff complement available to resource the Civil Service Commission is 38 full-time equivalents.

The Commission's budget is comprised of \$1,924,300 for salaries and \$1,031,100 for operating, for a total of \$2,955,400, which represents the Estimates now before us.

With these very brief remarks, Mr. Chair, I would now be happy to respond to any questions on the Civil Service Commission Estimates, its programs and activities.

Mr. Chairperson: We thank the Minister responsible for the Civil Service Commission for those comments. Does the official opposition critic, the Member for Springfield, have any opening comments?

Mr. Ron Schuler (Springfield): I would like to thank the Minister for her comments, and we are prepared to proceed with the Estimates.

Mr. Chairperson: Would the Minister's staff like to join the Minister at the table here?

Ms. Barrett: Mr. Chair, I would like to introduce Bob Pollock, who is the Director of Human Resource Programs, and Mr. Ray Chase, who is the Director of Management Information and Support Services.

Mr. Chairperson: We will begin our Estimates of the Civil Service Commission on page 32 of the Main Estimates book.

Resolution 17.1. Civil Service Commission (a) Executive Office (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$174,900–pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$59,700–pass.

1.(b) Administrative Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$597,000–pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$287,500–pass.

1.(c) Human Resource Management Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$1,152,400–pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$650,400–pass; (3) Less: Recoverable from other appropriations (\$67,600)–pass; (d) Organization and Staff Development Agency.

Resolution 17.1: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty, a sum not exceeding \$2,854,300 for Civil Service Commission for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2001.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 17.2: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty, a sum not exceeding \$101,100 for Civil Service Commission, Amortization of Capital Assets, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2001.

Resolution agreed to.

This concludes the Estimates of the Civil Service Commission. What is the will of the Committee?

Some Honourable Members: Committee rise.

Mr. Chairperson: The will of the Committee is to rise. Agreed and so ordered.

HEALTH

* (15:00)

The Acting Chairperson (Ms. Marianne Cerilli): Will the Committee of Supply please come to order. This section of the Committee of Supply meeting in Room 255 will now resume consideration of the Estimates for the Department of Health.

Consideration of these Estimates left off on page 91 of the Estimates book, Resolution 21.4. Health Services Insurance Fund. The floor is now open for questions.

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): Madam Chairperson, I wonder if the Minister has any information to table that has been requested over the past several weeks. I know that we have been waiting almost from the beginning for certain items, and I wonder if the Minister is able to bring some of that information forward now.

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Health): Madam Chairperson, I am very pleased that we are providing more information, varied information, than was ever provided to critics during the Estimates process under Health. I am very happy that that process is taking place, and I hope the Member appreciates the fact that this information is more forthcoming than it has ever been in the Department of Health since the time that I became critic in 1993 until 1999. I can assure the Member, I am still waiting for information from the various years to be forwarded.

The Member requested whether or not CancerCare is still short of radiation therapists, and I am advised that of the 44.51 EFT radiation therapist positions, 7.9 FTEs are vacant. As well, there are vacancies of 7 medical physicists, and recruitment processes continue for filling vacancy positions in radiation therapists and medical therapists at CancerCare Manitoba.

This is an example of the type of information that was never given out by members opposite when we were in government. It was literally not provided, Madam Chairperson, to us when I was the opposition critic. We are providing that information notwithstanding I am aware of the fact that clearly a government that is prepared to admit to what the circumstances are is probably a more-informed and a better government. When I used to ask questions about waiting lists, for example, members opposite denied, denied there were waiting lists. They did not exist. They did not exist, and they were not provided.

We, obviously, during the election campaign, raised the issue of waiting lists, as we had for several years, something the members opposite had denied. Now that we have been providing information with respect to waiting lists, I know that the Member utilizes those

waiting lists to construe for whatever end she construes them for, and I am prepared for that.

But we are providing that information on the basis that we recognize what the issues are, and we have done more in that regard than any government previous, and we are happy to provide that information.

The Member requested the number and nature of FIPPA, that is freedom of information requests received since forming the Government. I have been advised the Department has received approximately 45 requests for access to information. A sample of those requests are: breakdown of submissions to Pharmacare for oxygen as well as total dollar claims for the last fiscal year, Urban Shared Services contract information, listing of Manitoba drug standards and therapeutic committee members positions held, as well as members curriculum vitae, actual amounts spent for the provision of all diagnostic laboratory procedures per capita, listing of surgical facilities in Manitoba providing endoscopic, ophthalmological or orthopedic procedures, which facilities receive fees from Health, copies of all contracts regarding a payment of facility fee, listing designated psychiatrists appointed by the Minister of Health and their location in the mental health system.

The Member requested information on the role of DPIN to hospital ERs, and information on the evaluation of DPIN pilot projects in hospital ER sites. December 1998 and January 1999, the DPIN system was implemented in five sites: St. Boniface, Seven Oaks in Winnipeg and hospitals in Beausejour, Brandon and Thompson.

The implementation of these model sites led to a province-wide implementation of the DPIN system. This implementation started during the summer of 1999. The system has currently been implemented in 81 hospitals across the province, in hospital emergency rooms and admitting areas. Three additional sites requiring satellite connections will be implemented later this summer. These locations include: Churchill, Leaf Rapids and Lynn Lake. These satellite location implementations conclude the project role of DPIN.

The one-time funding identifies for costs incurred to complete the rollout and the ongoing funding costs are to support the provincial data network required to support the DPIN system. The evaluation process included a process where facilitators received feedback from clinicians and staff through surveys and site visits. This information was documented and recapped for a joint working session, which was held in mid-June, with site representatives where the information was shared.

The model site experience confirmed that providing DPIN retail dispensing history to hospital emergency rooms and patient registration system appeared to be useful in health benefits. Some of the top benefits that were outlined to be achieved in the hospital were: the patient's problems appear to be understood more quickly, thereby providing the ability for faster and more appropriate treatment of patterns and medication use, misuse, overuse and some abuse were identified; prescribing unnecessary medications or providing inappropriate treatments were avoided; identification of conditions and disorders that the patient failed to provide, and it improved the quality of medical history.

The Member for Charleswood (Mrs. Driedger) asked about the nursing Recruitment and Retention Fund. Of the 39 submissions from nurse participants, how many of these were acted upon? Of the 39 submissions from nurse participants or advice provided, over 30 have been acted on to date. These include approval of funding for relocation assistance, development support and delivery of speciality programs, recruitment initiatives including advertising the tenets at nursing job fairs, nursing refresher programs, forgivable loans to students presently enrolled in nursing programs, LPN bridging, community education initiatives. The nursing Recruitment and Retention Fund committee continues to receive the remaining issues related to information data, career planning, positive image of nursing, quality of work life and child care.

The Member for Charleswood requested the salary scale of four midwives. The salary scale for midwives, I am advised for midwives south of the 53rd parallel: step 1 is \$55,000; step 2 is

\$57,000; step 3 is \$59,400; step 4 is \$61,650; step 5 is \$63,850. For midwives north of the 53rd parallel: step 1 is \$62,080; step 2 is \$64,420; step 3 is \$67,230; step 4 is \$69,830, step 5 is \$72,730.

The Member asked about physician availability in Erickson. The note says the Member for Minnedosa (Mr. Gilleshammer) asked. The Member for Russell (Mr. Derkach) is present. Did the Member for Russell ask about the physician availability in Erickson?

Mr. Leonard Derkach (Russell): Madam Chair, that question was asked by the Member for Minnedosa. I was not present at the time he asked it.

Mr. Chomiak: Madam Chairperson, I wonder if you could convey or I will try to convey to the Member for Minnedosa that I will review this matter with him with respect to this particular item.

Mr. Derkach: Madam Chair, if the Member has it, if the Member would also provide it for my benefit as well, perhaps at our next sitting, because that is the community that I represent now.

* (15:10)

Mr. Chomiak: On July 13, the Member for Charleswood (Mrs. Driedger) requested that the grants and awards made by the Manitoba Health Research Council be tabled. I am tabling a copy of the 1998-99 Annual Report prepared by the Manitoba Health Research Council. It was tabled in the Legislature December 13, 1999, and the grants and the awards are outlined within that document. I have copies for tabling.

To continue, the Member for Emerson (Mr. Jack Penner) requested information on what plans there are for a greater degree of permanency for the physicians and nursing services in Sprague. I am advised that with the completion of one full year of operation of the East Borderland Primary Health Care Centre in Sprague, the needs of the area determine that physician services have been established and remain as: Provision of one day of service per week on an itinerant basis from Vita to the

primary health care centre in Sprague. This is a permanent expectation based on the physician's contract with the South Eastman Regional Health Authority.

The current community health nurse component, consisting of two nurses, each in a .70 EFT position, 1.5 total, who provide community health and primary care nursing services in the Community of Sprague, as well as the R.M. of Piney, will continue.

The Member for Charleswood also requested information on the status of the preoperative nursing course. The Nurses Recruitment and Retention Fund allocated funding to the RHA Surgery Program to support 14 students throughout the Preoperative Nursing Program, which ran from October 1999 to March 2000. All of the 14 students enrolled completed the program, I am advised, in March 2000. Approval has also been given to utilize funding to run a second Preoperative Nursing Program in September 2000. Ten students have been accepted into this intake. The Fund has also allocated funding to the Brandon Regional Health Authority to support eight students throughout the preoperative nursing program. Four students completed the program, which ran from October 1999 until March 2000. The remaining four students will begin the program in September 2000.

Ms. Bonnie Korzeniowski, Chairperson, in the Chair

Madam Chairperson, the Member for Charleswood requested her list of board members for the Manitoba Centre for Health Policy and Evaluation. The chair of the Health Policy and Evaluation is Dr. Brian Postl. The ex officio members are Noralou Roos, Charlyn Black, co-directors; the Manitoba Centre for Health Policy and Evaluation, Ron Hikel, the Acting Deputy Minister of Health; Les Roos, Director of the Manitoba Health Data Base, Manitoba Centre for Health Policy and Evaluation; Kue Young, Head of the Department of Community Health Sciences, Faculty of Medicine, University of Manitoba; Don Potter, representative from Treasury Board; and Brian Hennen, Dean of the Faculty of Medicine, University of Manitoba.

The appointed members include Tom Carson, Deputy Minister of Manitoba Culture, Heritage and Tourism; Sue Hicks, Associate Deputy Minister, External Programs/Operations, Manitoba Health; Arthur Mauro, Counsel for Aikins, MacAulay & Thorvaldson and Chancellor of University of Manitoba; Calvin Tant, CEO of Burntwood Regional Health Authority; Rick Dedi, Assistant Deputy Minister, Insured Benefits, Pharmacare and Labour Market Services, Manitoba Health; Ben Levin, Deputy Minister of Education, Manitoba Education and Training; Daniel Friedman, Bureau of Health Statistics, Massachusetts Department of Public Health, Boston, Massachusetts; Gary Glavin, Associate Vice President of Research, University of Manitoba; Alan Katz, Assistant Professor, Family Medicine, University of Manitoba; John Miller, Vice President, Canadian Institute for Health Information; J. Fraser Mustard, President of The Founders' Network, Toronto; John Wade, Professor, Department of Anesthesia and Community Health Services, University of Manitoba.

I should point that the immediate six individuals that I referenced were appointees from the University of Manitoba, Madam Chairperson.

The Member asked for contract templates with respect to the Department. Again, this type of information has not been provided in the past. I am providing the alternate funding model template for primary health care as well as the template for midwives. The draft sample is draft. I should point out that the template for midwives is draft and reflects continued work in progress, as we work on that. I have copies to provide for the Member.

Madam Chairperson: Are you tabling this?

Mr. Chomiak: Yes, I am tabling copies of those particular items, Madam Chairperson.

The Member requested information with respect to pilot projects being undertaken by primary health care. Primary health care is engaged in two pilot projects, namely, the Community Nurse Resource Centres and the

Centre de Santé St. Boniface. The Community Resource Centres focus on primary nursing care, health promotion and disease prevention, community development and outreach, and research that is supporting evidence-based practice for centres currently operating or in the planning stages with varying staff patterns. They are the St. Vital CNRC in Winnipeg consisting of primary care nurses, dietitian and family counsellor; the Burntwood CNRC in Thompson comprised of primary care nurses, Aboriginal liaison worker, recreation worker, dietitian and family counsellor; the Parkland CNRC in Ethelbert, Pine River, primary care nurse, itinerant staff and contractual physician for one day every two weeks; the NOR-MAN CNRC at The Pas and Flin Flon, similar staffing mix as Burntwood.

The later two facilities are in their developmental stages while the St. Vital CNRC has been operational for three years. The Centre de Santé St. Boniface opened July 1999 and focussed on the PHC needs of the Francophone population within Winnipeg and the English-speaking population within the St. Boniface catchment area. For its three-year pilot stage this facility has been situated within the St. Boniface Hospital. The staffing mix consists of primary care physicians, primary care nurses, a social worker, dietitian, community outreach worker and a mental health worker. The Centre is governed by a community board consisting of the founding organizations of the Grey Nuns of Manitoba, Collège universitaire de Saint-Boniface, the Société franco-manitobaine. An executive director administers the program.

The Member for Pembina (Mr. Dyck) requested information about the empty facilities with respect to the merged facilities and what dollars if any, would be available. I am advised the community can apply to the Department to use existing hospital buildings for some other purposes, but I note that the community would be responsible for capital and operating costs. Should the community sell the buildings, income from the sale would be used to reduce the capital debt of the project. A negotiated cost of staff training could be established with the Department as a start-up cost in the first year of an operating budget.

The Member asked about the 4% decrease in the Healthy Communities Development appropriation, Madam Chairperson. The transfer of the palliative care program to the Community and Mental Health Services comprehensive program and the Long Term Care Services program; and the remote fetal alcohol program to the Acute Care Services; and the ongoing costs of the tobacco reduction enforcement to the Public Health branch reflects the ongoing commitment to those programs. In fact, what happened was those programs moved from the Healthy Communities to actual program line items of the Department of Health, and the \$8.3 million was reduced to \$8 million, based on previous spending patterns.

The Member also asked how many sonographers we are short. I am advised there are five positions which are a mix of full time, part time and temporary. The ultrasound class presently in training have seven graduates in August 2000. The Department of Health is providing additional funding to increase the annual volume of ultrasounds tests this year. The Member should be aware that urgent cases are always prioritized and seen immediately, which has always been the practice of the Department of Health.

At this point, Madam Chairperson, that concludes my summary of information requests.

Mrs. Driedger: Could the Minister indicate for me when he will be forwarding information on the number of ICU beds closed in the city and the number of hip and knee surgeries that are on waiting lists? I believe the Minister had indicated he was going to provide for me a breakdown of the numbers of hips and knees.

Mr. Chomiak: That information will be provided soon.

Mrs. Driedger: The Minister also yesterday indicated that he was going to provide the names of people who lost their jobs with the merger of the WCA and the WHA and the positions that they had held. Does the Minister have that prepared for today?

Mr. Chomiak: Madam Chairperson, I indicated yesterday that I would provide the Member with

copies of the most recent, prior-to-merger staffing executive outlines from those particular organizations, and I will provide that.

Mrs. Driedger: In some of the information that the Minister just tabled, in particular, talking about the 39 initiatives that came forward from grass-roots nurses to the Recruitment and Retention Fund committee, the items that he had listed off, I thought, were all items initiated by the Committee itself or by the nursing task force that was looking at recruitment and retention. I did not hear in any of those 30 initiatives anything that had not been talked about by the committees. They did not sound very much like the grass-roots initiatives. I wonder if the Minister could elaborate on that a bit.

Mr. Chomiak: I provided the Member with a list of information that was provided to me by the Nurses Recruitment and Retention committee and read verbatim what information they provided. It struck me that there was similarity between what the Member refers to as "grass-roots" suggestions and those that are actually implemented by the Committee. That suggests to me that perhaps there was a convergence of viewpoints with respect to what should be offered and what should not be offered.

In point of fact, Madam Chairperson, since the Committee was comprised exclusively of people that had experience in nursing, one should not be surprised by that particular influence.

I also should note, in the latter part of my answer, I referred to several other issues that were still being considered and still being reviewed. I think it is also noteworthy that some of the initiatives that we embarked on with respect to our nurses' plan are similar to the initiatives that have been recommended.

* (15:20)

Now, Madam Chairperson, that does suggest that there is significant convergence and consensus of opinion with respect to what we have to do with nurses and what nurses have told us to do and a variety of pieces of advice. As I pointed out to the Member on numerous

occasions, the two most prevalent issues that came to my attention and were brought to my attention by nurses were (a) to bring back the diploma nursing program, which we have done, and (b) to provide us with funding in our communities for re-education and retraining, which are both initiatives that we implemented and put in place.

With respect to the convergence of those viewpoints, I cannot comment on it, other than that was the information that was provided to me. I did note the similarity between many of the initiatives that were provided from, as the Member refers to it, grass roots versus a lot of issues that are undertaken as well as a number of ongoing issues that did not relate to issues that were undertaken. But I am happy to report that, in our nursing recruitment retention plan, our five-point plan that we announced, it was significant insofar as a number of initiatives that came to us from nurses that had been suggested by nurses for some time had been put in place.

Mrs. Driedger: I wonder if the Minister could indicate for me when he will have available the number of ICU beds closed. That one seems to be a very straightforward answer that should not be that hard. I know I asked that question weeks ago when Estimates first started. I wonder if the Minister could tell me when he is bringing that information forward.

Mr. Chomiak: As I said to the Member opposite, a lot sooner than the number of beds and information that was provided to me during the seven years in which I was the opposition critic and that information will be provided.

Mrs. Driedger: Looking at the information on the salary scale for midwives, it seems quite different from what I would think was in the MNU contract and does not seem to be consistent with what nurses within the MNU contract are making. Also, the number of levels seems to be less. I thought that in the nursing contract there might have been seven levels. I see in the midwives there are only five levels, so this is certainly changing the way in which, in this instance, midwives are being paid.

Could the Minister tell me what the salary scale for a bedside nurse might be in comparison to that salary scale just provided on midwives?

Mr. Chomiak: I do not have that information in front of me.

Mrs. Driedger: In fact, it probably would not be appropriate to compare it to bedside nurses because likely the midwives would be equated to a different level of nursing. Would the Minister be prepared to provide for me the salary scale of a level 4 nurse?

Mr. Chomiak: I will endeavour to seek out that information for the Member for Charleswood.

Mrs. Driedger: The Minister referenced today the new diploma program. I wonder if he could indicate for me, because I would assume that we are six weeks away from a start date of the new program: Has that program been approved by MARN?

Mr. Chomiak: I think I answered that question for the Member several Estimates ago.

Mrs. Driedger: I wonder if the Minister could repeat it. I believe he indicated, if I recall correctly, that COPSE had approved it and he felt confident that MARN would approve it. My question specifically now is: Has MARN approved it, knowing that at their AGM in June there was a resolution passed where MARN reaffirmed their position as a BN entry to practice. If we are looking at a profession that does regulate itself, this seems to have put MARN between a rock and a hard place in some instances. I wonder if the Minister could tell me whether that program has been approved.

Mr. Chomiak: I wonder if the Member might outline to me what her position is with respect to the diploma program because I think it will be helpful to all members of the Committee.

Mrs. Driedger: I do not think it is my position here. I am the one, I understand—according to how the rules work, the Opposition asks the questions and the Government answers. I think it would be prudent for this minister, particularly around this issue which has certainly created some serious division within the nursing profession—I believe this minister has a responsibility not just to me but to the whole profession and to patients in Manitoba to be able to respond to this question.

Mr. Chomiak: I, again, take it from the Member's response and clearly from the evidence that we put forward during previous Estimates that the Member is not in favour of the diploma program. I can accept that. I mean, that is the Member's position. If that is the position the Member wishes to take and be forthcoming with, that is fine. That is the Member's right.

I think that the move to the diploma program is something that is in the interests of the patients of Manitoba. To suggest that this is creating divisions within the nursing profession, as if there were no divisions or no problems in the nursing profession when the members opposite slashed and destroyed the diploma program. When members opposite, when they were in government, attempted to eliminate completely, attempted to eliminate completely the LPNs in this province. I certainly take exception to the suggestion that a return to the diploma program—and I have to indicate that the 80 percent or plus of diploma nurses who are bedside nurses or are working nurses in Manitoba who were diploma-trained I think take a lot of exception to the member's opposition to the diploma program and the continued attacks on the diploma program. I do not think it serves nursing well or the nursing profession well to attempt to do that.

I do want to indicate to the Member for Charleswood (Mrs. Driedger) that divisions in the nursing program were not created by this government bringing back a diploma program. There were major and serious difficulties and concerns that were expressed for long periods of time, particularly during the decade of the '90s when we saw a significant downsizing of nursing programs.

I know the Member suggests that it was the unions that laid off the nurses. I do not want to go down that road, but I just want to suggest to the Member opposite that there were problems in the nursing profession that we had to come and deal with. One of our responses, and our major response, was the Nurses Recruitment and Retention plan that we put in place that as its centrepiece had several initiatives, the first of which was, of course, the return to the diploma program, as well as provision of \$3 million for education, training and upgrading throughout the

regions, something nurses have been asking for for some time, as well as a group of nurses who are reviewing working conditions to provide us with advice in terms of working conditions and assistance to nurses and to patients throughout the program.

So the suggestion by the Member for Charleswood and the Conservative Party that the diploma program is causing dissension, that it is the reason for the difficulties with nurses I think is a non-recognition of the history, is ignoring the history of the last decade in Manitoba and ignores some of the actions and some of the decisions taken by the previous administration.

Now, I appreciate the Member opposite I do not think was elected when the previous government cut out the diploma nursing program in Manitoba. I do not think the Member opposite was a member of the government when the government was attempting to eliminate the LPN program. But we fought long and hard with respect to the LPN program, and it was only in the last year or two before the Government was defeated at the polls that there was a awakening, and we supported it, that came on the part of the government that, in fact, the LPN program was valuable and there was a re-acknowledgement of the LPN program. We welcomed that, Madam Chairperson.

With respect to the diploma program, it was clearly at the top of the agenda for a variety of most of the nurses we talked to. It was clearly something that was asked for and indicated and was something that we did as a government in response to the needs of not just nurses but of patients in Manitoba. The emphasis should be on patients and patient care. The fact is that we do not have enough professionals, and it is not just nurses. We do not have enough professionals across the board.

* (15:30)

When I stood up in the Legislature three years ago and asked the Government to put in place a nursing plan, I wish they would have listened because by now we would have had additional nurses and additional staff to fund the positions and the programs that we require to deliver proper patient care. Now, when we offer

a program that sees the prospect of having additional nurses and other professionals in the next several years, members opposite cry foul and do what they can to criticize and to not accept the implementation of that program. So, to suggest that this particular diploma program is the factor—it was a difficult situation—vis-à-vis nurses' morale I think is a misreading of the facts. That is something we have debated and we have discussed, and I do not expect to change the mind of the Member opposite.

I know that she and her party are pretty resolved in their position, but I also would suggest that she recognize the diploma program was something that was asked for by nurses and that has been a response to that need. We are continuing to meet that response and to deal with what is the No. 1 issue, the requirement for patient care in Manitoba.

With respect to the issue of MARN as I understand it, MARN will be reviewing the program and has a process underway.

Mrs. Driedger: That is certainly the most evasive, convoluted answer I think I have heard so far in Estimates to a very, very direct question.

I would like to indicate to the Minister that I was part of the nursing history in this province in the last 10 years. In fact, the patient is always the centre of what I did as a nurse and, in fact, continues to be in any of my thinking, in any of my decision making, in my questions. I very much grew up with looking at the concentric circles, and the patient was always in the centre.

I worked with all of these nurses for the last many, many years. I would like to indicate to the Minister, it was not just in the '90s that we had a tough time in nursing. In fact, the '80s were absolutely horrendous, where we would be standing in the hallways as nurses crying because of the health care situation in this province.

The Minister continues to put on the record over and over and over that I and my party are in opposition to the diploma program when, in fact, he does not know where I stand. Nor does he know where our party stands, because our

questions as an opposition are for accountability of his decisions. In asking my questions it does not mean I approve of the diploma program or disapprove of the diploma program.

This minister, I think, is in a position where he is quite unsure about this particular decision, and he is looking for me to give him that little bit of—what would the word be?

An Honourable Member: Boost.

Mrs. Driedger: Boost, the Minister says. I think he wants some reassurances from me that he did the right thing. At this point in time, I think my job is more to be accountable in asking the question, in asking the many questions actually that arise from this.

I do not believe I have to be the one that sits here and tells the Minister that he did a good job or he did not do a good job. I am here to ask objective questions in the whole area around the whole nursing recruitment and retention strategy. I know that this minister has over and over again put on the record that we are opposed to it when, in fact, he has never heard a word from us in that particular area, but he certainly likes to misconstrue every question that I ask on the subject.

What I do know from conversation with a lot of nurses—Dr. Helen Glass being foremost in this and Dr. Helen Glass certainly being recognized internationally as a nurse who has really given her career to nursing—is that there has been by this government an interference in the self-regulatory ability of the profession. At the last meeting, a resolution came forward and the profession itself supported it, and the resolution was a reinstatement of their belief in the BN as the entry to practice.

The Minister also goes on to talk about some other initiatives of his government, like \$3 million to upgrade nurses, give them the ability to do that. I think that is good. If he is looking for some reassurances for some of the things he did and a pat on the back, I will give him that. I think the \$3 million was good. That is why we gave in the last contract \$200 a nurse for upgrading and ability to attend continuing education courses.

I think the setting up of a nursing advisory group to advise on the nursing situations and conditions within health care is a good move too. I will pat him on the back for that. I think that is a proactive move to get grass-roots opinions, because I am a strong believer in asking grass roots what their opinions are. I am also a strong believer in listening carefully to what the grass roots have to say, and right now there is some real division amongst the grass roots in terms of some of the decisions that this minister has made.

In fact, all I am looking for in this particular question is just a clear answer from the Minister, because we are something like five weeks away from this program to start up. I think it is a very fair question for all of those students who are expecting to go into this program, who basically have made the decision that that was what they wanted. They have not applied to anything else, and it may be too late for them to apply to anything else.

I think it is a very fair question, and I think the Minister should be very straightforward in his answer in terms of the kind of feedback he is getting from MARN, and I think it is almost like a yes or no response from the Minister that would be the most forthright answer that he could give to me. It would be a yes or no. Has MARN approved the diploma program?

Mr. Chomiak: Madam Chairperson, I do not want to be difficult, but if the Member would stop putting inaccurate information in the context of her question, it would be far easier to give yes or no answers.

The Member suggested in her wisdom and suggested in her initial question that the division in the nurses' ranks is a result of the diploma program, and I was pointing out to the Member something she may not have known, that when the previous government cancelled the diploma program, that caused problems. When the previous government tried to cancel completely the LPN program, that caused problems. When the previous government laid off nurses and said there was no future for many nurses in Manitoba, that caused problems.

Some recognition, even some mea culpa might help in terms of framing the question rather than taking the position that everything was fine until we came to office, and all of a sudden, there was a nursing shortage. I mean, Madam Chairperson, let us talk about reality here. The members opposite never admitted there was any problem, and that was a problem when we were in opposition because if you do not admit there is a problem, you cannot do anything about it. That is one of the reasons why things were not done about it.

So if the Member wishes to ask questions for a yes or no, the Member ought to in her preamble provide I think a perspective that is either non-controversial or provide accurate information that does not require me to correct the record with respect to items brought forward by the Member for Charleswood (Mrs. Driedger).

So, Madam Chairperson, as I said in my previous response, MARN will be reviewing the program and the process is underway. I will repeat it again. I cannot say yes or no to it. MARN will be reviewing the program and the process is underway.

* (15:40)

Mrs. Driedger: Does the Minister not have some concern about this, considering we are only five weeks away from the start of a school year, in terms of a curriculum that has to be developed, students who are waiting, and we do not know why, you know, there is no confirmation from MARN or no decision by MARN? Does the Minister not have some concern about this?

Mr. Chomiak: I am confident that the program will be up, running and functioning when the students arrive at the Red River community college in September.

Mrs. Driedger: On the same line of nursing students, has the Minister received any word back from the University of Manitoba? I believe he had indicated to me earlier in Estimates that he was waiting for some word back from them in terms of a waiting list of people who might want to get into the nursing profession and whether or

not he might give some thought to expanding the spaces in the university program to deal with the waiting list there.

Mr. Chomiak: I am happy to note there have been, particularly in the last few months, some considerable efforts to meet goals and targets with respect to the University of Manitoba. We are very supportive and are very aware of the circumstances and would be very supportive of additional and required needs of spaces should they be required.

Mrs. Driedger: Would the Minister be prepared tomorrow or later today to even phone the university and give them permission for opening seats? I have heard from a student, and I am actually waiting for more information. She has got all of her prerequisites. She wants to be a nurse. She has got that interest right now. Her mother phones us to indicate that she is not able to get into the program because it is full. We are going to lose this student nurse from the province.

I wonder if the Minister could indicate whether or not he is prepared to look at the situation a little bit closer so that we are not losing keen students who want to be nurses when, in fact, we are sitting right now with a vacancy in this province of over 1100 nurses.

Mr. Chomiak: As I have indicated, I am prepared to look at that, which is why I cannot understand why members opposite oppose our diploma program. There were also 1500 people who applied for the diploma nurse's program. Members opposite will not be supportive of that. That is their right. I do not understand this line of questioning. I have already said we are supportive and we are willing. I would sure like to see that information from the Member with respect to that.

Mrs. Driedger: Is the Minister prepared to expand the number of students going into the next LPN program in the province?

Mr. Chomiak: As the Member knows, we have taken a number of initiatives, and I would be curious to see what the Member's position is with respect to our urging health authorities and regions to expand the role of LPNs within the

acute care setting, to expand the roles and functions of LPNs, which is something we have taken on as a task. The Member might be aware that we have funded an additional 25 nurses seats this year within the Interlake.

Mrs. Driedger: Is the Minister prepared to fund any more seats for LPNs throughout the province? As I have indicated to the Minister in the past, I certainly do see a role for LPNs and I think he will find that our government had doubled the enrollment in the last year. I was a strong supporter of that, and I am wondering if the Minister would indicate now, seeing as we are sitting with a vacancy rate of over 1100 nurses in the province, now is the time to act. Is the Minister prepared to move on increasing the spaces in the LPN program very soon to address some of these shortages?

Mr. Chomiak: Do I take it from the Member's question, I want to be clear, is the Member, given the numbers that she is putting out, recommending that we increase the number of spaces in the diploma program, in the BN program, in the LPN program in the RPN program? Is that what the Member is asking me?

Mrs. Driedger: In this particular question it was the LPN program.

Mr. Chomiak: Madam Chairperson, we are doing every effort we can to increase and continue the expansion in all of the programs where we can.

Mrs. Driedger: Being a fairly new MLA to government, just over two years, but having attended Estimates over that period of time, one thing I did note was that at every Estimates I did attend over the two years, whether I was chairing it or sitting at the table listening to comments, the Deputy Minister was at every session of Estimates, attended every day.

This Minister has indicated to me that his Acting Deputy Minister is carrying out all of the regular duties of a deputy minister and yet in this set of Health Estimates, I have only see him here for probably half an hour. In all of the other Estimates I was ever at, the Deputy Minister was always at every one of them, and there to provide the Minister advice, support, answers. If

this acting deputy minister is carrying out his full duties as a deputy minister, I wonder if the Minister could tell me why he is not in attendance at these Estimates.

Mr. Chomiak: Madam Chairperson, in my 10 years of attending Estimates, particularly the majority of time in the last few years at the Department of Health, the Deputy Minister did not attend the course of the Estimates, and for most of those periods of time, from my experience—and I do not recall actually questioning that, because I determined there was some very high priority functioning that goes on in the Department of Health; it must be administered and dealt with on a high priority basis.

I was also very cautious when I was the critic as I did not like to utilize staff even when I was critic. I was always very conscious of the staff requirements, and I would let the Minister know in advance where I was going and what I was doing so that staff would not have to be there, would not have to wait around, because I knew that in the middle of all of this and all of this stuff that we do in Estimates, the civil servants are caught somewhat in the middle, having to be on stand-by, having to be at this table for long, long, long periods of time and I wanted to utilize those staff, as critic. If one was to go back and question the previous ministers under which I had Estimates in Health and that was Stefanson, McCrae, Praznik and Orchard, you will find that, in fact, was the course of action that I followed.

I also, with respect to the individuals that were brought forward by the ministers, I did not when I was critic, as I recall, I could be wrong, but as I recall I did not question who was at the table and when they were at the table and in the last several years, when the Deputy Minister was not there for the vast majority of time, I did not query that and that certainly was not my experience in Estimates.

* (15:50)

Mrs. Driedger: Certainly I appreciate the huge amount of work by everybody involved in the Health Department, Deputy Minister on down. My question certainly came from my two years

in experience. I thought the Deputy Minister from Health was in attendance at most sessions last year. I could be wrong, as the Minister has pointed out that I might be. However, having chaired some of those meetings, I know he was not there all the time, and I certainly do not expect it all the time because I realize the complexities and the challenges of working within the Health Department. It certainly is the most challenging of all departments in government. I am curious though, and my comment rose from the fact that he has only been here for half an hour. I do believe the Deputy Minister last year was there much more than just half an hour, especially if he was fulfilling the total role of a deputy minister.

My question was just based on my observations in the last while. I do not doubt, and I am not saying that people are not working hard, because I do not doubt that for a minute. I am quite aware of how hard civil servants work and the many challenges they face, particularly in the area of health. For the most part, I have absolutely nothing but admiration for the work that they do.

The Minister had indicated earlier in one of the documents he tabled for information that we have five vacancies in sonographers with seven grads graduating in August. I believe it is probably in just under three weeks that they are graduating. I have been provided some information on that particular area. I wonder if the Minister could verify the information for me.

I understood that there were eight people graduating from that particular program and that most of them were leaving the province because they had not been offered a job here in Manitoba, when, in fact, the feeling was that people should have had their act together four months ago and knowingly had vacancies. Now the Minister tells me five vacancies. Why would somebody not have offered anybody in that area a job?

Again this is a question for verification of information I have been given. I am not assuming that it is correct or incorrect. I wonder if the Minister could verify for me why, according to the information I have, these people were not offered jobs, particularly at least four

months ago, so that we could have addressed this shortage of sonographers.

Mr. Chomiak: As I understand, if memory serves me correctly, historically, there has not been a good uptake of sonographers in Manitoba in terms of the graduating class. I will take that question under advisement and attempt to verify or not the information that has been brought forward by the Member.

Mrs. Driedger: Just to provide the Minister with a little bit more information on that, the source of my information is very reliable and also very concerned that here we have a situation where the Minister has indicated we have a shortage. He has also indicated in previous statements that we need to address the training program. It would seem to me that we have an adequate training program, but if the situation is not being managed proactively, and this particular person felt that these people should have been offered a job four months ago, he questioned why that did not happen. Now we could be in a situation where we are losing most of these students because they have committed, one to a job in Moose Jaw, and in other places, and a number of them leaving the province.

I do appreciate the fact the Minister is looking into it. I think some pretty fast action might help to keep a few of them here who might not have jobs and are hoping and waiting that there might be a job offer here in Manitoba.

Mr. Chomiak: As I indicated to the Member previously, I will take that matter under advisement and provide a response to the Member.

Mrs. Driedger: I would like now to defer some questions to the Member for Steinbach, who has some specific issues related to his area.

Mr. Jim Penner (Steinbach): I was speaking at the Estimates on July 11 in regard to several questions, some of which the Minister indicated he would take under advisement. So I would like to come back and just check on a few of these things to see where we stand and whether we have made any progress.

I asked the Minister a question regarding the need for a primary care centre in the town of Niverville. At the time we discussed it, there were probably 1900 residents of the community, a fairly dense surrounding community, and at the present time there is no hospital, no doctor's office, and no personal care home. I understand this was in the planning stage at one time. I understand from the residents that they would really, really like to be able to, particularly when it comes to a personal care home, stay in their community with their family and friends when they reach the stage where they cannot help themselves anymore.

I would like to ask the Minister if Niverville facilities have been brought forward for discussion or planning at this point.

Mr. Chomiak: I believe that process will shortly be communicated to the South Eastman RHA as part of our rollout of the announcements that are going to occur from the capital process announcements that came forward today. So that decision, the status of it will be communicated to the South Eastman Regional Health Authority shortly.

Mr. Jim Penner: As well, the Minister took as notice a question regarding the status of dialysis in the southeast region. Since our discussion in Estimates, I have again been approached by local residents about the service.

I would refer specifically to a letter I received this morning from a Mr. Louis Reimer. I understand Mr. Reimer has been in touch with the Minister's office and has not at this time received a reply regarding this issue. I would note for the Committee that Mr. Reimer is very grateful to be able to receive dialysis, because without this he is dead. He appreciates the health care system for keeping him alive. Yet he wonders, and rightly so, I think, why a service of this nature cannot be brought into the southeast. Louis is 61 years old. He has been gainfully employed for 36 years, contributed to the communities where he worked. In March of 1999, he was asked to start travelling to Morden for dialysis treatments because the units at St. B and Health Sciences Centre were being overloaded. This was extremely discouraging. Instead of being able to have this treatment

locally in Steinbach, which has a large regional hospital, he was forced to travel to Morden. This dialysis treatment is not a convenience. If he does not have it, he will die.

Having dialysis in Morden meant leaving Steinbach at ten o'clock in the morning, getting into Morden before noon, having a little lunch, getting hooked up at twelve thirty and by five o'clock he was on his way back to Steinbach.

The ride was a real chore, because after having a machine remove three or four litres of water from the blood plus numerous toxins by circulating the blood through a filtering process for four hours, he says I am quite tired. Now I have an hour and forty-five to two hours drive ahead of me. Since then, we have managed to get him back into St. B.

He said Morden has a very nice four-station dialysis unit. They only have six patients from their area taking dialysis. Four units are capable of handling, I am told, sixteen patients with two shifts a day. Other patients were bussed in from Winnipeg to Morden. In their new hospital, they are putting in six dialysis units. I wonder why with only six patients they get six units, which could handle twenty-four patients. To me, it would make far more sense to place their extra machines in a different part of the province such as Steinbach, than add to a unit that is already capable of handling more than twice the number of patients from their own region.

* (16:00)

I did some research as to how many dialysis patients were in the Steinbach area. I have the names of four right in the town of Steinbach. But what became very interesting to me was that there are a number of people who are on peritoneal—is that right, peritoneal?—but would like to be on hemo instead. So this man, Louis Reimer says I spoke to Mr. Kroeker from Landmark. His daughter-in-law is on peritoneal dialysis and is not doing very well. Her name is Elsie Kroeker. She had written a letter to the editor in *The Carillon* news a while back saying she would like to go on hemo, but her doctor said there were not any spaces available. So she

expressed her wish for a unit in Steinbach so she could improve her quality of life.

Madam Chairperson, I have also heard in the last few days that the Roseau Reserve, south of Steinbach, has at least four people on dialysis, and then the southeast corner going all the way up to Buffalo Point, there are people commuting from Buffalo Point to St. Boniface. So Louis says the answer for me and the people of the southeast who have kidney disease and are in need of dialysis, would be a dialysis unit in Steinbach. Reg Toews, who is with the RHA, informed me that there are no dialysis units in the Eastman Region, even though we have quite a significant population base.

I realize that this would be something that would take some time, but I think it should be seriously considered. Louis says that his father had kidney failure, and apparently this thing runs in the family. He is hoping that if his kids contract the same disease that they will not have to commute for long distances. Apparently, the commute itself is very difficult after losing almost 12 pounds of body fluids through the dialysis process. Therefore, if the cost of treating patients is the same in one place or another, it seems that the time has come for Steinbach to be considered for dialysis. That is a plea from an individual on behalf of many individuals.

I wonder if the status of dialysis machines for Steinbach is available from the Minister.

Mr. Chomiak: Madam Chairperson, I indicated the response to the Member's question previously in the Estimates process. As I understand, there is a provincial-wide dialysis program that makes considerations across the province.

As the Member might appreciate, the demands in dialysis and dialysis growth are growing exponentially, in fact, in this province with the need in diabetes being epidemic in some segments of the population. The expansion of dialysis has been incredible. If one were to view the expansion of dialysis over the past five years, it has probably exceeded every other program in terms of its actual growth in the province. That is not to say that solves that

individual's problem. That is not to say that there is not need for expanded dialysis, one of which was recognized in terms of construction starting on expanded dialysis today.

As I indicated in the House prior, the provincial dialysis program, which is a centrally run program which was established by the former government and is operating under the same parameters and criteria presently as it was, has not considered Steinbach as a potential hemodialysis location for this year. They are continuing reviewing the growth of dialysis and the need for dialysis.

I will take the Member's comments and pass them on to the provincial dialysis program for review as well as, of course, the response to the individual in question. There is no doubt that there is an incredible need across this province for an expansion of dialysis. There also has been a significant expansion of dialysis over the past five years, which is continuing. The provincial dialysis program considers all of the various locales and the various needs-based factors in reviewing the dialysis requests.

Mr. Jim Penner: Thank you for that answer. I feel almost emotionally involved when I represent some of the people who have these concerns. I really hope that the southeast will be given some consideration. Obviously that is the case.

I would like to return to a point I made a couple of weeks ago to which I did not receive an answer. In the Minister's defence, I realize it is difficult to sit here and take rapid-fire questions regarding a wide range of topics affecting a number of regions. However, we talked a little bit about per capita funding for the southeast region. I would like to revisit that.

I think it is important to mention that we must not be seen to be punishing regions of our province that perform efficiently. Rather I think those regions could be rewarded and, in fact, should act as a model for other regions.

The Minister mentioned that the area I represent is a fairly healthy one. However, I would argue two things in response. The first is the fact that the region is relatively healthy and

efficient is not sufficient reason to punish those who live in the region or choose to move there. Secondly, I would suggest that within the South Eastman Health Authority there is, in fact, disparity in the condition of Health. There are, I think, concerns about regions southeast of my constituency but which are still part of the RHA which I partially represent.

Regardless, the Minister has had some time to reflect on this situation since we last spoke. I wonder if he could give some hope perhaps to my residents and those of the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mr. Lemieux). You will recall that the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs was quoted in the newspaper as saying that he was astonished that we were the lowest user of funds for health care in the province and that we still had many needs that needed to be addressed. I am just wondering if the review of this funding for the southeast is underway.

Mr. Chomiak: Madam Chairperson, sometimes when I respond to questions, there has been a suggestion that I am not as specific in some references. This is an example of an area where one must be wary in terms of one's response. One could interpret a response as somehow residents are not being adequately or sufficiently treated with respect to their situation. It is all a relative thing. It is all relative. It is relative across the province. It is relative across the region.

I have never liked per capita funding arguments on the philosophical level because per capita arguments are not, in my view—it is only my own personal opinion. I am not arguing for the Department of Health. I have always shied away from per capita arguments because that is not necessarily illustrative nor does it provide a proper analysis of the kind of care, whether it is care or whether it is education that is provided.

Notwithstanding that, I provided the information that was provided to me by staff, with respect, to the Member. Figures are misleading and are not always reflective of the actual reality of the situation. The bottom line is that the Province and the Health Department and all of the Health regions and all of the people involved

in health care are trying to utilize resources to the extent possible to provide the fairest and the best treatment of patients and facilities to individuals.

I also indicated that the funding methodology that was in place was the same methodology that we had inherited from the previous administration. I have indicated that there is a methodology funding committee in place that is reviewing the models and how funding should be applied.

* (16:10)

I also understand that representatives from the Department of Health are meeting with South Eastman to set up a review of their programs and review their particular programs and their needs and requirements. Suffice it to say that Health will attempt to, to the best of our ability, provide the best funding allocation and services that we are capable under the circumstances.

It becomes a relative argument across the province and across regions with respect to funding allocations. To a certain extent, the Department of Health has been trying to move, not necessarily under our government, but under previous government, which I think we are trying to follow under this government, into more of a needs-based response to requirements. In fact, when the RHAs were set up, the initial phase was to do a needs-based analysis of their requirements, which then formed the framework, as I understand it, for the provision of the financial resources.

There is a funding methodology committee at the Department of Health that is reviewing the funding methodology to all regions. I understand the Department of Health is meeting with South Eastman to review the process, specifically for South Eastman. I think that is happening across the province with respect to other regions.

Mr. Jim Penner: Thank you for that answer. I do not envy the complications of determining the distribution of the funding. I would like to use an analogy to make a point. When one studies criminology, more often than not, a community that has a low crime rate has, in fact, always had

a poor law enforcement organization. In fact, poor law enforcement inevitably runs with a low crime rate.

Now, when we want to allocate funds by statistics, this makes it rather difficult because, by the same token that a low crime rate is a weak law enforcement, we have a situation here where a so called healthy area—you referred, I think, in the July 11 conversation, that southeastern Manitoba was a healthy area—that is probably because we cannot perform the procedures and we cannot administer the treatments.

So naturally the situations that exist are not recorded as a health problem or a health weakness or a lack of health in that area, but I know that south and east of Steinbach, there are areas where health is a real challenge. For the most part, Steinbach has become a community that is a service community. It is a retail community. It provides services. Association for Community Living provides services for those with learning disabilities throughout southeastern Manitoba, and the southeast recycling plant provides recycling services throughout southeastern Manitoba. So it would not be abnormal, I do not think, for a service community to provide the 45 000 to 60 000 people living in that vicinity with the services that would show that the health may not be as highly rated as we think, because we are relying on statistics.

So I would just like to put on the record that I am concerned about the statistics being the sole guideline when, in fact, the statistics only show the procedures that take place and the treatments that take place in an inadequately funded and an inadequately equipped facility. Could I ask, Madam Chairperson, if the Minister is aware of how many dialysis patients there are in southeastern Manitoba?

Mr. Chomiak: Before I respond to that particular question, I just want to comment on the Member's statements. I want the Member to understand that this is a relative argument. The reference to a healthy community was a relative healthy community vis-à-vis other communities, and it is not a blanket statement that should be used as a blanket statement. It is a reference vis-à-vis other communities.

The funding arrangements and the funding model and the needs assessment were operating on a system that was put in place prior to our administration coming to office. So we are functioning within data and information that was provided to us prior to our assuming office, and we were functioning on that kind of analysis and that kind of basis. With respect to the number of patients that require dialysis in that particular area, I will have to take that question as notice.

Mr. Stan Struthers, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair

Mr. Jim Penner: Thank you for the answer to that question on statistics and healthy area statement. I think it has been conceded for some years that the need for improving our various health facilities was being addressed. I just feel that some of the things that we tried to do did not work, and we still want to go forward. Some of the things worked fairly well, and some of the things just backfired. So all I am trying to do is continue the process, and I give credit where credit is due.

I was asked, Mr. Chairman, that the minutes of the South Eastman Health Board of Directors meeting from May 25 indicated that the Government was still considering elected boards and also that caregivers may be appointed to the RHA boards. Could I ask if that is still a consideration?

Mr. Chomiak: As I indicated previously in the Estimates process, the provision of caregivers to the boards is being actively considered by the Government, and we are prepared to do that, and we are still considering and working on the process of the elected board issue.

Mrs. Driedger: Could the Minister tell me whether or not in this budget there has been any commitment to funding for the continuation of the breastfeeding service at Women's Hospital?

Mr. Chomiak: I will take that question as notice and provide the response to the Member.

Mrs. Driedger: As Estimates are probably winding up within the next day or so, is the Minister able to find any of that information out by tomorrow? I understand that this was a three-

year demonstration project at the Women's Hospital. It was funded by monies donated to the Health Sciences Centre, and according to them, with the third year of this project well underway, it is imminent to look at the continuing needs for ongoing and comprehensive lactation support for Manitoba families in the future.

Apparently, from the information we have received, it has been an extremely positive program. Certainly for any mother that has attempted and had difficulty with breastfeeding, they can appreciate a program like this. It is very specialized. Certainly a lot of bedside nurses do not always have the time to put in the teaching time and the support time that is needed to help a new mom learn how to breastfeed.

The Minister probably has received a number of letters. I would be surprised if he did not because there has been a massive letter writing campaign on this whole topic. I know that Dr. Postl and the Women's Health Program have all received numerous letters. I have a huge file of letters of support from doctors, from nurses and particularly from mothers, new moms, who are supportive of the program and would like to see some commitment to some support of this particular program.

I appreciate that the Minister is prepared to provide the information, knowing how hard it has been to get some of the information tabled. It has taken weeks and weeks. It would be nice to be able to provide some reassurances to these people if indeed there is a commitment to funding.

* (16:20)

Mr. Chomiak: First off, Mr. Acting Chairperson, even though the Estimates may wind up today or tomorrow, I have undertaken to provide the information to the Member and will provide the information, unlike what happened in the past seven years when the information was not provided. Literally not provided.

Mr. Chairperson, we have provided more varied information to this member than has been provided at any other time from the Department of Health to a critic for information requested. For the Member to somehow suggest that

information has not been provided is wholly and completely inaccurate and not appropriate.

We have provided more information of a different nature that was never ever provided by the Department of Health during the course of Estimates, and frankly, had we considered the practice that had been adopted by previous ministers during the course of Health Estimates, the Member would not have received probably even half of the information that we actually provided, so that I do not think is a fair comment whatsoever with respect to the information provided. The Member ought to be, I think, more accurate in her comments and information that she has provided.

With respect to specific programs, the Member criticized us when we came out with our budget. There was criticism about spending too much money with respect to the health care system even though we increased the actual spending for programs extensively in this particular budget. There are literally thousands of programs that are administered by the various health authorities in the various regions in a variety of functions, in a variety of activities right across the system for which funding is provided.

Obviously, we do not have access directly during the course of the Estimates to every single program expenditure item under the various regional health authorities. The Member may be unaware of the move to regionalization in which funding is provided to the various regions and the fact that the regions are actually the operators and deliverers of programs. That was the process that was put in place by the Member's government, which she sat around the table and supported, and that was the process that was put in place.

I undertook to indicate to the Member that I would be providing that information, and I will provide the other information. Whether or not the Estimates end tomorrow, the next day or the following day, I will provide that information to the Member that I undertook to provide, and she will receive it. Most of the information has been provided to the Member. As I indicate, information that was never, ever provided during the course of Estimates was provided to the

Member and to the other members during the course of the Estimates debate. So I do not think that the comment from the Member is actually fair, but that is the way that these events transpire.

I will undertake to review the comments of the Member with respect to that particular program, and I will endeavour to get back to the Member with respect to the details concerning the delivery of that particular program.

Mrs. Driedger: I appreciate the Minister's undertaking to find out the information on that particular program. I have to indicate, though, after this particular maybe we call it a tirade, the Minister had committed to tablings. It was not that I was asking for information he did not make a commitment to do. He actually had committed to providing a number of different bits of information, and I am very appreciative of that. Certainly it helps me to understand more what is happening in health care, and I am very appreciative of what he has offered to do.

My statement was in relationship to how long it has taken for him to meet the commitments that he had made because sometimes it has been almost like pulling hen's teeth to get some of the information put onto the record after the commitment had been made that the Minister would do that.

In regard to the Minister saying that we criticized too much spending, just a bit of clarification. I think what we criticized was maybe the hypocrisy behind what we saw in the Health budget because, over time, we were accused of reckless spending, and, in fact, with the new NDP coming into government, there were all kinds of accusations of reckless spending. What I found ever so interesting is that the Minister took all of this so-called reckless spending, built it into the Budget, and then added 6 percent on top of it.

I am not sure that we ever criticized the fact there was too much spending because the challenges in health care are certainly there and all of the challenges seem to take funding in order to resolve them. So I do not ever recall criticizing that. What we criticized is the position that the Minister took in all the

accusations he made of our reckless spending, and then he builds that into the Budget and adds 6 percent more on top of that. If I have any concerns, it would certainly be in that particular area.

At this point in time, I think I will defer any further questions of mine to the Member for Minnedosa.

Mr. Harold Gilleshammer (Minnedosa): Mr. Chairman, I regret I was not able to be here for the entire session to hear the Minister's answers earlier, but I did come in to hear him say how open he was and providing so much information. I have asked him on a number of occasions now for a copy of the new template for the existence of acute care facilities in rural Manitoba, and I believe he committed earlier to provide that for me. I am wondering if he could do that now.

Mr. Chomiak: I will provide that to the Member.

Mr. Gilleshammer: I thank the Minister for that undertaking. I am wondering if he could table that today, provide me with that copy today.

Mr. Chomiak: No, I cannot provide it today to the Member.

Mr. Gilleshammer: Would he confirm that the revised template of which he has spoken is now completed and available to RHAs. I believe the Minister talked about farming it out. Is it complete and ready to go?

Mr. Chomiak: Can the Member clarify his question?

Mr. Gilleshammer: Well, yes, I can. We have discussed this template that has been distributed to RHA boards in the past. The Member has talked about it in the House on a number of occasions. He indicated to me that there was a revised copy and that the copy would be farmed out. I asked him if I could have a copy of it and he said yes. I came back and asked for it a second time. He said it would be available in due course. I am here again today near the end of the Estimates exercises to see if he is prepared to share that with me today.

Mr. Chomiak: I have provided a response to the Member in that regard.

Mr. Gilleshammer: I am sorry that his answer is unclear. I am asking him if he has it with him today and whether it exists and whether I can have a copy of it today.

Mr. Chomiak: I indicated to the Member that I would provide him with a copy in due course. I also indicated in my previous response to the Member that I did not have that with me today to provide.

Mr. Gilleshammer: The last time we met, the Minister had said he had it and he could provide it, but he did not have it with him. I am wondering if one of his political staff would be able to provide it to me later today after this exercise is over. I would be happy to stay at my office or the caucus room to receive this report from him.

Mr. Chomiak: As I indicated to the Member, I will provide it to him in due course.

Mr. Gilleshammer: I am wondering if the Minister would not be wise to take a page from the Premier's book. He is out visiting with people in southwestern Manitoba today, people who are struggling because of economic circumstances that are beyond their control and that governments are trying to assist with. I can tell you that adding to the stress of these people is the fact that there is a document out there that is reviewing the southwest health authority and the Marquette Health Authority which, if it was accepted and implemented in its current form, would be devastating to those people. It would require that a number of those facilities would be closed.

I am rather appalled that he wants to play political games with the report that people are asking for. It can be his practice to stall members of the Legislature in this committee by giving his answer that these will be provided in due course.

I am not the only one interested in this. The Minister knows that. There have been people who have been writing to him and phoning his office and trying to have meetings to try and get

a legitimate discussion going with him on this issue. So far he has stonewalled those people.

I am asking him again. Just a few minutes ago he was talking about the spirit of co-operation and this openness that Manitobans had never seen before from a Minister of health. I am wondering if he would extend that to me by sharing that copy with me and through me to people of southwestern Manitoba.

* (16:30)

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, as I indicated to the Member, the previous government undertook a number of reviews. In 1994, they asked the Centre for Health Policy and Evaluation to do a review of rural hospitals which report was released several weeks ago. The previous government asked for a lab consolidation and ordered a lab consolidation process to take place. In fact, the Member was a member of the Cabinet that ordered that to take place. We received that report when we came into office, and we discovered that that report had not been adequately distributed. We distributed that report across the regions to various organizations for their review and input.

There was another report with respect to emergency services that several reports had been done and had been deep-sixed by the Department, and then there was another report that was done when the Member was a member of cabinet, when he sat around cabinet. I do not know if he made the decision to not release those reports. I do not know if he actually made the decision, but his cabinet colleagues made the decision not to release those previous reports. A report came to our desk with respect to ambulance services across the province which we then took and we then provided to a variety, an extensive group of individuals, organizations, communities, municipalities across the province and asked for their input and advice and provided that report to other individuals.

Now, another report was commenced during the dying days of the previous regime's government. I do not know if the Member sat in cabinet when and if they talked about it. I do not know if the Member was around the table when

they were talking about a task force report to look at the templates with respect to minimum standards as it applies to hospitals. I do not know what the Member said in cabinet or what the Member said with his colleagues, what the Member told his communities in that regard for the study that was commenced when the Member was a member of the cabinet and a member of the Government, but that process commenced and took place during the course when we arrived in office and continued, Mr. Chairperson.

A report came from the various participants in the various parties that was directed to my attention and has now come to my office and to my attention, and I have indicated to the Member that I would provide it to him in due course. The Member has come into the Estimates period and insisted on a daily basis that I provide him with that report when a colleague of his was wandering around rural Manitoba with a copy of the draft of that report saying the NDP is closing hospitals, the NDP is closing hospitals. That was not, I think, an appropriate response or even a justifiable response from members who had initially started the process of a review of the templates, something that was required and needed to be done, which was a review of the minimum standards and the particular template.

I have said something that was not provided to me when I was an opposition critic that we will provide members with a copy of that particular report in due course. The Member is attempting to impose his particular will by having it done today or tomorrow. I have indicated to the Member—and the Member is an honourable member. I said I will provide copies, and I will do that. That was a process that was not necessarily provided to us when we were in opposition, but we are prepared to do that and to provide the Member with that.

Now, the Member is attempting to weave into his discourse the issue of meeting with other authorities. Of course, there are concerns in rural Manitoba. Of course, there are problems in rural Manitoba, Mr. Chairperson. Of course, there are people who have to be talked with, and, of course, there are people that have to be dealt with. The Member has brought to my attention

numerous instances of municipalities and other officials that want to talk to the Department. The Department has talked with these individuals on a regular basis and has continued to converse and discuss matters with individuals and individual groups.

The Member conveniently forgets that he was a member of the Cabinet that put in place a regional health structure, which he stood up and defended and which he stood up and said this is the way we have to go. We were putting in place a regionalized health structure and a system that is going to deal with community-based input and a system that is going to be regionalized. He was a part of a process that put in place boards, most of whom, those very same individuals, were on the very same boards.

In fact, most of the individuals in all of the administrative and board structures that are in place are, in fact, individuals that the Member personally as a member of cabinet agreed to put in place. Now the Member is saying, well, you know what, I do not necessarily believe in that process and I want the Minister to step in and to change perhaps the way things are done and the way things are continuing to be done in the province. I want the Minister to immediately step up and do this, I want the Minister to do this.

Mr. Chairperson, we have on a regular basis, I have indicated to the Member we will provide that information. He will get that information. I have also said that the Department of Health and officials have been meeting with officials in question. I will try to meet with as many officials and individuals across the province as it possible. I have undertaken to do that. I have probably met with a considerable group and with many more than perhaps has happened in other cases as other ministers. So I am not going to accept the criticism of stonewalling from the Member, nor am I going to accept the Member's criticism of not providing more information.

I daresay that had the roles been reversed, most of the reports that we made public, the lab report, the emergency services report, the minimum standards report and all those reports, if the past practice had continued would not have

been made public by members opposite. That was certainly the pattern that they adopted.

We reversed that pattern, and we will provide that information. We continue to provide that information on a regular basis and will continue to do so. I have already indicated to the Member that I have undertaken to provide the information to him. If the Estimates process should end today or tomorrow, I would still provide that information.

With respect, there have been a variety of initiatives that I have also indicated to the Member that we would attempt to do. Some of it has not been as quick as I would like to because of the demands of the Department and some of the concerns that have been raised. Initially I thought I could set up a meeting with officials from our emergency measures with the member sooner than I can. It is going to take longer than I thought because of the process, but we are doing it as quickly as we can. I have given those instructions that that should take place.

Having said that, we have tried to be forthright. I can assure the Member that we have provided more information than has ever been provided in the past and we will continue to do so. The Member's attempt to characterize the speed with which we are acting on some particular issues or trying to characterize the fact that we are not providing information for him today or even yesterday as somehow not providing information is totally inaccurate and not true.

I have indicated that the information would be provided. I have also indicated that I undertake to do that. We will deliver that as I indicated.

* (16:40)

Mr. Gilleshammer: I hate to come here and see the Minister so angry from time to time. If it is anything I said to get him worked up like this, I would certainly offer my regrets. I am just telling him, certainly described a very wonderful minister. I am sure that much of that is true. I just want him to understand how important this is for members of those communities in the South Westman area and Marquette, who are

going through difficult economic times and who want to see their communities survive. I am sure when the Premier gets back he can share some of his views with the Minister of Health and confirm that these are difficult times out there. All I am saying is we have an opportunity to relieve some of that stress by making that information available.

I know I have to accept that the Minister will provide it in due course. I am saying that if he wants to continue to enhance that wonderful reputation he is garnering for releasing all of these reports, doing one more would certainly add to it.

The other commitment that he made in the House one day was to phone the mayor of Boissevain. That was done, I believe, on June 28. I am wondering if he has had time to accomplish that yet.

Madam Chairperson in the Chair:

Mr. Chomiak: No.

Mrs. Driedger: In the Webster report, one of the primary recommendations was No. 7, where Mr. Webster said that a review should be carried out of all rural hospitals in the province to determine the need for these hospitals and, where appropriate, the alternate uses to which these capital assets could be redirected. I would like to also indicate he has, and I will read two paragraphs which are his comments under point No. 7: There is a view that in some parts of the province there are too many acute care beds and that the dollars currently being directed to these services could be more effectively utilized for community-based care. There is also a view within some RHAs that there is adequate funding already available provided the system could be reconfigured to provide the right services in the right place.

His second paragraph states: In order to adopt this recommendation, RHAs would have to be given the responsibility and authority to make the tough restructuring decisions without political interference other than with the final approval of Manitoba Health and the Minister of Health. The Minister would also have to approve

the criteria under which the reviews would be carried out.

Could the Minister tell me whether he directed Gordon Webster to review and comment on whether or not all rural hospitals are needed in Manitoba?

Mr. Chomiak: No.

Mrs. Driedger: Could the Minister indicate, I guess, his intent on whether or not to follow one of these primary recommendations from the Webster report?

Mr. Chomiak: The Webster report was a review of the health care financial management and accountability. Included in the appendix under Appendix A is the terms of reference that were given to Mr. Webster. If the Member wants to return to Appendix A, which is included at the back portion of the report, he was asked to identify any inefficiencies, overlap or duplication which exists within the planning for and delivery of health care services in Manitoba, introduction of approved accountability around health care expenditures in Manitoba, processes which must be implemented to avoid the traditional funding shortfalls and subsequent deficit top-ups which have characterized health care spending, processes which must be implemented to enable government to make proactive decisions around necessary increases, any suggestions, changes in our approaches to health care delivery which would help alleviate the continued upward pressures in health care expenditures.

Mr. Webster came back with a number of recommendations, some were very broad, some were very specific, under the catchment of those particular criteria. So, when the Member asked if he was specifically asked to review the rural hospitals, that is not the case. I understood that the previous government, under the former premier and former minister of Health, commissioned a report, in fact, to do that for the Centre for Health Policy and Evaluation, such report which was reported back about a week and a half ago, which I believe the Member has a copy of.

Mrs. Driedger: Could the Minister tell me what his intent is in terms of this specific primary recommendation No. 7 to address whether or not all the rural hospitals in Manitoba are needed?

Mr. Chomiak: The report recommends a review should be carried out of all rural hospitals in the province to determine the need for these hospitals, and, where appropriate, the alternate uses to which these capital assets could be redirected. I believe, Madam Chairperson, that that process actually started taking place in 1994 under the previous administration, which asked for a review from the Centre for Health Policy and Evaluation with respect to the utilization of rural health care facilities.

Mrs. Driedger: Would the Minister concur with Mr. Webster's statement that there are too many acute care beds in the province?

Mr. Chomiak: I believe that the previous-minister of Health, the Member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Praznik), made that statement very loud and clear during the course of Estimates on numerous occasions, and made that point very regularly during the course of the Estimates debate.

Mrs. Driedger: Could the Minister indicate for me not what the previous-minister has said, but what he himself feels in terms of whether or not there are currently today too many acute care beds within the system.

Mr. Chomiak: We have received the Centre for Health Policy and Evaluation report, and we are asking for feedback and advice from the regions and across the province with respect to its assessment and evaluation from the report, the report that was ordered by the government in 1994.

Mrs. Driedger: Mr. Webster made a statement that there is also a view within some RHAs that there is adequate funding already available within the system. Would the Minister concur with that statement?

Mr. Chomiak: There is a variety of views within various RHAs with respect to various situations. The Member for Steinbach (Mr. Jim Penner) just recently in Estimates here indicated

that he thought there was not sufficient funding in place. There are some individuals and various RHAs that have individual concerns and individual responses to that particular matter. That was one of the reasons that we are undertaking a review of the funding methodology with respect to our RHAs.

Mrs. Driedger: Mr. Webster indicated that in order to adopt this recommendation—and the recommendation is only for a review, but a review that would actually be addressing a situation of looking at what happens to rural hospitals. He says that the RHAs would have to be given the responsibility and authority to make the tough restructuring decisions without political interference. Could the Minister tell me what his involvement would be in terms of this particular review being carried out, and why Mr. Webster might feel that political interference is something he had some concern about in a review of this issue.

Mr. Chomiak: It is obviously of a good deal of concern. If the Member were paying attention to comments of the Member from Minnedosa (Mr. Gilleshammer) just recently, he was very concerned about a review process that was undertaken in the summer of last year, and undertaken by some of the RHAs with respect to minimum standards and staffing of hospitals and, I think, fairly strongly expressed the viewpoint that from his perspective the potential for downsizing or the potential for conversion or closure of particularly rural hospitals would detrimentally affect the rural communities.

So the Member needs look no further than her colleague with respect to an opinion in this regard.

* (16:50)

Mrs. Driedger: I was certainly more interested in what the Minister's opinion was than my colleague's because I have talked to him about this issue, and I am aware of what his opinion is. Certainly, my colleagues and I have had a number of discussions about issues like this so I am aware of what the issues are for them, the concerns that they bring from their areas, and I think there are some very, very valid concerns that are coming from their areas. So I was not

asking right now as to what my colleagues' opinions were.

I was asking this minister what his particular opinion would be in this area, as he is the one that is going to be entrusted to handle Primary Recommendation No. 7, and Mr. Webster had indicated that the RHAs would have to be given the responsibility and authority to make the tough restructuring decisions. I am sure that is not an understatement at all without political interference. Obviously, that was added in there because Mr. Webster had a certain view to this. I was wanting to hear what the Minister had to say in terms of a comment of his own.

Mr. Chomiak: Madam Chairperson, obviously, the structure that has been put in place with respect to regionalization, I would indicate that decisions in regard to the application of funds and the application of resources in a region are made by the regional health authorities who are situated and located in that particular region.

Mrs. Driedger: Primary Recommendation No. 8 from Mr. Webster says the existing RHAs within the province should be reviewed to determine whether mergers of some RHAs would be more economical and would enable the delivery of improved levels of patient care.

Could the Minister tell me whether or not the Department and he are currently looking at that?

Mr. Chomiak: Madam Chairperson, it is interesting because the Member for Charleswood also had, earlier on during the course of Estimates, recommended a review of all the RHAs, and I indicated that that was an interesting suggestion. It had been something that we had considered, whether or not we should do a functional and complete review of all the RHAs, and actually had not gone forward with that particular recommendation.

There is always a review and always discussion concerning functionality of operations, and I will be very curious and very interested in the feedback we are going to get from various regions as to their view of that particular issue.

Mrs. Driedger: Does the Minister concur with Mr. Webster when he says there is a view that some RHAs are not large enough to operate at the most effective or efficient level possible, nor do they have the resources necessary to offer the most appropriate quality standards? Does the Minister have any idea which RHAs Mr. Webster might have been referring to?

Mr. Chomiak: Madam Chairperson, not specifically, but I am certainly anxious for the feedback from the RHAs with respect to this particular viewpoint.

Mrs. Driedger: Could the Minister confirm with me, based on the answers he is giving right now, that, in fact, he will be undertaking a review to determine whether or not mergers are what he will be looking at?

Mr. Chomiak: Madam Chairperson, I do not think that the Member can take that response from my answer. No.

Mrs. Driedger: I put the question to the Minister then, I mean, will he be looking at the RHAs? Will he be asking for a review to see whether or not there should be a merger of some RHAs?

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, I believe under the RHA act that was passed by the previous government, that the RHAs have the power to recommend particular mergers. I believe, if my memory serves me correctly, they actually have that particular power. There was provision put into the Act for RHAs to actually recommend that particular situation.

I am very interested in what responses that we are going to receive back from the RHAs with respect to this recommendation and other recommendations.

Mrs. Driedger: Is the Minister indicating by that response that this report has gone out to all of the RHAs and he is awaiting their comments on it?

Mr. Chomiak: I directed, when the report came out, that the report ought to be circulated to the RHAs and interested parties for review.

Mrs. Driedger: Once the review has been completed, will the Minister move on this particular recommendation to call for a larger review to determine whether or not mergers should take place? Would it be his intent that rather than leaving it to the RHAs to come up with that, would it be a move that he would be prepared to take in terms of following the recommendation to review whether or not some RHAs need to be merged?

Mr. Chomiak: I do not want to prejudge the particular results of discussions and ongoing discussions in a whole variety of areas and a whole variety of processes that are taking place.

Mr. Gilleshammer: Just a comment to the Minister based on a question that someone asked earlier about the composition of RHA boards, I am given to understand that Premier Romanow has some very strong feelings about appointed board members and elected board members. I believe he was known to say that one of the mistakes he made was allowing for elected board members. I would just want the Minister to think about that and perhaps, in his travels, could speak to Premier Romanow to get a better understanding of where he was coming from.

Mr. Chomiak: I have actually had discussions with officials in Saskatchewan concerning that. I thank the Member for that suggestion.

Mrs. Driedger: One final little section of questions prior to taking a break, could the Minister tell me how many people in numbers are on the waiting lists for CT scans?

Mr. Chomiak: I will attempt to provide that response to the Member.

Mrs. Driedger: With all of the staff here right now, I wonder if the Minister has that information accessible to him. I will be asking for the number of people on waiting lists for CT, MRI, bone scan, ultrasound, cardiac surgery, knee surgery, hip surgery, and heart surgery. I know that when we were in government, we kept all that information. Manitoba Health tracked it. It was readily available at all times. It was monitored quite regularly as part of the management of waiting lists. I would wonder if

the Minister, through his staff who are here now, might have that information.

Mr. Chomiak: I am surprised the Member provides me with that revelation, because the Minister never provided it to me when I asked for it. That is interesting. I will endeavour to provide to the Member the information that we have available.

Mrs. Driedger: Is the Minister then indicating that the staff that are here right now do not have that information with them and he will choose to provide it at another time?

Mr. Chomiak: I have indicated to the Member I will provide the information that is available that the Member has requested.

Mrs. Driedger: Could the Minister put a bit of a time line on this for me?

Mr. Chomiak: In due course.

Mrs. Driedger: If the Minister were still interested in having a break, I would be prepared.

Madam Chairperson: The Committee will take a five-minute recess.

The Committee recessed at 4:59 p.m.

The Committee resumed at 5:12 p.m.

Madam Chairperson: Will the Committee of Supply please come to order. The floor is now open for questions.

Mrs. Driedger: The Minister indicated prior to the break that he did not know that the Department kept specific numbers of people on waiting lists. Could the Minister indicate for me and reaffirm I guess what his statement had just been that this is the first time he knew that?

Mr. Chomiak: No, I think the Member misinterpreted the response. I said that, when I asked for that kind of information when I was the critic, I was not provided. I was given to

believe that that information was not provided and the Member indicated it would not, but that she was knowledgeable when she was government that that information was available. So I said that is a revelation to me.

Mrs. Driedger: Could the Minister then confirm that, indeed, he has been tracking these numbers since forming government and is aware of what the actual numbers of people are on each of those waiting lists?

Mr. Chomiak: Madam Chairperson, no, that is not the case.

Mrs. Driedger: Could the Minister just expound on that a little bit more? Is he not aware of the number of people on the waiting lists or is he not aware of what specifically?

Mr. Chomiak: The Member asked whether or not I was aware of tracking the number of people on specific waiting lists since we formed government, and I said, no, that is not the case.

Mrs. Driedger: Is the Minister currently, as the Minister of Health, following the number of people on waiting lists?

Mr. Chomiak: Madam Chairperson, we regularly look at the wait times for particular procedures.

Mrs. Driedger: I am aware that the Minister follows wait times. Does he also follow the number of people on those waiting lists?

Mr. Chomiak: Madam Chairperson, I do not follow the numbers of people on that waiting list.

Mrs. Driedger: I wonder if the Minister could tell me why he would not be tracking that along with the waiting times in terms of weeks or months or years for tests or surgeries, why he would not be asking for that information on a regular basis so that he would know that there were 5000 people waiting for cataract surgeries and he would be able to monitor that on a month-to-month basis, for instance, as to whether or not that is going up or down.

Mr. Chomiak: I believe I follow the practice generally that was approached by the previous administration with respect to wait times, and that is the process that we have continued to follow.

Mrs. Driedger: Actually, for the Minister's information, we followed the numbers on the waiting lists. They were part of regular reports that were given to the Minister, and I, as the legislative assistant to the Minister of Health, received all of that information because we tracked not only weeks, months or years of time people were waiting, but we also tracked the number of people that were on those waiting lists as well as the numbers of tests or surgeries that were done in terms of numbers of people.

I guess I would ask the Minister why he would not be following the numbers of people who are waiting on any list so that, in fact, we are not talking about just a fact. We have a waiting list for MRIs of five weeks. There is also some significance to knowing how many people that actually accounts for. Keeping in mind the patient is always central, if we only look at waiting lists in terms of weeks, we sort of lose that focus because it is numbers of people. It is those significant people in that centre circle that we need to be keeping track of.

Mr. Chomiak: I thank the Member for that advice.

Mrs. Driedger: I hope the Minister is not that trite when he is talking to Manitobans or to people that are on those lists because certainly there is significance to it. If we are looking at 5000 people waiting for cataracts, if we are looking at hundreds waiting for cardiac surgery, knowing those numbers is significant, especially if you are one of those people on one of those waiting lists.

I appreciate the fact that the Minister is willing to provide me with those numbers of people on the waiting list, and I guess I would hope the Minister would have a closer look at that too.

Mr. Chomiak: Madam Chairperson, I cannot believe that the Member was legislative assistant to the Minister of Health and did not provide that

information to Manitobans that she said she tracked on a daily basis, when it was asked for on a daily basis. I am astounded. I am astounded, and perhaps that was one of the indications of the problem we had in this province under the previous administration, which the Member has gone out of her way to defend over the course of these Estimates as to how wonderful things were. The members did not provide the information that we asked for with respect to a variety, even though she had it and stonewalled and stonewalled together with the Minister of Health in providing that information to Manitobans.

I think therein lies the difficulty and the problem with respect to why members got into so much difficulty with respect to health care during the course. I remember standing up and asking for specific information in terms of numbers and it was not provided, and told that information was not available.

* (17:20)

Now, the Member tells me that information was being tracked on a daily basis and she had access to it and the Minister had access to it, and they would not provide it. I think that is illustrative of the difficulties and the problems we had when the members opposite refused to acknowledge that there were problems. They refused to acknowledge that there was difficulties, and they obviously did not put in place programs and initiatives to deal with those programs and denied they were there. That was one of the reasons why we could not see the substantive improvements in the health care system that we were required to deal with.

Obviously, the Department tracks information on the same basis, and we were tracking information on the same basis that I presume was tracked during the course of the previous administration. In terms of the reporting information that is provided on a regular basis, the information is provided on the same reporting style and reporting basis that was provided with respect, I assume, to members opposite.

With that respect, information of scheduling, people and wait times is related. I did that on a

whole series of areas. When we chose to put it on the Web site and make public the hallway situation, we used the same reporting mechanism that members opposite had secretly closeted away and had been used on a regular basis. What did we do? We put the information on the Web site. We took the information the members had been secreting away and not providing and denying it actually existed, and we put it on the Web site.

Periodically, Madam Chairperson, of course that opens us up to criticism. The Member opposite says well, you have only eliminated the problem 80 percent, you have only eliminated the problem 90 percent, you have only eliminated the problem 98 percent, and you have failed as a government the Member says, when, in fact, members opposite were secretly not providing that information, were not providing it to the public. We put it on the Web site, and we said judge us by the results, judge us by what we are able to accomplish with respect to the programming we are putting in place and with respect to the information that we are providing. We put it on the Web site, and we said deal with it on that basis.

With respect to the wait times, Madam Chairperson, we have used the same kind of reporting structure and data for comparative purposes that members opposite chose. We did not change. The same individuals are in the same positions, generally, providing the same type of information provided to the members opposite, except the difference is members opposite would not provide it to us. You know, the Member has this way of saying, well, now you should do it and now—but, I do take some exception to the fact that the Member, who now indicates she was a legislative assistant to the Minister—had access to that information and sat in the Legislature day after day after day when the information was stonewalled and the information was not provided.

Now, when we provide the information to the Member, the Member says, well, provide it faster, provide more information, when, in fact, we have even provided more forthcoming with respect to information, more information to members opposite than has ever been provided during the course of these Estimates. The

Member knows that. That is the interesting thing, because the Member has indicated she knows that. The Member has indicated she knows there were problems in particular areas. She knows there were problems, in particular waiting lists.

Why did the previous government not act? Where were you? Where was the action to deal with the problems, Madam Chairperson? Why were there not initiatives put in place? Why did you not deal with the hallway medicine situation? Why did you not deal with the situation of waiting lists? No, when you knew—and I find that a bit strange, particularly when the Member now comes on a regular basis and is critical of the initiatives that we have introduced, initiatives that were not in place when the Member was aware of this information, when the Member had access to this information, when the Member was a legislative assistant—I now find out—to the Minister of Health and had that information and did not provide that information publicly, information that we are providing on a regular basis.

Then the Member insists that we have to provide it in a particular form to the Member, because the Member said she had access to that information when she was legislative assistant. Then she insists that we provide it in a certain time frame, notwithstanding the fact that we provided more information and additional information that was never provided during the course of the Estimates debate. We went further. We put the hallway stats up on the Web site, and the Member regularly stands up and utilizes those stats to provide information. That is why they are there, for the information of the public, for the education of the public, so people will know what the reality situation is.

There was one week when the information did not go up on the Web site, and the suggestion came from members opposite that we were hiding the information because it was not up on the Web site that day when, in fact, there had been a computer glitch across the entire system. Everyone knew it, but members somehow saw in that failure of that one week to post Web site data that there was somehow a

conspiracy on the part of the Government to withhold information. That is a problem.

That is a problem for me, Madam Chairperson, because I think the way that the previous government functioned and operated and the methodology adopted by them, they assume and they read into events and read into circumstances, certain ways of functioning and certain ways of acting that I do not think are valid and were probably adopted—I do not want to accuse members opposite of that—by the previous regime and which we are not continuing. But, you know, to be accused of not providing information, or not providing information in a timely fashion, when the information was never provided—and the Member knew that that information was available when she was legislative assistant to the Minister of Health—strikes me as an issue that I think bears some discussion and some scrutiny.

You know, to continue to make statements that information is not provided in a timely fashion or information is not provided, when more information has been provided to the Member opposite, I think, does not serve this committee well and does not serve the process well. I may have taken longer than I anticipated with respect to that, but I do take exception to that kind of comment by the Member with respect to information, by carefully gleaning off the past and forgetting the past, and then coming back to the past to say: Oh, I had access to that information, and you, the new minister, should now provide it to me when, in fact, I was legislative assistant to a minister and we would not provide it to anybody. Now the Member for Minnedosa (Mr. Gilleshammer) is saying that is not true, that information was not provided.

The reporting mechanism that we are utilizing with respect to waiting times is consistent with the pattern that was adopted by the previous government with respect to reporting times. The hallway medicine initiative is on the Web site on a weekly basis and very, very public despite suggestions from members opposite that that information would not be made available. That information has been made available. More information has been available. We will continue to educate Manitobans by providing that information.

But for the Member to suggest that she had accessed information that she would not reveal through her minister previous and that somehow now we have to reveal all of the information that she secretly, and the former government, secretly closeted away, I think, does a disservice to the entire process.

Mrs. Driedger: Following this particular tirade, then I have to ask the Minister something, and following his line of thinking in this. He has now given his legislative assistant, Mr. Struthers, the freedom to provide me with every bit of information I want, because the Minister just said that a legislative assistant that has information and does not provide it, is doing a bad job. I have to assume that his legislative assistant is now authorized by this tirade to give me every bit of information that I want. I do not even have to go to the Minister anymore. Is this what he is saying?

Mr. Chomiak: First, I want to correct the Member. The particular discourse that I just engaged in was not a tirade; in fact, it was an attempt to show the Member the fallacy of her position with respect to demanding information that she herself and the Minister kept from the public. I have indicated that we are providing—we are not saying no to the information provision. We have provided it, and we will continue to provide it, contrary—and that is where the logical reasoning of the Member for Charleswood breaks down—to the past practice of the previous regime of which she was legislative assistant, when the information was not provided at all. The information was simply not provided.

Now the Member has asked for information of which we provided more information during the course of these Estimates than at any other time that I recall, additional information on a variety of subjects that has not been provided in the past. I now discover, from the comments of the Member, that she had accessed information that I was denied and that was not provided for previously. She had access to that information and chose, together with the Minister of Health, not to make that very information public that she is now asking be made public.

That is where I find the logical inconsistency in the questions and the remarks of the Member who then insists on certain timely release of information, and the release of information to the members of the Opposition, of which I have indicated at least half a dozen times during the course of the last hour, hour and a half, that we will provide in due course to the Member. We have provided information that again, I reiterate, has not been provided in the past.

With respect to the Member's suggestion that she can go to the legislative assistant of the Minister of Health and obtain information, as I have indicated, we are providing information from this government on a timely basis that has never been provided before, and we will continue to do that. We will continue to provide that information notwithstanding that the Member when she was a member of the former government did not provide that information.

I want the Member to recognize that particular position, at least acknowledge that particular position, and the total logical inconsistency of that particular position, and perhaps reflect upon that with respect to the information that is being provided to members opposite and to the public during the course of the Estimates debate.

* (17:30)

Mrs. Driedger: Is the Minister truly naive enough to believe that an upper-bencher legislative assistant, whether it is to the Minister of Health or the Minister of Education, has any ability or authority to go running around providing information, especially when I was never personally asked for any? Is the Minister truly naive enough to believe that an upper-bencher legislative assistant has the ability to go around providing information?

He accused me of stonewalling, saying I should have been providing information. Well, is he going to stonewall me now, or is the legislative assistant going to stonewall me now? It should hold true. If he felt that I should be providing information, then so should his legislative assistant be providing me with all of the information that I want. I do not understand.

This minister has been around this government long enough to know that upper benchers are not ministers. We do not have the authority to be providing information left, right, and centre. We have an obligation as a legislative assistant to do certain things. But we certainly are not privy to a lot of information, nor do we have authority or cabinet approval or anything else that is involved with being a minister. An upper bencher really does not have a huge amount of clout in terms of some of the decisions made within departments. That is absolutely for sure. So, if the Minister is going to accuse me of knowing information and stonewalling, then that is going to hold true for his legislative assistant, too. For a minister that has been around long enough to know the situation, I am totally surprised at him making comments such as this.

Mr. Chomiak: Madam Chairperson, I do not want this discussion to continue interminably. I think there are a lot of questions the Member wants to ask, and there are a lot of responses I am prepared to give. My point that I was making, and I will wrap it up on this point, was the Member had accessed information, together with the Minister of Health, that was not provided to us, and was denied to us on a regular basis.

I express surprise that the Member who was part of a government that denied information would now come back and say to the members of this government who have provided more information that she is aware of than has ever been provided before, of somehow not providing information, I think that is logically inconsistent. I just express surprise, particularly when the Member indicated to me that she had access to all kinds of information that had been denied to us by the previous government of which the Member was a part. The bulk of which has been provided already, during the course of these Estimates to members opposite. I was just pointing out the logical inconsistency of that particular position.

Mr. Gilleshammer: Madam Chairperson, the Minister has spent considerable time patting himself on the back for all the wonderful things he has done, reliving his life in opposition, and

provided precious few answers. Can he indicate how many people in Manitoba are waiting for knee surgery?

Mr. Chomiak: Madam Chairperson, I do not really see the comments in terms of patting myself on the back. I am simply responding to questions and providing information that is asked for by the members opposite. If the members opposite are defensive and want to go down that road, that is fine. I will just point out to the Member for Minnedosa (Mr. Gilleshammer), it was the Member for Charleswood (Mrs. Driedger) who raised the issue of her participation in the previous government and her access to information. So, in that regard, Madam Chairperson, I was responding to claims that were raised by the Member for Charleswood.

I will provide that information. I have taken notice of that information and will provide it.

Mr. Gilleshammer: So I am given to understand that today the Minister will not provide numbers of people on any of the waiting lists that we have been asking about for cardiac surgery, hip replacement, heart surgery and so on. Again, that this will be provided in due course.

Mr. Chomiak: Madam Chairperson, we had a long discussion previously in terms of the Estimates debate, in terms of information on waiting lists, how that information is allocated, how that information is provided, et cetera, with respect to numbers.

In terms of the Department of Health directly, I do not see access to the regular numbers on all cases on a regular basis. The general reporting mechanism that has been the practice, that members used in their pre-election piece that went out in July of last year and then their other pre-election piece that went out in August of last year with respect to waiting lists, the Member might recall there were documents that were mailed to all Manitobans, I believe, one in July and one in August, that used averages for waiting lists, et cetera, for various procedures. Generally, in terms of reporting of information, that has been the practice that we have continued. We have taken the waiting lists—

they were limited—but the waiting list periods for some of the areas that the members had pointed out in July and August of last year, and used those figures in terms of the information and the reporting that were provided.

With respect to the numbers of patients, I will endeavour to find out what we have. As I indicated I think recently, in terms of Estimates, I will endeavour to provide information to the members.

Mrs. Driedger: I do not want to be confused about the issue, nor do I want to get the Minister's legislative assistant into any trouble, but if the Minister could just clarify for me: Do I have his permission now, with the comments he has put on the record this afternoon, to be asking the legislative assistant for information that I might be asking for here today; example, numbers of people on waiting lists, length of waiting lists in terms of weeks, days, months? Is the Minister, by his train of thought and what he has put forward here, indicating that I have the permission to do that and that his legislative assistant now has an obligation to provide me with that? Otherwise, he would be considered stonewalling, as the Minister has indicated.

Mr. Chomiak: I am sorry that the Minister has to seek clarification and go down this line of questioning, Madam Chairperson. The Member for Charleswood can ask anything of anybody in terms of—if the Member for Charleswood wants to ask questions, wants to go to the Member for Dauphin (Mr. Struthers), she can. I am sure she does on a regular basis. She can ask him whatever she wants.

First of all, this reference to upper bencher, I do not like. This whole reference is just—the fact is we are all members of the Legislative Assembly, we all work together on a variety of projects on regular systems and regular processes. We talk to each other on the record and off the record on a regular basis. We all talk to each other on a regular basis, generally. The Member does not need to seek my permission if she wants to have a conversation with the Member for Dauphin. He is a very affable fellow and is a very effective fellow. She does not need my permission to talk to him, Madam

Chairperson, and I do not think I have to ask her permission to talk to the Member for Minnedosa (Mr. Gilleshammer) or any other members of her caucus. We all talk on a regular basis.

* (17:40)

Madam Chairperson, with respect to the provision of information, I generally adopted the policy, when I was the Health critic, that I asked for all information through the office of the Minister. That was what I was basically directed to do, and that is what I generally continued to do during the course of my tenure. I did not generally go around to other authorities or other agencies. I generally directed my questions toward the Minister's office, and generally the Minister's office provided information to me directly through the Minister's office. That is just the practice of government. Generally, members ask questions and generally they are related to that particular area. They go through the Minister's office with respect to the responses to those particular questions.

The Member said that we were stonewalling. I cannot believe the Member's comment. We have provided more information during the course of these Estimates than has been provided at any other time on any other occasion during the course of the Estimates debate. Now the Member wants additional information parcelled out in a particular fashion that she wants or that she feels it should be provided in. I am just indicating, and I have taken notice of dozens and dozens of questions and provided dozens and dozens, in fact, hundreds of responses to the Member for Charleswood. I must reiterate and add that more information has been provided to the Member for Charleswood than at any time was provided to any other Health critic.

Now, the Member wants to define the style and the type and the timing and the particular nature of the information. I have taken those questions as notice and indicated to the Member that I would be prepared to provide, where it is appropriate and where it is necessary and where it is available, the information to the Member for Charleswood, and we have done that. We have done more than that. We have put up on the Web site the lists with respect to the hallways,

something the Member said she had access to on a daily basis.

An Honourable Member: I never said "daily." You said that.

Mr. Chomiak: The Member said that she did not say "daily," and I will correct that. The Member said she had access to that information, but I could never get access to that information, but I want the Member to understand that there has been a change, and we provide that information publicly on the Web site, and the Member has access to it, as do all members of the Legislature, as do all members of the public, which is a change considerably from past practice, Madam Chairperson, and from the way things functioned in the past.

So the Member keeps wanting to go down this road of—and I do not know if it is a defensive mechanism or not—ascertaining what she could ask the legislative assistant for or what the legislative assistant, what information can be provided, when, in fact, the members received access to information. The members receive access to information, run out to the media, provided that information to the media and got press clips on that. So I do not know what the Member is complaining about. You have got a lot more information than we ever had and were ever provided. We even provided it to you, knowing you were going to run out to the media and provide that information publicly, but frankly that is the way the process is. The process is that we are trying to be open and we are trying to provide the information. In fact, we have provided it.

So for the Member to then bring up images of stonewalling and images of not providing information strikes me, in the immortal words of the former member for Morris, passing strange. I do not want to belabour this point. I said previously what I wish to do is that I wish to go on and deal with the issues raised, but the Member keeps going back, and because the Member chooses to make suggestions in the course of her preambles that I think are inaccurate, I feel compelled to respond to those particular inaccuracies. I have indicated to the Member we are providing that information. She has had access to more information than has ever

been provided, and that will continue to be the case.

Madam Chairperson: Order, please. A recorded vote has been requested in another section of the Committee of Supply. As the hour is now 5:45, is it the will of the Committee to rise for the day before members proceed to the Chamber for a formal vote?

Mr. Chomiak: Do we have any sense, do you guys know, are we going past six o'clock?

An Honourable Member: Today?

Mr. Chomiak: Yes.

An Honourable Member: I imagine so.

Mr. Chomiak: Then we better not rise. Let us see what happens. We will have to come back.

Madam Chairperson: Is it the will of the Committee to rise?

Mr. Chomiak: We can come back and adjourn the Committee if we have to.

Madam Chairperson: Okay. I am therefore recessing this section of the Committee of Supply in order for members to proceed to the Chamber for a formal vote.

The Committee recessed at 5:50 p.m.

The Committee resumed at 6:10 p.m.

Madam Chairperson: The hour being 6:10, committee rise.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

* (15:00)

Mr. Chairperson (Conrad Santos): Good afternoon. Will the Committee of Supply please come to order. This section of the Committee of Supply will now resume consideration of the Estimates for the Department of Education and Training. Could we request the Minister's staff to enter the Chamber now?

Hon. Drew Caldwell (Minister of Education and Training): Thank you, Mr. Chairperson, I will have staff come into the Chamber. They are just in the anteroom.

Also, I would like to just briefly comment, welcome the Member for Fort Garry (Mrs. Smith) back from her journey to P.E.I. and also comment upon the process that we have undertaken in terms of the Estimates. Of course, both for the Member for Fort Garry and myself, this is a brand-new process, being rookies. I know that the Member for Russell (Mr. Derkach) has been through the Estimates process both as an MLA and as a former minister of Education.

I just wanted to comment, as it may be my last session—I do not know for sure, but the Member is nodding her head, so we are hopeful—that we have had a very interesting process. From my own perspective as a rookie, and I am sure that the Member for Fort Garry would agree, it has been very educational, very interesting. I have been thankful from time to time to have the Member for Russell in attendance, I am sure the Member for Fort Garry has as well, because his experience did demonstrate itself a number of times. We had some fun during the process in earlier days.

So I just wanted to say, as we have been adjourned in this process with the Department of Education and Training for a little while, that it has been an interesting experience from our perspective and one that has also been mystifying from time to time, but I know we have gone through it pretty much to completion now, and it has been interesting. It has been something that I will not forget, at least my first time through. I expect the same is true for the Member for Fort Garry, although I expect she will make some remarks to this effect, too.

So thank you, welcome to the Member for Fort Garry, and thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Chairperson: Consideration of these Estimates left off on page 57 of the Estimates book, Resolution 16.1. Administration and Finance. The floor is now open for questions.

Mrs. Joy Smith (Fort Garry): Mr. Chair, I just wanted to put some comments on record, as

well. I concur with what the Minister of Education has to say. It has been a very enjoyable time. It has been a time of learning, but it has also been a time to get to know the Minister better and appreciate the Minister's point of view in terms of where he is going in Education.

I do put on record that we do have some differences from time to time, but that does not undermine the respect that we have for each other, and that is very much appreciated, as well. I also have to say that the staff at Manitoba Education and Training is absolutely outstanding. Their expertise, I know, is appreciated by all of us. I know the Minister has very graciously introduced his staff and I am sure he will again just as a protocol. He has very graciously introduced the staff and also acknowledged their contribution to this Estimates process as well. I thank you for that, all of you, for coming and bearing with us during these days of Estimates. I must say when I worked in Manitoba Education and Training, I remembered being in the Estimates process and turning on a dime and getting information as quickly as possible and hoping that I had all my notes ready. I have full appreciation for what you do, and without your contribution I think both sides of the House would be remiss not to, thank you so much for being here. I appreciate it.

Having said that, the Minister has alluded to the fact that we are in the final stages of our Estimates process and I fully expect that will be the case. I understand Mr. Derkach will be here. He has three or four more questions that he would like to introduce and get some answers to, so with all due respect, I would ask that we be allowed to bounce around a little bit just to clean up some questions that we have. In sharing the Estimates process with another colleague, we have double trouble I guess. We keep thinking about new things that we need to approach, so if you will bear with us in that regard I would appreciate very much.

* (15:10)

I wanted to turn to page 60, 16.4, Mr. Chair, and ask this minister some questions on the Manitoba Property Tax Credit. If the Minister would be so kind, could you please give me an

overview as to the objectives and talk about how the Manitoba Property Tax Credit impacts on the funding for the educational services in the province of Manitoba, and give some ideas as to the goals and objectives you might have for the future?

Mr. Caldwell: Mr. Chairman, I thank the Member for her question and am pleased to be able to provide some answers to it. Before I do so, perhaps I should again introduce the members of the Department who are with us here today: Mr. Claude Fortier, Ms. Pat Rowantree, Dr. Leo LeTourneau, and my boss, Dr. Ben Levin.

The issue which the Member raises is one, of course, that is of tremendous significance for the Government of the Province of Manitoba. The Property Tax Credit and resident homeowner tax assistance program that the provincial Government has undertaken in this budget year, in addition to \$75 to that program in this budget year provided to Manitoba taxpayers in this year, an immediate benefit of \$325 as a deduction in their municipal property tax statement. That represents an injection of \$75 additional funds in this budget year, Mr. Chairperson. The Property Tax Credit was and is central to government's belief that property taxpayers in the province of Manitoba over the past decade have suffered tremendously as a consequence of, frankly, provincial government offloading of responsibility in term of funding, particularly for the public school system which is why this subappropriation appears within my budget but more broadly as well.

The major concern of property taxpayers in the province of Manitoba revolves around the percentage of funds that have to be obtained locally, from the local level, from local ratepayers in the form of property tax to support individual school division's educational objectives. For that reason that subappropriation is reflected in the Department of Education and Training's budget.

The philosophy behind the tax credit and the enhancing of the tax credit, which was an election commitment that the provincial New Democratic Party made in the previous election, if elected government, the commitment was to

increase the property tax credit by \$75 in this budget year and a further \$75 in a future budget year. That commitment was undertaken in this year's budget. It was a recognition of the property taxation explosion that took place at the local level over the past decade, recognition that that explosion was primarily the consequence of provincial offloading in the public school sector by the provincial government and a recognition that Manitoba's property taxpayers truly required some level of support at the property tax level as a consequence of the increases of the past decade.

So it was an election commitment. It was directly tied to the level of the property taxation, primarily driven by local educational needs. It is a commitment that we felt as a government and continue to feel as a government is one that local property taxpayers indeed need after the tremendous burdens that property taxpayers have been placed under over the years.

I know that members opposite also concur in this view that Manitoba property taxpayers indeed pay tremendous amounts of dollars and contribute tremendous resources to the public school system, to the health system, and to many other endeavours of government. Relief in terms of property taxation is something that both parties in this House, I daresay, three parties in this House recognize as an important issue.

So that is how it evolved, Mr. Chair. It is linked with Education because that is where the largest increases have been experienced as a consequence of school division taxation. That I think is appropriate, to reflect it in the Education appropriations, for this reason. I would be pleased to answer any more questions. That is a pretty broad outline of where it emerged from though.

Mrs. Smith: Mr. Chair, one more question to the Minister, in view of what we are going through right now, we have a great deal of concern about Bill 42, not to get into a dissertation about it at this point in time.

Could the Minister reassure this committee that the property taxes will not be raised in the subsequent years? Will there be enough funding in the coffers to offset that?

Mr. Caldwell: Mr. Chair, we can state in very broad terms the programs and policies and commitments that the Government has put into place in support of public school excellence in the province of Manitoba. We can contrast them with the policies of the previous administration, as we do oftentimes in Question Period. I will not get into the partisan rhetoric that we get into in Question Period in this regard, so I will leave the previous administration's record alone. *[interjection]* The Member thanks me for that. You are welcome.

I will talk about the policies and commitments and programs that have been put into place by this government in support of public school excellence, particularly as it relates to funding and property taxation and so forth. The issue of taxation and guaranteeing whether taxes will go up or down is a little bit like guaranteeing that an asteroid will not hit the planet. Conditions obviously vary and there are so many unknowns at any level, but this year we can deal with the factual basis rather than something hypothetical.

This year in Manitoba, with the increase in support that the Government committed to in the public schools funding announcement, you will know and the Member will know that the Government of Manitoba made a commitment to tie public school funding with the rate of economic growth in the province of Manitoba. We are fortunate in Manitoba to have an economy that is growing.

I know that members opposite can take a great deal of credit for that and do in terms of the business policies that were undertaken by the previous administration. I am pleased to note that the growth continues and expands during the mandate of this administration, our government. We have, in that light, tied public education funding to economic growth; that is, the Government of Manitoba will invest resources in the public school system in a trajectory of funding growth. This year that translated to a \$30-million injection of new dollars into the base of the public education system in the province of Manitoba. Next year, with the continued growth of the provincial economy, I expect that figure will be of a similar nature.

This sort of business planning, Mr. Chairman, which provides for ongoing stability in terms of funding the public school system, has never been undertaken before in the province of Manitoba. It provides for long-term business planning, both at the local level and at the provincial level, with some understanding and some analysis tied to economic growth that provides for those at the school division level, the business officials, the secretary-treasurers and so forth, as well as those at the government level to co-ordinate four-year, five-year, six-year outlooks and forecasts for their programs and for their levels of funds.

* (15:20)

It provides a stability to the public school system broadly as well as funding enhancement that is tied to a figure that all parties can understand, business officials, the province, banks. The public understand economic growth as a concept and understand how that is reflected in dollar terms. That commitment of increased funding support to the province will mitigate against the local property taxation increase. There is no doubt about it. As we as a government try to restore levels of provincial funding, we do expect a relative decrease in the need to go to local property taxpayers. The reverse, of course, is what happened in the past decade, and we are hoping and expecting that the same will occur this year.

In fact, Mr. Chairperson, in some instances, the school divisions in the province of Manitoba, when the public schools funding announcement was made this year, did reflect the lowest levels of local property taxation increases in a number of years. That expectation from that perspective is one that we hold to.

As well, Mr. Chairperson, in terms of over and above, of course, the commitment to increase funding at the rate of economic growth to the public school system which will mitigate against local property taxation increases, the property tax credit, the additional \$75 in this budget year and the future increases of the property tax credit, will address this problem at the other end. That is right in the household, right in the pocketbook, as it were, of the property taxpayer. The combination of providing

increasing support to the system, with a mitigation at the homeowner level and renter level, attacks this problem at both ends.

That is the context within which we are framing all of our fiscal expectations vis-à-vis the public school system.

Mrs. Smith: With all due respect to this minister, I know that the intent is I am sure to provide the best possible education for students in Manitoba. In all due respect, talking about the taxation and talking about Bill 42, I am sure the Minister can appreciate, as he just stated a few minutes ago, there are so many variables that come into play that it is hard to predict what the taxes will do.

Today on CBC, Mr. Chair, as the Minister and I were speaking on radio this morning or noon hour, we were talking about the hopes and the fears that we had for this bill. In all due respect, I do think that we had a difference of opinion in how the bill would impact the community. I think from both sides of the House there is concern there. I guess the Minister is quite aware that our concern on this side of the House is the property tax increases and the uncertain economic rate of growth, which is so unpredictable.

Could this minister please articulate why he is so certain that this bill is very, very good for the students of Manitoba and for the families in Manitoba? This side of the House, as you know, and the opposite side of the House as well, I know is very supportive of teachers. I know the Minister is very mindful of teacher concerns. That is very much appreciated. I know that teachers have had a huge job to do with a lot of curriculums, a lot of testing, a lot of things that had to be brought into play because of the need for the curriculums to be updated and the need for accountability.

Having said that, I know from the Minister's comments, Mr. Chair, he is very concerned to make sure that teachers do feel supported and teachers do feel a part of the system and respect it. I say on this side of the House that that is of paramount importance to this side of the House. We are very supportive of teachers. As you know, I was a teacher for 22 years. My husband

still teaches. Needless to say, we have strong networks out there in the teaching population.

Having talked about the Manitoba property taxes, could this Minister articulate why he is so certain that the taxes will not go through the roof and he is so certain that teachers will not be blamed for this happening? This is a concern that we have on this side of the House. I am sure this is something that this minister has put under consideration as well. So if he could articulate how he knows that this move to Bill 42 will be in the best interests of the education of the students, it would be much appreciated.

Mr. Caldwell: Mr. Chairperson, the answer, quite simply, is the historical record. Again, I could speak for 20 minutes about this, but it gets into the realm of rhetoric and party politics or politics at its worst when we do. But the historical record, in this regard, on either side of Bill 72, which Bill 42 repeals, not in full, I might add, the largest cost driver identified is class size and composition. We want to have a broader provincial discussion about what policy should be with regard to class size and composition. But in terms of teachers' salaries, settlements, they range in the 2% level, both sides of Bill 72.

In terms of the macro issues—I guess they are micro issues, frankly—of transfers and so forth, these were all considerations that governed collective bargaining for decades, and there is no appreciable explosion. The explosion in property taxation that took place in the province of Manitoba was not related to the collective bargaining protocols that existed in the province for the last 40 years. The explosion in property taxation related more to the reallocation or redistribution of funding supports for the system. I am trying to stay away from rhetorical stuff because you get bogged down in it, and there seems to be no way out unless the Speaker is going to stop Question Period. That is usually where we do this sort of thing. That is the historical record, the long and short of it.

Mrs. Smith: I am not sure that the Minister has articulated quite honestly how this bill is going to improve the level of education for students in the school, but we have gone through quite a few hours of Estimates and I would like to turn my

time over to Mr. Derkach, who has some questions he would like to ask.

Mr. Caldwell: I want to thank the Member for Fort Garry (Mrs. Smith). It has been a pleasure when we have had it, the exchanges. I kind of like this process a little bit better than Question Period, to tell you the truth, although some of my colleagues may not agree with that from some of the earlier sessions. It has been pretty smooth in Education and Training, and I appreciate that.

* (15:30)

I should also say before the Member passes, I did get handed a note today from the Department, and the Member from Russell, I note, also appreciates this. There was an error in the list of Red River College Board of Governors, and I will table the corrections. It relates primarily to dates. I am assuming here Mr. William Regehr was chair effective July 1, 2000. I am not sure what was on the record before, and Mr. Edgar Martens, member effective July 1, 2000. It says: Please destroy the listing of current Red River College Board of Governors in your book.

I will table that to make sure that is correct. Thank you again.

Mr. Leonard Derkach (Russell): I would like to, if I may, return to the post-secondary area of the Estimates. I have a couple of questions as they relate to Stevenson Aviation. Then I would like to move on into the university side, if the Minister is agreeable to that.

With regard to Stevenson Aviation, can the Minister tell us whether or not Stevenson Aviation Centre is still operating out of Portage la Prairie?

Mr. Caldwell: Yes, it is, and actually I spent half a day out at Stevenson about three weeks ago and had a great tour of the facility. I know that the Member knows the former Portage air force base very well himself. I was quite impressed at the work that has been done out there. Yes, it is still out of Portage and is still hale and hearty.

Mr. Derkach: Can the Minister perhaps just briefly elaborate on the programs that are delivered through Stevenson Aviation at this time?

Mr. Caldwell: While there is a bit of a scrambling here to get me some information, there are a number of programs that are available out of Stevenson for Manitoba learners, for students. Aircraft maintenance engineering. I will articulate a little bit about the growth. I know that Stevenson grew from gestation through the former administration. I know the Member would be interested to know that there is still growth at Stevenson and, in some sectors, quite hardy and robust growth. In the aircraft maintenance engineer, in 1999-2000, there were 10 students in that program. In 2000-2001, it mushroomed to 95, tremendous growth in the maintenance engineer program at Stevenson. Aircraft maintenance, in 1999-2000, there was 20 in that particular program. In 2000-2001, there was an actual 30. Structural repair technician remained constant at 12 in both years. We are projecting this year for 2000-2001 enrollment; we are hoping to get those numbers up to the range of 20 or so.

As the Member will know, and I know, as indeed the House knows, the aerospace industry in Manitoba is a very important industry. It is cutting edge, in terms of technology and technological applications. There are tremendous opportunities in this area. As the previous administration did under its time in office and as this administration is doing now in our time of office, there is significant interest in developing and further expanding this particular industry in the province of Manitoba, and, of course, Education and Training plays a role in that.

In terms of Canadian aircraft, air regulations, again, there were 23 last year, 33 this year. Other areas where there are courses offered, AME refresher recurrent programs for air maintenance engineers, that expanded tremendously. In 1999-2000, there were 36, in 2000-2001, 115. Of course those numbers fluctuate to a degree because that is a refresher program for those who already operate as air maintenance engineers. There are welding programs, prior learning assessments, avionics and so forth. In total, in 1999-2000, there were

257 students. In total, in 2000-2001, there were 346, a very vigorous and growing educational facility.

Mr. Derkach: Can the Minister tell us whether or not Stevenson Aviation is still involved in the truck driver training program as well, or is that something that has gone by the wayside?

Mr. Caldwell: Not to my knowledge and not to the knowledge of the Deputy, so I would say, to the best of our understanding, right here with the staff that I have, no, but I could check that again for the Member if the Member desires. My expectation is the truck driver training has likely moved out of that facility and is taking place in different context. I could provide that information for him. It is certainly not on the Stevenson note that I have here. Stevenson Aviation Centre is very much identified in terms of activity identification is the delivery of the in-school component of the Aircraft Maintenance Engineer Apprenticeship Program, a number of accredited technical training courses to address recurrent training and skills upgrading needs of the aviation industry in other courses to promote job entry into the aviation industry. That is the information I have. I know there is eye contact going on between the ADM and the members so, if there is any other information, I would be pleased to hear it.

Mr. Derkach: It is just purely for information, Mr. Chair, because I have not been involved in the education field for some time. I do know that at one time Stevenson Aviation used to run a truck driver training program at Birds Hill. They had a training course and provided training for long-distance truck drivers. As a matter of fact, you used to see them coming into the city with a truck driver training logo on the trucks. I was just wondering whether that is something that went by the wayside in the previous administration or whether it is still operating.

Mr. Caldwell: I was just advised by the deputy, in reference to the Birds Hill, it twigged a reaction, I suppose, an understanding. But a lot of those programs, the Member would probably be happy to note, the truck driver programs have been transferred to private industry, and there are a number of schools now. I expect that that is

what occurred with the enterprise that he alludes to, probably a couple of years ago at least.

Mr. Derkach: In the Minister's commitment to double the enrolment in community colleges, is he also looking at that kind of initiative in the various training initiatives, such as Stevenson Aviation?

Mr. Caldwell: In terms of the aerospace industry, Mr. Chair, yes, I think that, again, like the previous administration, we have very close dialogue with industry in this particular sector. We recognize it as a very important industry for the province, as I mentioned in an earlier remark about the cutting-edge nature of the industry in terms of high tech and the opportunities that high tech brings with it for the larger economy.

* (15:40)

So we have been pleased to note the growth that occurred in educational opportunities this year, and it is something that the Government of Manitoba continues to support and believe in. We expect the aircraft industry to grow in the province by up to 50 percent over the next few years, so there will have to be a corresponding commitment to the industry. Definitely, there will be more interest in assisting and facilitating that growth.

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Chair, does the Minister have any plans with regard to expanding the programs or the numbers of programs at Stevenson Aviation, and is he undertaking any kind of a review of the programs that are being offered at Stevenson or its location, for that matter?

Mr. Caldwell: Mr. Chair, the answer is yes to all of them. I can elaborate a little bit further.

The programs at Stevenson, of course, there are a number, upwards of a dozen, but they do, as the Member understands, represent still only a fraction of the opportunities available in the aerospace industry, in the aviation industry. We as a government do expect that Stevenson will continue to dialogue with government and advocate for program expansions. I certainly am interested in receiving that advice.

Certainly, industry also has an interest in broadening the opportunities available for young Manitobans to have an education in this sector of our economy, and I am pleased to take that advice as well. We will be working closely and continuing to work closely with Manitoba aerospace as an industry group to see what training is needed and where we can best deliver it.

As the Member from Russell (Mr. Derkach) knows, no doubt, the aerospace and aviation industry is very well organized as a sector in the province of Manitoba in terms of its global training needs and where they would like resources to be placed by government. We are very, I think, working in the same tradition as the previous administration in being responsive to industry needs and trying within the best of our capacity and resources to develop opportunities based upon those needs.

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Chair, is the Minister or government looking at a review with respect to the location of Stevenson Aviation and whether it is appropriate for it to be located in Portage la Prairie?

Mr. Caldwell: There have been over the years, and I expect that the Member knows this as well, requests from industry in this area, in this sector which is primarily located around the Winnipeg International Airport, to have a capacity that is closer to home as it were. Those pressures have existed for years and continue to exist. There have been discussions for some time now about that desire of industry to have closer access to the training needs at Winnipeg International Airport as opposed to some miles west in Portage la Prairie.

I am very sensitive as minister and the Government is very sensitive to this issue, both in terms of what industry desires and in terms of what Stevenson desires, and that discussion continues to occur within the Department. If there is any review that has taken place—"review" is too hard strong of a word, frankly, but if there is any debate or discussion on this particular issue it revolves around those pressures and those concerns of both industry and of Stevenson in Portage as a training establishment.

Options are always considered on potential outcomes in terms of getting the best delivery for education and the best delivery for industry, and those sorts of discussions continue. There certainly is no decision being made on Stevenson's future now in Portage or Stevenson's future now in the city of Winnipeg. Stevenson's existed at Portage la Prairie at the former air force base, and they run a very good operation out there.

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Chair, I agree with the Minister, that indeed Stevenson Aviation does run a fairly respectable operation in Portage la Prairie. One of the reasons that it was relocated to Portage was under the initiative of decentralization but also important was the establishment of industry and training facilities in Portage la Prairie as a result of the abandonment, if you like, of the base.

It seemed to be a significant fit with that space, and indeed, I think it has provided an important contribution to the economy of the community with regard to the training that goes on at Stevenson's. I daresay it is probably appropriate, because there is a training component in terms of aviation at Portage as well.

I guess more specific to the Minister: Is he launching or is he contemplating launching a task force or a review by individuals from his department or outside of the Department of Stevenson vis-à-vis its location in Portage and Winnipeg?

Mr. Caldwell: In this regard, I agree with the Member in terms of the operations of Stevenson and the work it does in terms of providing aviation technical training for Manitobans. I do have a sensitivity to the demands of industry who, after all, in this regard, we are trying to facilitate as well. There have been, as the Member knows, over the years, a desire of industry in the aerospace sector, in the aviation sector who are primarily located around the Winnipeg International Airport to have closer accessibility, to put the terms of maximizing resources in terms of infrastructure resources but also maximizing resources in terms of human resources and opportunities for students in the province.

I am interested in certainly having—not any sort of task force or anything quite as elaborate or ornate as that, but I am interested in all branches of government or all branches of the Department and have undertaken some assessments in branches, as the Member knows as well, since assuming the office in October. I am interested in getting some advice and some range of options and some range of input from the field, from the Department, on how to best deliver aviation training in aerospace technical training in the province of Manitoba with reference to maximizing the opportunities for industry and maximizing the opportunities for young Manitobans to access the highest level of training in the aviation and aerospace sector in the province.

There has been a working group, I am advised here, responding to a study showing the demands in industry. I am interested in, again, as I mentioned, getting from the Department some advice about what exactly is the feeling in the industry and at Stevenson and in the other post-secondary education institutions that also augment this industry and getting some of their advice back on this issue. But in terms of anything more specific than that, no, Mr. Chair, for the most part my hands are full enough of items right now as it is.

We have also been in discussion—the Deputy is reminding me that we have been and I have been personally to Bristol, Boeing and Air Canada in the city at the establishments that they have at Winnipeg International. I am tremendously impressed. You know, being a country boy from Brandon, you do not get a chance oftentimes to get into such a high-tech workplace. I am tremendously impressed at the aviation and aerospace industry in the province and the tremendous infrastructure establishment they have in the province vis-à-vis that industry.

I hope I have answered the Member's questions sufficiently. There is no task force. There has been a working group responding to a study by industry in terms of their demands. I want to try and make decisions vis-à-vis all areas of the Department based upon best advice. I am certainly not in any hurry on any issue to wander into something. That is a cinch.

* (15:50)

Mr. Derkach: In view of the fact that this is an area that is a high-tech area and one which there seems to be a fairly bright future and a lengthy future for employment and for expansion, I note from the Estimates that although there is some salary and operating increases, there does not seem to be a significant increase in terms of the program side. So I guess my question with regard to the review is based on the fact that we seem to be in a pause with regard to expansion of programs at Stevenson Aviation. So I am wondering whether the Minister is indeed going to be looking at expansion of programming in that area once he has the report of his working group and whether he looks at this area as one where there is opportunity for expansion.

Mr. Caldwell: Mr. Chair, yes, I do look at this area as one that is worthy of expansion in the province and certainly I think conform with the view of the previous administration on this particular matter. The Member is right in noting that the primary expansion in the budget this year for Stevenson is on the salary line and it is quite modest. There were salaries adjusted to compete with private enterprise. I know that oftentimes those in public service, when they leave public service, have opportunities in terms of private enterprise of achieving substantially larger salaries. This is an area that we have to be very competitive in, particularly the aerospace sector and the aviation sector.

This year, as the Member notes, there was a very modest increase related primarily around salaries, as I just mentioned. This year also, as the Member notes, there was not significant expansion broadly in Stevenson. The primary reason for that is not so much looking at Stevenson, but it is directly related to the whole idea of the College Expansion Initiative and how we are trying to, as a government, reformulate education and training opportunities at a global level to achieve higher participation rates for young Manitobans entering the post-secondary sector, maximizing resources as we invest in the post-secondary education sector.

So in terms of Stevenson, I think that is more reflective of why there is a very modest

increase in this particular appropriation in this budget year.

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Chair, well, I can say to the Minister that in my experience this is an area that has trained Manitobans and I guess non-Manitobans, but our students specifically, for an industry that requires and seems to show growth in terms of its requirement for that type of trained individual. I would encourage the Minister to look at this industry and also encourage him to look at the other components.

Mr. Stan Struthers, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair

I know that the working group may be looking at the needs of industry with regard to where the training is located, but I guess I have to relate that back to our communities in rural Manitoba where, if we simply tried to meet the pressures, I daresay there would not be a university in Brandon nor would there be a training college in Brandon. We need to take into account, when we measure all of these issues, the fact of living accommodations for those students who are from out of province or from out of the area. We need to measure such things as the impact on the economy for the area and also the availability to people in that region as well.

So, although we could centralize all government functions in the Capital region or the Capital city, I think there is merit, and I have a very strong bias towards this and I am not afraid to admit it, that indeed as a government of a province we need to show our presence in all communities of our province, including the smaller and more rural communities of Manitoba. To me it seems that the distance between Winnipeg and Portage is not all that great. In fact, you know that is not a big hurdle in terms of working with the aerospace industry, especially when that industry is located on the western side of the city as well.

So I simply make my comments, and the Minister can take them for what they are worth. But, indeed, I would encourage him, as the leader of that particular department, to pay careful attention to the needs of the people in that Portage area before he makes any

movements to remove that training centre from the community of Portage. Indeed I can tell him that we will be keeping a close eye on that as well because, as I indicated to him before, I do have a strong bias towards opportunities in rural Manitoba as well.

Mr. Caldwell: Mr. Acting Chair, I think that all of us, the Member for Russell (Mr. Derkach), the Member for Dauphin (Mr. Struthers), and the Member for Brandon East (Mr. Caldwell) have a similar sense for those communities that are outside of the city of Winnipeg. So we are all amongst friends in that particular issue. The issue will be studied very carefully, if indeed we go down that road, and I share the sensitivity that both you have and the Member for Russell has for those communities outside of the Capital Region and the city of Winnipeg.

I believe it is appropriate to assess the entire context in all decision making before a decision is concluded. I will likely set my staff to cringing when I mention this, after it being in the papers so much over the last couple of weeks, but certainly the process that we are undertaking as a government vis-à-vis the expansion of the Red River College in the downtown area of the city of Winnipeg, we want to really have a detailed assessment of the impacts on all decisions as we move forward, achieving the maximum use of resources and the maximum benefit to Manitobans in our decision making. So I do agree with the Member for Russell, and I do in fact share his view in this regard.

Mr. Derkach: Not specifically against Stevenson Aviation, more related to Red River College, but still in the community of Portage la Prairie, I guess specifically Red River College, I think, has an office or it is a spot in Portage. I am wondering whether or not the Minister is contemplating any expansion of that centre in Portage la Prairie.

Mr. Caldwell: Mr. Acting Chairman, certainly the expansion in programming is at the direction of the Board of Red River Community College in the main. The College Expansion Initiative does provide for a regional expansion, distance education as components, Mr. Chair. The College Expansion Initiative, the broad shape is known but the details of the college expansion

issue remain to be developed and are being developed actually as we speak, so I expect, and I will give you my expectation. I do not talk about hypotheticals, but we are committed to having an expansion of college enrollment in the province, a very ambitious program. I expect that there will be implications in terms of growth throughout the system as that program is undertaken, but in terms of the presence, the centre at Portage la Prairie, I expect it will also have some positive impact to that particular program.

We also want to work more closely between colleges and schools, Mr. Chair, especially vis-à-vis adult learning centres as has been the case at the Brandon Adult Learning Centre, so we are in a curious little situation here and I am going to record this for posterity. This may be the first time that a Minister has shared briefing, not notes but little advice that comes from the Deputy Minister. Typically, it is a pile of paper that gets shoved in front of the Minister, as I know the Member for Russell will remember from his days as minister. Doctor Levin has brought in a laptop today which he is assiduously punching out notes for me and holding it in front of my face, so it is kind of interesting. So, at any rate, I expect that throughout the system there will be some positive implications for rural centres wherever there is a presence for Red River Community College, Assiniboine Community College and Keewatin Community College.

* (16:00)

Mr. Derkach: Can the Minister advise how many staff are currently in place in Portage la Prairie from Red River Community College and what their operating and salary program lines are and also what programs they offer from that centre?

Mr. Caldwell: Mr. Chair, staff is just preparing that, and I note with humour that it is not something that Doctor Levin feels he can punch into his computer and get up right away, but we will have the information for the Member momentarily. There is, as the Member knows, a considerable presence of educators throughout the province, with all the colleges particularly, because they have a larger local presence in the

rural communities throughout Manitoba, so there are substantial numbers throughout the province. Doctor Levin is now scrawling a note to me on a piece of paper, so we should have some answer very soon. Oh, he writes, "We do not have those here." Oh, Doctor LeTourneau has given me some material now. The note that Doctor LeTourneau has given me here is: "The regional campuses have technology access sites within their regions. They are the primary producers of adult computer literacy, expertise. I do not have any raw numbers in terms of educators, but I will endeavour, if the Member would like, to get you those numbers. I do not think that we have them here right now."

Mr. Derkach: Well, Mr. Chair, I would certainly be appreciative of the Minister if he would provide that kind of information for me, not because it is of some value to me to be able to come back at government and criticize them or anything of that nature. It is for information, and I know that the Minister can tell me, well, get your own information in that regard, but, really, our information has to come accurately from government, and I think that is government responsibility. I would like to also ask the Minister if he could do the same for me. I know he may not have that information here today, but it is not information that I require right at this moment. Certainly, if it could come to me in written form at a later date, I would be appreciative of it, and that is the area of each community college and what outreach offices they operate at the present time and what programs are available from each of those outreach offices.

By outreach offices or centres, I guess I mean, in the case of Red River, do they operate only in Portage la Prairie, or do they operate in other areas? I think they operate in southern Manitoba as well. Assiniboine Community College, I know, do a distance ed learning program. They also have some centres. I believe Keewatin Community College does, the same with Thompson and with some of the northern communities. As I indicated, it is just for information for me as a critic for post-secondary education, so I am a little more knowledgeable with regard to where these centres are, what programs they operate, how many staff they

have and what their operating grants and operating financial responsibilities are.

Mr. Caldwell: I can give some advice in terms of centres that Assiniboine College and Red River College and Keewatin Community College offer in different areas of the province. I will read some of that in right now. Assiniboine Community College, obviously, operates in the Parkland Southwest Regional Centre, Russell, the Member's home constituency. It also operates in the Neepawa Training Centre, the Killarney Resource Centre. It offers programs out of Swan River from the Swan Valley School Division, as well as projected regional projects for 2000-2001 in Churchill, Flin Flon, Pemechikamik and, again, Swan River regional. Red River offers four regional campuses in Portage, Winkler, Gimli and Steinbach, as well as a regional centre in Selkirk. Keewatin operates in small operations in a number of communities throughout the North.

I had an answer from staff vis-à-vis the Member's previous question on educators and numbers and so forth. That information, the colleges themselves have. If the Member desires, I have no problem inquiring of the colleges to get that information for him, and I would be pleased to do that.

Mr. Derkach: I would like that information. I thank the Minister for indicating positively that he would get that for me. I appreciate that.

Mr. Chair, if I might continue in this regard, in the area of the community colleges, we look at the areas of the virtual college or the distance education learning centre. I know I had pursued this with the Minister earlier, but I want to ask the Minister more specifically whether he has any specific plans with regard to the distance education learning centre or college which can deliver programs throughout the province without having a campus associated with it. If I might continue, the reason I asked that question is because there seems to be some speculation on behalf of individuals around Manitoba that indeed this is something that is in the works for the future year. I am wondering whether the Minister has any specific plans in that regard and whether he has allocated any funding for that initiative.

Mr. Caldwell: Yes, as I had noted earlier, the whole idea and concept of Campus Manitoba, which the Member for Russell (Mr. Derkach) pioneered during his time as minister, is something that we have an interest in government to continue expanding. I think that over the course of the mandate we will continue to expand Campus Manitoba, including into the colleges and not just universities. Over the course of the mandate, I think that in most areas of education and training in the province of Manitoba, we want to achieve growth, in terms of Manitobans participating at higher rates in post-secondary education. Indeed, in education at all levels in the province of Manitoba, we believe in the concept of lifelong learning, and are trying to facilitate that concept wherever we can within the province.

Colleges are planning a Campus Manitoba presence within them, Mr. Chair, which will probably start with a business administration program, delivery of a business administration program via Campus Manitoba. This will be contextualized again in the broader framework of the college expansion issue for the province, but I think it is safe to assure the Member that the Government is interested in continuing to broaden and expand the delivery of distance education in the province. I would be remiss if I did not note with appreciation the work that the Member did in developing the Campus Manitoba program during his tenure as minister.

Colleges, Mr. Chair, have been slower to get involved in Campus Manitoba historically in the province, because there are fewer generic programs such as arts and sciences that lend themselves to large enrolments. They are more focussed and more specific in their programs, but having said that, that is a challenge. It is not an obstacle.

Mr. Derkach: I thank the Minister for that, and I notice that there is no line for Campus Manitoba. I am wondering whether the Minister could direct me to the line or whether in fact he could advise me as to what the budget for Campus Manitoba is?

* (16:10)

Mr. Caldwell: Mr. Chair, the number is \$800,000, I am advised. The Deputy dated himself here. He said the University Grants Commission a moment ago, but it is Council on Post-Secondary Education. That is where it appears, and I am getting great delight in reading into the record the Deputy Minister here today, taking my last shot at it for this year.

Just to direct the Member to it directly. It is 16.7 and it falls under the University Operating Grants line item, 16.7(b), I am sorry, page 149. It is not delineated as a separate line item, but that is where it falls.

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Chair, I guess I still have trouble finding it. I note that under 16.7 (b) University Operating Grants, account for—is that where the item would be found, under the regular University Operating Grants?

Mr. Caldwell: Mr. Chair, that is correct.

Mr. Chairperson in the Chair

Mr. Derkach: So the Minister is telling me that approximately \$800,000 is allocated to this initiative?

Mr. Caldwell: Mr. Chair, that is correct.

Mr. Derkach: Could the Minister tell me how that compares to the previous year?

Mr. Caldwell: Mr. Chair, the amount is the same.

Mr. Derkach: So is the Minister telling me that they did not get the same increase in funding as the universities receive?

Mr. Caldwell: Mr. Chair, I am advised by Doctor LeTourneau that additional grants have been provided over the last number of years in addition to \$800,000. In terms of the \$800,000 figure, I think, similarly with Stevenson, we want to, as government, get a handle on the broad details, I suppose, of allocations and place them within the context of what we want to achieve for the College Expansion Initiative. This also falls under that sort of caution, I suppose.

Mr. Derkach: So, Mr. Chair, when the Minister says that additional grants are provided over and above \$800,000, can he give me an amount?

Mr. Caldwell: Mr. Chair, in '98 and '99, there was an additional \$300,000; in '99-2000, an additional \$250,000.

Mr. Derkach: Can the Minister advise what these grants were for?

Mr. Caldwell: In the main, Mr. Chair, they were to develop new courses.

Mr. Derkach: So the allocation of monies over and above the base of \$800,000 was for the development of new courses, but is there any money over and above the base grant for the implementation or introduction or the delivery of new programs?

Mr. Caldwell: There was no need for new dollars because the new courses, I have been advised, could be delivered with the existing staff complement.

Mr. Derkach: So they are simply replacements for programs that were offered before or in addition to? If it is in addition to, there has to be a requirement for resources to deliver those programs. I guess my question is: How, then, do you account for increased resources when you do not allocate more money?

Mr. Caldwell: It is in addition to. The cost offset is twofold: one with existing capacity being the capacity of the Department to deliver, the branch or Campus Manitoba to deliver, as well as tuition fees offsetting.

Mr. Chairperson: Who wants to speak?

Mr. Caldwell: I do not know if the Member heard me. These are new courses in addition to existing ones. The cost implications to deliver the courses are offset from two areas. One is existing capacity. There was existing capacity within Campus Manitoba. The remainder offset is from tuition fees charged.

Mr. Derkach: I do not want to spend a lot of time on these. I just simply want to get some

base of information from the Minister that we can then look at at a later point in time.

I would like to move, with the permission of the Minister, to some other areas within the post-secondary area. I know we spent a fair bit of time on the Minister's Estimates, so I am not going to try and keep him that long. I do have some questions as they relate to the labour market training area. This is an area that the Department has taken over from the federal government and one which, I think, we have a better approach now to be honest with you in terms of how we deliver the labour market programs in the province.

I note that some of the labour market offices have been amalgamated and have been closed. I am just wanting to ask the Minister whether or not the presence of these labour market offices in the communities is still there or whether now that has been amalgamated into community college centres or offices on a more regional basis.

Mr. Caldwell: We do share a space with the federal government in many of these offices. There have not been any closed. There have been some consolidations. Yes, there have been some consolidations of space. The Province maintains all the offices that the federal government had in the same places, so the consolidation, I think, is likely what the Member was referring to.

Mr. Derkach: I guess more specifically to the Minister: Is he telling us that all of the offices that were present in previous years will be maintained in the various communities?

* (16:20)

Mr. Caldwell: We have no plans in the Department to have any alteration in this regard. I cannot predict what may happen looking out, but there are certainly no plans at present.

Mr. Derkach: Can the Minister advise whether or not in the agreement with the federal government there is increased funding for this area in this current year?

Mr. Caldwell: There have been some marginal increases. The Deputy advises that they are in range of 1 percent or less. So there is some marginal increase here.

Mr. Derkach: Can the Minister advise what the Province's allocation over and above the past year has been to this initiative?

Mr. Caldwell: The levels are essentially the same. There are some marginal differences, but the level of support that the Province is putting in 2000-2001 is notionally the same as the amount that the Province put in in 1999-2000.

Mr. Derkach: I think we have covered the area of the community colleges. We have covered the area of labour market training, the Campus Manitoba. In all of those areas, Mr. Chair, with the exception of the community college area, the Minister has indicated that there have been marginal increases but not substantive. Yet, when we ask questions in the House, the Minister talks about the enormous increases to education. I will acknowledge one thing, and that is that the Minister has had greater resources because of the adequate provisions that were left to his government by the previous government to be able to deal with funding. So he has had the latitude to be able to do that.

The Minister also makes reference when we ask questions of him in the House about, quote, unquote, cutbacks to education from the former administration. I took the liberty of going back through previous years' Estimates to see precisely the kinds of shortfalls that the Minister was referring to in Question Period. I think that if the Minister were to examine those numbers more critically, he would find that indeed there has been some creative accounting on his part, or perhaps on his spin doctor's part, with regard to the reality of how funding has been allocated to education.

Having said that and having that off my chest, Mr. Chairman, I have to say that I encourage the Minister to continue to support these areas of education, because I do find and feel that they are extremely important to the economy of our province, to the future of our province, and indeed to the young people of our province. That leads me to the Student Financial

Assistance Program. In this area, there is a substantial increase from the \$33 million to the \$49-million number, but I want to ask the Minister whether or not the support to student financial assistance has been in the form of the matching Canada-Manitoba Millennium Scholarship and bursary fund or whether in fact there have been substantive changes in the other areas of loans and bursaries and if you like, student financial assistance to students in Manitoba institutions.

Mr. Caldwell: Mr. Chairman, there is new money in this area, \$6 million to the bursary program, and as the Member notes, the federal Millennium Scholarship fund an additional \$11 million.

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Chair, can I ask the Minister why there has been a decrease in the Manitoba Learning Tax Credit Program for students in 2000 and 2001?

Mr. Caldwell: Mr. Chairman, the program remains unchanged, as I know the Member will appreciate because it was a program begun by the previous administration. The estimated take-up is the reason for the reflection there.

Mr. Derkach: Is the Department then projecting fewer students who are going to be requiring the assistance, fewer students or less assistance required by students who are going to be attending our institutions?

Mr. Caldwell: There is an expectation that the decrease in the tuition rates will have a corresponding effect in this area.

Mr. Derkach: I think the Minister wanted to complete his answer.

Mr. Caldwell: Just a further detail, Mr. Chair. The Finance Department also does analysis based upon the projections that are derived at from their analysis. In this area, that has also been reflected.

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Chair, that answer leads us to the next area and that is the one of the tuition rebate. I know the Government's thrust was to try to show significant initiative in the post-secondary area and especially to students who

might be attending universities and colleges in Manitoba. However, I think there was a bit of shortfall in the planning and the projecting of the impact that this would have on the overall system. I have to say that although this provides some short-term relief, if you like, for students who are attending our post-secondary institutions, it certainly does have a negative impact on the overall system in that it does not allow our post-secondary institutions to be able to adjust their revenues in a positive sense so that they can continue to provide the same level of programming at our institutions.

Our universities have stated very clearly that they have had to reduce funding in almost every faculty at the University of Manitoba. What this means is; and there is no magic to any of this, if universities are not allowed to increase tuition fees and if they are not given the same amount of money that is going to be taken out of their budget as a result of the reduced tuition fees, then they have to be faced with nothing less than cutting programs or cutting faculty or a bit of both. There has been some dismay expressed by our universities at that issue. I would say that perhaps Brandon University and perhaps the University of Winnipeg can probably cope with this for the coming year. But, indeed at the University of Manitoba, which is our largest university and the one that deals more specifically with research in the higher learning areas, and is one that is probably an institution that depends largely on attracting students from other areas of the globe, if you like, this institution is going to be affected adversely by the initiative undertaken by the Government. Although through its initiative the Government will be reducing tuition fees by some \$8 million, the impact on our universities is more than that.

* (16:30)

I know that in tough economic times, a government may from time to time, have to influence the universities not to raise tuition fees. In a time when our economy is growing, in a time when there is an abundance of funding because tax revenues to the province are growing, it seems to be a regressive step to take an issue like this and not allow universities to be able to, in a progressive way, enhance their ability to offer programs that should be offered.

I think at the end of the day the student is going to be the one who is going to suffer because the numbers of programs, the numbers of courses, the professors are just not going to be there that is expected of an institution like the University of Manitoba.

I guess my worry goes beyond that because our university here in Manitoba has to compete with other universities across the land. I know of numerous students who are leaving our province to find educational opportunities in other jurisdictions. They do that because of the availability of programs at these other institutions. It is not because they want to leave Manitoba because it is a terrible province. Indeed many of them regret having to do that. The only place they can access some of these programs is at institutions outside of our province.

I fear if we continue this initiative that indeed it is going to be a very difficult one for government, and one which will land this government in a bit of hot water, but more importantly, will diminish the competitive ability of our post-secondary institutions, especially the largest one in our province.

So I want to ask the Minister, I know that this was an election promise. I know that this was a commitment that was made during the election. And I know how strongly a government wants to fulfill its commitment pledge. But now that they have done this for the first year, is the Minister prepared to take a look at all aspects of this initiative and to re-examine whether in fact this is a prudent way to go or whether in fact there may be a change of heart with regard to this initiative in the next fiscal year?

Mr. Caldwell: I appreciate the Member's comments and indeed share his concerns about a policy which may have impacts which are negative as opposed to positive on any issue that government looks at. The Member is accurate in stating that the commitment that this government made was for 10 percent tuition reduction for young Manitobans and not-so-young Manitobans attending and registering for post-secondary education in the province this year. It was an election commitment. The Department right now is looking at the issue more broadly of

affordability. I would acknowledge, I think, Mr. Chairperson, that the 10 percent tuition reduction for 2000-2001 is, in terms of a longer-scale perspective, a longer perspective, something that is not sustainable on that level. It is something that is very much responsive to the here and now.

The whole issue of affordability, the Department would like to consult broadly on the matter with student groups, with institutions, with others. In fact that process of consultation is underway because government does need to address the issue of increasing costs to students and also increasing costs to institutions. They are not mutually exclusive, which I think the Member rightly points out.

We as a government do have to increase participation rates in our post-secondary institutions and also increase outcomes in our post-secondary institutions. Making those institutions affordable to students is very important, as is providing adequate resources to make sure institutions are fulfilling the mandate that they have to provide educational excellence. As the Member knows, this past year universities in the province of Manitoba got the largest increase in support in a number of years.

The Member points out that the opportunity was made available by the fact that the Treasury is in somewhat better condition than it has been. We do, in the province, have a growing economy which is allowing an opportunity for that investment in the post-secondary system. I do take the Member's comments seriously. I recognize them as legitimate concerns. Certainly I do share the concern that whatever level and whatever policy, when it is being considered, the consideration must be broader than just the individual programmer policy, in this case, a 10 percent tuition reduction.

I am sensitive to those concerns. I think it is important to note in Manitoba, though, as well, that a large portion of students in the province cannot afford the level of increases imposed by universities, and we have heard that anecdotally over the last number of years. Four provinces in Canada right now have frozen fees. Therefore the issue of affordability is very much on the public agenda broadly in the country right now.

It is also an issue that is being researched by the Council of Ministers of Education in Canada, so Manitoba is not alone in dealing with this issue. This administration, of course, is not alone in dealing with it. The previous administration also had to deal with the whole issue of tuition, and I believe froze tuition for a number of years at some point during their tenure.

As I said, I do take the Member's remarks and—*[interjection]* I am sorry, I should not have said frozen—capped tuition increases during part of their administration. So the whole issue of tuition—

An Honourable Member: There is a difference.

Mr. Caldwell: Yes, there is a difference. I acknowledge that, vigorously nodding my head here. Had capped tuition during its mandate. So the whole issue of tuition is something that does have to be sensitively dealt with. It does have to be dealt with in a larger context, in the context of affordability, but also in the context of how it impacts upon programs at universities. I do share the Member's concerns and know that he will provide the best advice to me as we move on this agenda.

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Chair, this is where, I guess, the Minister and I part ways in terms of our thinking with regard to support to students because the Minister knows, as well as I do, that there are students across this province who have different means, depending on their socio-economic status within society. To give everybody a 10% reduction in tuition fees does not necessarily mean the same to each and every student in the province, because there are students who have lesser means. And there are students who face substantially greater costs as it relates to attending a university in the province of Manitoba and even attending the same programs within a university. I refer the Minister to students who perhaps live in the city of Winnipeg, who live at home, who attend a university, and students who attend university from outside the city who have to incur costs for transportation, costs for living accommodation, costs for transportation within the city, for that matter, but that is not different from students who live in the city on a full-time basis.

So, there are two areas, I think, of costs that are significantly different for students who attend our institutions from outside of the city of Winnipeg. It would seem to me that those areas can be addressed through a bursary or a scholarship program much more effectively, because then we are talking about addressing the needs of students rather than giving everybody the same kind of reprieve, if you like, which does not translate to that same amount of relief for each and every student. And so I simply do not agree with giving everybody the same amount of reduction in tuition fees on a percentage basis, because I do not think it translates to equity.

* (16:40)

The second thing that it does, by doing this, we are really hampering our universities to be able to deal with the programs and the professors that they have to have in place and the resources of the universities.

I am wondering whether or not the Minister is going to be looking at this whole initiative again and whether or not he will be more closely looking at the Manitoba Bursary Program because the scholarship program, as I understand it, is done through the federal government, whereas the Bursary Program is done through the Province, but both programs are administered by the Province. The money for the financial assistance for students does come largely from the federal government, the Student Loans Program comes from the federal government, as I understand it. I may be corrected on that, and certainly I give the Minister the opportunity to do that.

I would ask the Minister whether or not, in his own mind, he does not think that addressing student financial needs through the bursary and scholarship program is not a better way than giving everybody just a decrease of 10 percent in their tuition.

Mr. Caldwell: Mr. Chair, the Member's points are well taken, and it is for precisely this sort of debate that the Department is assessing the whole issue of affordability. Certainly, the remarks that he has placed onto the record today will go into that deliberation by the Department.

As he rightly points out, the objective is to enhance affordability for Manitobans, and if there are ways of managing those resources more efficiently and getting a greater impact in terms of participation rates in the province, that is certainly what we are interested in in this exercise.

Mr. Chair, I wonder if I might be indulged for a five-minute break, if that is acceptable,

Mr. Chairperson: Break, four and a half minutes.

The Committee recessed at 4:43 p.m.

The Committee resumed at 4:55 p.m.

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Chair, I would just like to turn to the area of Capital Grants, if I might with the Minister, and ask the Minister, with regard to universities, the Capital Grants line is precisely the same as it was the previous year. Can the Minister give me an explanation of this line what it entails, and whether or not there was a demand from our universities to enhance this area, and what the response was from the Minister?

Mr. Caldwell: I know the staff is getting some detailed information for me in that regard. The question is about whether there is some demand for Capital Grants from post-secondary institutions and what my reply was. Yes, there are demands for capital support from post-secondary education. I know the Member was chuckling when I said that, and he appreciates, as a former minister, exactly how loud those demands get from time to time. The response in terms of how I respond as a minister when those demands are made is probably likewise very similar to the former member's response. We have to place the request within the context of available resources, something which there is not an endless supply of in the province of Manitoba or indeed anywhere else for that matter.

Mr. Derkach: I guess I want to ask for clarification from the Minister with regard to Capital Grants to universities. There were \$10 million or \$11 million almost allocated the previous year. The same has been allocated this

year. My question is: Is this for new capital, or is this for the amortized capital payments that have to be made on capital that has been provided to the universities?

Mr. Caldwell: The Province of Manitoba does not amortize university capital at this point. With regard to the question about new dollars, \$6,940,000 was for new major capital and \$4 million was for renovations, equipment and so forth. It is new capital. The \$4 million in renovations and equipment broke out to \$3 million for the University of Manitoba—*[interjection]*—yes, because I expected that was going to be your next question—\$550,000 for the University of Winnipeg, \$350,000 for Brandon University, and \$100,000 for Collège universitaire de Saint-Boniface.

Mr. Derkach: I note that, with regard to the capital, it is exactly the same as the previous year, and yet I know that the infrastructure at the university is demanding more. From time to time when we were in government we used to inject extra capital money into the universities for such things as an example, the steam tunnels or the renovation of the steam heating system at the University of Manitoba. We also did, I think, a special allocation of funding to the Brandon University Library, Clark Hall, and, I believe, to the department of Agriculture at the University of Manitoba. I am wondering, although this is regular capital, whether or not there are special allocations that the Minister is going to be forwarding to the universities for special projects in the current year.

Mr. Caldwell: In terms of special projects, we have not gone down that road as the previous government did as of yet. I cannot speculate again on what may or may not happen in the future, because, as the Member notes, there is a significant capital deficit in the system and there are significant challenges in the system that need some redress, so I will not rule that out in the future but in terms of this year's Estimates, no. There is not any plans to that effect.

* (17:00)

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Chair, so in essence the Department has not allocated any additional

funding or any increase in funding for capital for the university or for the community college area.

Mr. Caldwell: In its broad strokes, yes, the Member is correct in that statement.

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Chair, there is also a line included here, Recoverable from Capital Initiatives. Can the Minister just give me an indication where that is recoverable from? I used to know but I need a refresher.

Mr. Caldwell: The previous practice, I am advised, is that government had a capital fund for all initiatives across government, a special amount of money for capital across government and that is why that figure is reflected in '99-2000 Estimates and not in the 2000-2001.

Mr. Derkach: So, in essence, we will have a capital program that is \$4.5 million less in this fiscal year because—or was the \$4.5 million recoverable from the total of \$36 million in the previous year?

Mr. Caldwell: No, more precisely, it is an accounting protocol. The money, the \$4.5 million that the Member mentions came into the Department of Education and Training from other areas of government last year. This year it is reflected in departmental only.

Mr. Derkach: Can the Minister give me an indication of what the Amortized Capital Assets line reflects?

Mr. Caldwell: Mr. Chair, they are primarily related to computer equipment. They are listed just below—oh, they are not. Page 171 perhaps? We have so many Estimates books here, I know that the Member has just changed his books.

Mr. Chairperson: Now, who has the floor here? You have.

Mr. Caldwell: It is page 171 and I think that outlines it. I note that the Member is nodding his head so I think we have all found it now.

Mr. Derkach: But can the Minister provide for me what the new amortized costs for 2000-2001 are of \$153,200?

Mr. Caldwell: Mr. Chair, it relates to equipment, primarily computers, but I think there is a note at the bottom of the page, reflects the amortized cost for purchased capital assets and that is primarily where that \$153,000 in total amortization of capital assets, new amortized costs in 2001 comes from the purchased capital assets.

Mr. Derkach: Will the Minister identify them for me, please?

Mr. Caldwell: Mr. Chair, the Department's bubble scanner, some computer equipment, those sorts of items within the Department are responsible for the new amortized costs.

Mr. Derkach: Okay, thank you, Mr. Chair. I think I understand where that area comes from.

I think that sort of completes the issues that I wanted to deal with in the Estimates process this year with regard to post-secondary education. But I do want to make a couple of final comments before we start going line by line.

First of all, I want to say to the Minister that I would like to thank his staff for providing the information. Indeed, in my experience with the staff that are still familiar to me who work in the Department, I have to say that they are very dedicated to their job. Indeed, I appreciate the work that they do on behalf of us as government and on behalf of the students and people in the education area in Manitoba. I know these are professional people and certainly we appreciate their time. Sometimes, I know that during the Estimates process it must become very frustrating for them, but indeed I do appreciate the fact that they have been patient and have given us the answers straightforwardly.

Mr. Chair, with regard to government, I have to say to the Minister that indeed he has inherited a department that is large in government, one that will be filled with challenges as he proceeds, and one that I think every Manitoban has some interest in because everyone has gone to school, has been there and has indeed got a keen interest to better our society through education, and investment in education is an important area to all of us.

I am somewhat disappointed in the Government in that an election commitment that was made, which I think was somewhat short-sighted, even after the impact of it was noted by many who were not necessarily politically motivated but who were looking at it from a practical point of view, could not encourage the Government to change its mind with regard to the initiative. I have some hope that indeed the Minister is going to relook at the issue and is going to examine it whether or not in fact it was a bit short-sighted and could be changed and broadened to more accurately reflect the needs of students in our province and to give our universities a better opportunity to indeed be able to continue to expand their programs and maintain the resources that they have at their disposal. So, in that particular area, I do have some disappointment.

I know the Minister said to Manitobans that his increase to post-secondary education was at least at the level of the cost of living. However, when one examines the real cost or the real increase to education, it waters down from that level to something somewhat less. I think that we all experience that because although we want to be noble in our gesture of grants offered to the institutions that we have responsibility for, when we apply it to the formulas we find that the numbers do not quite come out to where they were when we had made the announcements.

* (17:10)

Mr. Chair, I do not fault the Minister purposely for that, but I do hold him accountable for the comments that he makes with regard to the commitment to education and the commitment to the funding for education. If he says that in fact he will afford to give universities grants that are equal to the cost of living or to the growth of our economy, then indeed I expect that he will do that genuinely and without trying to be creative in the figures that he puts forward. I do not blame him for that specifically, but indeed it is a government responsibility.

We were in government through years when it was difficult, in years when the economy of this province was in the dumps, if you like, and we were going through probably the worst

recession since the Great Depression for that matter. Therefore, we were limited in the means that we had at our disposal to be able to give to our universities. The Minister lives in a different time. I expect that this government will be generous with our universities to the extent that it can, prudent with its dollars, but indeed invest in our universities and our education system in a very respectable way. I think Manitobans are waiting for that.

Politically, we can say things that perhaps make those out who are not involved in the day-to-day affairs of education believe that indeed we are doing our job. At the end of the day, the proof is in the opportunities that we really make available to the students and that we make sure that those students stay in this province, not only to get education and then leave, but I think we have to provide some incentives for students to stay here after they have graduated so that indeed they can become productive members of our society and contribute to the economy of our province.

The Minister has an enormous amount of work that is facing him. He has an enormous responsibility. I understand that. Certainly, as an opposition critic, I will not only criticize him but indeed at times when there are initiatives that he undertakes that are positive, I will certainly give him the credit for that as well.

With those few comments and my comments to the staff here, I think, and I will defer to the critic of the K to 12 area, we are prepared to go line by line, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Chairperson: Item 16.1 Administration and Finance (b) Executive Support (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$505,600—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$96,800—pass.

1.(c) Native Education Directorate (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$397,900—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$125,100—pass.

1.(d) Human Resource Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$670,000—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$146,600—pass.

1.(e) Financial and Administrative Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$764,500—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$257,100—pass.

1.(f) Management Information Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$715,900—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$304,500—pass.

1.(g) Research and Planning (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$319,300—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$160,900—pass.

2. School Programs (a) Division Administration (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$327,200—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$96,300—pass.

2.(b) Manitoba School for the Deaf (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$2,873,000—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$634,900—pass.

2.(c) Assessment and Evaluation (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$2,105,500—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$2,093,200—pass.

2.(d) Program Development (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$3,437,000—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$4,211,400—pass.

2.(e) Program Implementation (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$3,115,700—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$2,035,200—pass.

2.(f) Student Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$1,929,300—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$731,500—pass.

Resolution 16.2: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$23,590,200 for Education and Training, School Programs, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2001.

Resolution agreed to.

3. Bureau de L'Education Francaise (a) Division Administration (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$141,900—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$23,700—pass.

3.(b) Curriculum Development and Implementation (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits

\$1,192,900—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$978,100—pass.

3.(c) Educational Support Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$1,227,000—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$658,800—pass.

3.(d) Official Languages Programs and Administrative Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$812,800—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$1,357,800—pass; (3) Assistance \$1,376,700—pass.

3.(e) Library and Materials Production (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$460,500—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$280,600—pass.

Resolution 16.3: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$8,510,800 for Education and Training, Bureau de l'Éducation Française, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2001.

Resolution agreed to.

4. Property Tax Credits (a) Manitoba Property Tax Credit \$146,470,000—pass; (b) Pensioners' School Tax Assistance \$4,040,000—pass.

Resolution 16.4: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$150,510,000 for Education and Training, Property Tax Credits, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2001.

Resolution agreed to.

* (17:20)

5. Support to Schools (a) Schools Finance (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$845,900—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$165,600—pass; (3) Property Assessment \$2,300,300—pass.

5.(b) Education Administration Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$1,336,600—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$492,700—pass.

5.(c) Schools Information System (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$395,900—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$537,000—pass.

5.(d) Schools Grants (1) Operating Grants \$615,142,200—pass; (2) General Support Grants \$19,933,700—pass.

5.(e) Other Grants \$2,364,600—pass.

5.(f) Teachers' Retirement Allowances Fund \$77,813,400—pass.

5.(g) Manitoba Education, Research and Learning Information Networks \$493,300—pass.

Resolution 16.5: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$721,821,200 for Education and Training, Support to Schools, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2001.

Resolution agreed to.

6. Training and Continuing Education (a) Management Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$743,200—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$230,400—pass; (3) Advanced Education and Training Assistance \$1,287,300—pass.

6.(b) Labour Market Support Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$465,900—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$141,700—pass.

6.(c) Adult Literacy and Continuing Education (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$276,700—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$92,200—pass; (3) Grants \$1,213,500—pass.

6.(d) Youth Programs (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$1,359,200—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$441,700—pass; (3) CareerStart \$2,480,800—pass; (4) Youth Community Partnerships \$4,525,000—pass; (5) Partners for Careers \$400,000—pass; (6) Less: Recoverable from Aboriginal and Northern Affairs (\$200,000)—pass; (7) Less: Recoverable from Rural and Urban Economic Development Initiatives (\$4,212,500)—pass.

6.(e) WORKFORCE 2000 (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$317,400—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$79,200—pass; (3) Training Support \$1,000,000—pass.

6.(f) Stevenson Aviation Centre (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$820,400—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$631,100—pass.

6.(g) Apprenticeship (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$2,457,100—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$688,900—pass; (3) Training Support \$2,545,500—pass.

6.(h) Employment and Training Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$3,653,600—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$1,952,700—pass; (3) Training Support \$4,361,600—pass; (4) Building Independence \$3,351,600—pass; (5) Less: Recoverable from Family Services and Housing (\$600,000)—pass.

6.(j) Canada-Manitoba Labour Market Development Agreement (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$5,324,500—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$580,500—pass; (3) Training Support \$49,867,000—pass.

Resolution 16.6: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$86,276,200 for Education and Training, Training and Continuing Education, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2001.

Resolution agreed to.

* (17:30)

7. Support for Post-Secondary Education (a) Council on Post-Secondary Education (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$633,300—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$229,900—pass.

7.(b) University Operating Grants \$231,169,000—pass.

7.(c) Post-Secondary Strategic Initiatives Fund \$1,031,300—pass.

7.(d) Community Colleges Grants (1) Operating Grants \$64,156,900—pass; (2) Inter-Universities North \$822,100—pass.

7.(e) College Expansion Initiative (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$188,000—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$56,000—pass; (3) College Expansion Initiative Grants \$4,856,000—pass.

7.(f) Access Programs \$6,609,700—pass.

7.(g) Student Financial Assistance (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$1,743,800—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$664,500—pass; (3) Loans and Bursaries \$7,642,200—pass; (4) Interest Relief and Debt Reduction \$1,147,600—pass; (5) Manitoba Scholarship and Bursaries Initiative \$5,000,000—pass; (6) Manitoba Learning Tax Credit \$14,350,000—pass; (7) Canada Study Grants \$2,100,200—pass; (8) Canada Millennium Scholarship Fund \$11,000,000—pass; (9) Manitoba Millennium Bursary Fund \$5,900,000—pass.

7.(h) Tuition Rebate Grants (1) University Students \$7,000,000—pass; (2) Community College Students \$1,000,000—pass.

Resolution 16.7: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$367,300,500 for Education and Training, Support for Post-Secondary Education, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2001.

Resolution agreed to.

8. Capital Grants (a) School Divisions \$25,234,900—pass; (b) Universities \$10,940,000—pass; (c) Community Colleges \$2,245,800—pass; (d) Less: Recoverable from Capital Initiatives.

Resolution 16.8: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$38,420,500 for Education and Training, Capital Grants, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2001.

Resolution agreed to.

Item 16.9. Amortization of Capital Assets \$1,940,500—pass.

Mr. Caldwell: I just wanted to conclude with a couple of remarks myself. As I mentioned at the outset of today, I did quite appreciate the Member for Fort Garry (Mrs. Smith) and the Member for Russell (Mr. Derkach) and the discussion that we had over the last number of weeks on the Department of Education and Training's Estimates.

As I mentioned, for both the Member for Fort Garry and myself, this is a new experience and one I am sure neither one of us will soon forget. We both appreciated, I think, speaking on my behalf and I expect as well for the Member for Fort Garry, the experience of the Member for Russell in this process. I think for me it was very helpful to have a former minister of education take part.

I want to thank the two members opposite and indeed the members of the Opposition and the Government who have taken part in the Estimates process as it pertains to Education and Training. It has been quite an interesting process.

I know that my salary is coming up next on the agenda here, and I know that the members will not deem that I have earned my salary. I can say that if I do not have their support this year, I will try to work harder to get their favour next year.

* (17:40)

Mr. Chairperson: 16.9: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$1,940,500 for Education and Training, Amortization of Capital Assets, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2001.

Resolution agreed to.

The last item to be considered for the Estimates for the Department of Education and Training is item 1.(a) Minister's Salary, in the sum of \$27,300. Shall this item pass?

Some Honourable Members: No.

Mrs. Smith: I move, seconded by the Member for Russell (Mr. Derkach), that, due to the recognition by Manitobans that the Minister of Education and Training has failed to live up to his election commitment of providing funding equivalent to the rate of Manitoba's economic growth, the Minister of Education's salary, budget line 16.1.(a), be reduced to the amount of \$1.90, equivalent to the true percentage increase in public school funding for school year 2000-2001.

Motion presented.

Mr. Chairperson: I find this motion to be in order. Debate may now proceed. Anyone speaking for or against?

Mr. Steve Ashton (Minister of Highways and Government Services): I just want to put on record that we could have considered bringing a motion of this kind in the last 10 years when the Conservatives were in power, but if we had gone on the basis of increase in public school funding in the years when there was minus 2 percent, it would have required the previous ministers of Education to pay money to the Government. With that, I will say that we will be voting against this, and, in fact, if anything, I think the Minister of Education should get a bonus for turning around the public education system.

Mr. Chairperson: Is the Committee ready for a question, or are there any other—

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Mr. Chairperson: The matter before the Committee is the motion raised by the Member for Fort Garry (Mrs. Smith) that due to the recognition by Manitobans that the Minister of Education and Training (Mr. Caldwell) has failed to live up to his election commitment of providing funding equivalent to the rate of Manitoba's economic growth, the Minister of Education and Training's Salary budget line item 16.1.(a) be reduced the amount of \$1.90 equivalent to the true percentage increase in public school funding for the school year 2000-2001.

Voice Vote

Mr. Chairperson: All those in favour of the motion, say yea.

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Mr. Chairperson: All those opposed, say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Mr. Chairperson: In my opinion, the Nays have it. I declare the motion defeated.

16.1.(a) Minister's Salary.

Mrs. Smith: Mr. Chair, I want to take this opportunity to challenge your ruling. *[interjection]* Yeas and Nays.

Formal Vote

Mr. Chairperson: A recorded vote has been requested. Please call in the members.

All sections in Chamber for formal vote.

Mr. Chairperson: A motion was moved in the section of the Committee of Supply meeting in the Chamber by the Member for Fort Garry (Mrs. Smith). The motion reads that due to the recognition by Manitobans that the Minister of Education and Training has failed to live up to his election commitment of providing funding equivalent to the rate of Manitoba's economic growth, the Minister of Education and Training's salary, by the line item 16.1.(a), be reduced to the amount of \$1.90, equivalent to true

percentage increase in public school funding for the school year 2000-2001.

This motion was defeated on a voice vote, and subsequently two members requested that a formal vote on the matter be taken.

A COUNT-OUT VOTE was taken, the result being as follows: Yeas 17, Nays 26.

Mr. Chairperson: The motion is accordingly defeated.

The hour being after 6 p.m., committee rise.

Call in the Speaker.

IN SESSION

Mr. Speaker: The hour being after 6 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. tomorrow (Wednesday).

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, July 25, 2000

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