



Second Session - Thirty-Seventh Legislature

of the

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

**Official Report
(Hansard)**

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



Vol. LI No. 35B - 1:30 p.m., Thursday, May 24, 2001

ISSN 0542-5492

MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Seventh Legislature

Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
AGLUGUB, Cris	The Maples	N.D.P.
ALLAN, Nancy	St. Vital	N.D.P.
ASHTON, Steve, Hon.	Thompson	N.D.P.
ASPER, Linda	Riel	N.D.P.
BARRETT, Becky, Hon.	Inkster	N.D.P.
CALDWELL, Drew, Hon.	Brandon East	N.D.P.
CERILLI, Marianne	Radisson	N.D.P.
CHOMIAK, Dave, Hon.	Kildonan	N.D.P.
CUMMINGS, Glen	Ste. Rose	P.C.
DACQUAY, Louise	Seine River	P.C.
DERKACH, Leonard	Russell	P.C.
DEWAR, Gregory	Selkirk	N.D.P.
DOER, Gary, Hon.	Concordia	N.D.P.
DRIEDGER, Myrna	Charleswood	P.C.
DYCK, Peter	Pembina	P.C.
ENNS, Harry	Lakeside	P.C.
FAURSCHOU, David	Portage la Prairie	P.C.
FRIESEN, Jean, Hon.	Wolseley	N.D.P.
GERRARD, Jon, Hon.	River Heights	Lib.
GILLESHAMMER, Harold	Minnedosa	P.C.
HELWER, Edward	Gimli	P.C.
HICKES, George	Point Douglas	N.D.P.
JENNISSEN, Gerard	Flin Flon	N.D.P.
KORZENIOWSKI, Bonnie	St. James	N.D.P.
LATHLIN, Oscar, Hon.	The Pas	N.D.P.
LAURENDEAU, Marcel	St. Norbert	P.C.
LEMIEUX, Ron, Hon.	La Verendrye	N.D.P.
LOEWEN, John	Fort Whyte	P.C.
MACKINTOSH, Gord, Hon.	St. Johns	N.D.P.
MAGUIRE, Larry	Arthur-Virden	P.C.
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	N.D.P.
MARTINDALE, Doug	Burrows	N.D.P.
McGIFFORD, Diane, Hon.	Lord Roberts	N.D.P.
MIHYCHUK, MaryAnn, Hon.	Minto	N.D.P.
MITCHELSON, Bonnie	River East	P.C.
MURRAY, Stuart	Kirkfield Park	P.C.
NEVAKSHONOFF, Tom	Interlake	N.D.P.
PENNER, Jack	Emerson	P.C.
PENNER, Jim	Steinbach	P.C.
PITURA, Frank	Morris	P.C.
PRAZNIK, Darren	Lac du Bonnet	P.C.
REID, Daryl	Transcona	N.D.P.
REIMER, Jack	Southdale	P.C.
ROBINSON, Eric, Hon.	Rupert's Island	N.D.P.
ROCAN, Denis	Carman	P.C.
RONDEAU, Jim	Assiniboia	N.D.P.
SALE, Tim, Hon.	Fort Rouge	N.D.P.
SANTOS, Conrad	Wellington	N.D.P.
SCHELLENBERG, Harry	Rossmere	N.D.P.
SCHULER, Ron	Springfield	P.C.
SELINGER, Greg, Hon.	St. Boniface	N.D.P.
SMITH, Joy	Fort Garry	P.C.
SMITH, Scott, Hon.	Brandon West	N.D.P.
STEFANSON, Heather	Tuxedo	P.C.
STRUTHERS, Stan	Dauphin-Roblin	N.D.P.
TWEED, Mervin	Turtle Mountain	P.C.
WOWCHUK, Rosann, Hon.	Swan River	N.D.P.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, May 24, 2001

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Manitoba Hydro Lines Routes

Mr. Ron Schuler (Springfield): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Melvin Conover, Penny Friesen, Jock Nault and others, praying that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba request that the Minister responsible for Manitoba Hydro (Mr. Selinger) consider alternative routes for the additional 230kV and 500kV lines proposed for the R.M. of East St. Paul.

Kenaston Underpass

Mr. Frank Pitura (Morris): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Bernie Dyck, Susan Boulet, Mark Penner and others, praying that the Premier (Mr. Doer) of Manitoba consider reversing his decision to not support construction of an underpass at Kenaston and Wilkes.

Mr. John Loewen (Fort Whyte): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of A. Jones, D. Bekolay, M. Kulas and others, praying that the Premier (Mr. Doer) of Manitoba consider reversing his decision to not support construction of an underpass at Kenaston and Wilkes.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Manitoba Hydro Lines Routes

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Member for Springfield (Mr. Schuler), I have reviewed the petition and it complies with the rules and practices of the House. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read?

Some Honourable Members: Yes.

Mr. Speaker: Clerk, please read.

Madam Clerk (Patricia Chaychuk): The petition of the undersigned citizens of the province of Manitoba humbly sheweth:

THAT the R.M. of East St. Paul has the highest concentration of high voltage power lines in a residential area in Manitoba; and

THAT the R.M. of East St. Paul is the only jurisdiction in Manitoba that has both a 500kV and a 230kV line directly behind residences; and

THAT numerous studies have linked cancer, in particular childhood leukemia, to the proximity of power lines.

WHEREFORE YOUR PETITIONERS HUMBLY PRAY THAT the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba request that the Minister responsible for Manitoba Hydro consider alternative routes for the additional 230kV and 500kV lines proposed for the R.M. of East St. Paul.

Kenaston Underpass

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Member for Morris (Mr. Pitura), I have reviewed the petition and it complies with the rules and practices of the House. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read?

Some Honourable Members: Yes.

Mr. Speaker: Clerk, please read.

Madam Clerk (Patricia Chaychuk): The petition of the undersigned citizens of the province of Manitoba humbly sheweth:

THAT the intersection at Wilkes and Kenaston has grown to become the largest unseparated crossing in Canada; and

THAT the volume of traffic for this railroad crossing is twelve times the acceptable limit as set out by Transport Canada; and

THAT vehicles which have to wait for trains at this intersection burn up approximately \$1.4 million in fuel, pollute the environment with over 8 tons of emissions and cause approximately \$7.3 million in motorist delays every year.

WHEREFORE YOUR PETITIONERS HUMBLY PRAY THAT the Premier of Manitoba consider reversing his decision to not support construction of an underpass at Kenaston and Wilkes.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Member for Fort Whyte (Mr. Loewen), I have reviewed the petition and it complies with the rules and practices of the House. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read?

Some Honourable Members: Yes.

Mr. Speaker: Clerk, please read.

Madam Clerk: The petition of the undersigned citizens of the province of Manitoba humbly sheweth:

THAT the intersection at Wilkes and Kenaston has grown to become the largest unseparated crossing in Canada; and

THAT the volume of traffic for this railroad crossing is twelve times the acceptable limit as set out by Transport Canada; and

THAT vehicles which have to wait for trains at this intersection burn up approximately \$1.4 million in fuel, pollute the environment with over 8 tons of emissions and cause approximately \$7.3 million in motorist delays every year.

WHEREFORE YOUR PETITIONERS HUMBLY PRAY THAT the Premier of Manitoba consider reversing his decision to not support construction of an underpass at Kenaston and Wilkes.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Member for Charleswood (Mrs. Driedger), I have reviewed the petition, and it complies with the rules and practices of the House. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read?

Some Honourable Members: Yes.

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Mr. Speaker: Clerk, please read.

Madam Clerk: The petition of the undersigned citizens of the province of Manitoba humbly sheweth:

THAT the intersection at Wilkes and Kenaston has grown to become the largest unseparated crossing in Canada; and

THAT the volume of traffic for this railroad crossing is twelve times the acceptable limit as set out by Transport Canada; and

THAT vehicles which have to wait for trains at this intersection burn up approximately \$1.4 million in fuel, pollute the environment with over 8 tons of emissions and cause approximately \$7.3 million in motorist delays every year.

WHEREFORE YOUR PETITIONERS HUMBLY PRAY THAT the Premier of Manitoba consider reversing his decision to not support construction of an underpass at Kenaston and Wilkes.

* (13:35)

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour of tabling the Report of the Review and Implementation Committee for the Report of the Manitoba Pediatric Cardiac Surgery Inquest, May 2001.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 23—The Highway Traffic Amendment Act

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): On behalf of the minister of highways (Mr. Ashton), I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger), that leave be given to introduce Bill 23, The Highway Traffic Amendment Act (Loi modifiant le Code de la route), and that the same be now received and read a first time.

Mr. Speaker: Does the honourable Attorney General have leave to move the motion?
[Agreed]

Motion agreed to.

**Bill 32—The City of Winnipeg
Amendment Act**

Hon. Jean Friesen (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): I move, seconded by the Minister of Industry, Trade and Mines (Ms. Mihychuk), that leave be given to introduce Bill 32, The City of Winnipeg Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la Ville de Winnipeg, and that the same be now received and read a first time.

His Honour the Lieutenant Governor, having been advised of the contents of this bill, recommends it to the House.

Mr. Speaker: Will the honourable minister also table the message? The honourable Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, have you tabled the Lieutenant Governor's message?

Ms. Friesen: Yes, Mr. Speaker. To the best of my knowledge it was attached.

Mr. Speaker: It has to be recorded as tabled; that is why I was just asking the honourable minister.

Motion presented.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk), that leave—

Mr. Speaker: Order. I was recognizing the honourable Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs if she had a quick response to the bill. If not, then is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Motion agreed to.

Bill 34—The Municipal Amendment Act

Hon. Jean Friesen (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): I move, seconded by the Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk),

that leave be given to introduce Bill 34, The Municipal Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les municipalités, and that the same be now received and read a first time.

His Honour the Lieutenant Governor, having been advised of the contents of this bill, recommends it to the House, and I am tabling that message.

Motion agreed to.

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: Prior to Oral Questions, I would like to draw the attention of all honourable members to the public gallery where we have with us, from Daniel McIntyre Collegiate, 15 Grade 11 students under the direction of Mrs. Connie Baker. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable Minister of Industry, Trade and Mines (Ms. Mihychuk).

Also in the public gallery, we have, from Arthur A. Leach Junior High, 23 Grade 9 students under the direction of Ms. Susanne Achenbach. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable Member for Fort Garry (Mrs. Smith).

* (13:40)

Also in the public gallery we have, from Roseau Valley School, 24 Grade 9 students under the direction of Mr. Richard Waslanka. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable Member for Emerson (Mr. Jack Penner).

Also, I would like to draw the attention of all honourable members to the public gallery and to the Speaker's Gallery where we have with us legislators from Minnesota, North Dakota and South Dakota. From Minnesota: Senator Dick Day, Senator Dennis Frederickson, Senator Jane Krentz, Senator Roger Moe, Representative Maxine Penas, Representative Tom Pugh, Representative Rod Skoe, Representative Steve Sviggum; from North Dakota: Senator Tom Fischer, Senator Joe Heitkamp, Senator Ken Solberg, Representative Ole Aarsvold, Representative Al Carlson, Representative David Monson; and from South Dakota: Senator

Arnold Brown, Senator Paul Dennert, Senator Barbara Everist, Senator Jim Hutmacher, Representative J. Duenwald, Representative Gary Hanson, Representative Mike Jaspers, Representative Jim Peterson.

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

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Mr. Stuart Murray (Leader of the Official Opposition): Mr. Speaker, before I begin, I would like to acknowledge the Premier (Mr. Doer) for allowing myself and our colleague, the Leader of the Liberal Party (Mr. Gerrard), to work in conjunction with the legislators from Minnesota, North Dakota and South Dakota. I think we had a very worthwhile meeting and things were accomplished, so I would like to pass on my congratulations to the Premier for initiating that meeting.

Health Care System Public Consultation

Mr. Stuart Murray (Leader of the Official Opposition): Mr. Speaker, as we all know, health care in Canada and indeed Manitoba is a very, very worthwhile initiative and is something that requires attention from all levels of government. However, I think it is important to point out that the expenditure in Canada on health care is certainly unsustainable. When you look at Manitoba, the amount of money that is put on spending in health care is \$5,000 a minute. That adds up to \$7 million a day.

Mr. Speaker, it is time that we looked at our health care system. Reform is needed. Public debate is needed. Why then has the Premier put forward legislation that will prevent dialogue, that will prevent innovation and prevent much needed reform?

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): Mr. Speaker, first of all, I would like to thank the Leader of the Opposition's comments about the forum we had over the last two days, and I would like to thank all members of the Legislature who participated in the forum with our colleagues from North Dakota, Minnesota and South Dakota. We have truly reached very, very important conclusions over the last 24 hours dealing with upper basin

storage of water, flood mitigation, energy, policies that we share in common. We agreed to chemical harmonization in agriculture. We agreed to reinforce the excellent contingency plans we have in all jurisdictions across our region for foot and mouth disease.

So I want to thank the Leader of the Opposition, the Leader of the Liberal Party (Mr. Gerrard), the Member for Emerson (Mr. Jack Penner), and the Member for Arthur-Virden (Mr. Maguire), along with our delegates and all the other visitors here in Manitoba and here in Canada. We were really truly pleased with the results over the last 24 hours, and I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his comment today.

Addressing his question that was posed in the Chamber, we certainly know, and I have articulated to the member opposite yesterday in Question Period to another question, when we did come into office the per capita spending in Manitoba from all provinces was the highest in Canada with very questionable results. Having said that, we also know the amount of money spent in the Canadian health care system with 100% access as a percentage of GDP is considerably lower than other jurisdictions with the mixed system of public profit systems.

We believe the changes that were proposed yesterday do not in any way, shape or form prevent innovation. We have innovations going on all the time in health care. They are very, very necessary. I mentioned yesterday we have more support going into community-based health care, preventative health care, to health care programs for prenatal and postnatal programs, because we feel the issue of healthy babies is very, very important to our future. We believe that the proposals yesterday are consistent with actually the policies of the previous government.

* (13:45)

Mr. Murray: Mr. Speaker, I am delighted that we could agree, as the Premier stated, on some of the initiatives that we did discuss with the other legislators, and I am delighted that we did agree on that.

On this issue, however, Mr. Speaker, we disagree. Manitobans and indeed all Canadians want quality health care. They want it quickly

and they want choice. We on this side of the House believe they deserve it. Members opposite continue to fearmonger and spread mistruths about Manitoba patients and how they will suffer because of it. In this Legislature, in this very Chamber, in 1989 the leader opposite spoke, and I will quote what he said. He said: Look at creative ways to reform our health care system. Look at ways of dealing with the rising costs of the health care system and you will get support from our party.

Well, Mr. Speaker, rather than sticking with his commitment of being open to reform and dealing with the rising costs of health care, why has the Premier slammed the door on public debate and dialogue and much needed reform? Why is this Premier putting his ideology ahead of what is best for patients?

Mr. Doer: Surely the member opposite is not suggesting for a moment that he is incapable of debating this issue when this issue was before this legislative forum. I think the debate is available to members opposite. They have a responsibility to try to make their point.

Mr. Speaker, the debate is available for the public of Manitoba. Like all pieces of legislation, it will go before a legislative committee that will include presentations from the public. We will certainly listen to see how many people support, like the member opposite supports a profit health care system. When it comes to creative health care, members opposite brought us frozen food, firing a thousand nurses and the attempt to privatize home care in Manitoba.

We have put in support for an eating disorder program for many teenage youths, Mr. Speaker, that we believe is a very creative program. We have put in place a prenatal and postnatal program for underweight babies that we think is very, very important. We have increased the responsibility and increased the number of training spots for nurses in Manitoba, across Manitoba. We are putting more diagnostic care outside the city of Winnipeg. It is not just going to be located in the two teaching hospitals.

We have a number of creative alternative ways of dealing with health care, whether it is

keeping our schools open later at night in some of the targeted areas. Every day we make a difference to improve health care in the most creative ways possible to reduce the pressure on acute care hospitals, increase the ability to prevent health care sicknesses and have ways of having long-term, good health with the citizens of this province.

Mr. Murray: Mr. Speaker, I find it fascinating to get the lecture over on the other side when, in fact, under his watch, this Government fired some 600 nurses and closed two hospitals.

Mr. Speaker, we are talking about needed health reform that will help all Canadians and all Manitobans. I was surprised when I asked the Minister of Health (Mr. Chomiak) if he had had any dialogue with Mr. Romanow. He said no. Well, where are these opportunities? Where are these opportunities of dialogue that this Premier is talking about? Clearly, this debate is not about what is right for the politicians. This debate is what is right for the people and the patients of Manitoba.

Will the Premier listen to Manitobans and commit today to holding province-wide public consultations on health care before he completely closes the door to reform that could lead to improved health care for Manitobans?

* (13:50)

Mr. Doer: Let me try to deal with a number of the rambling issues that were raised by the Leader of the Opposition. Number one, in his first question he talks about the cost of health care, and then he begrudges us the decision to take two hospitals that were old and combine them into one hospital, one new modern hospital, Mr. Speaker, in terms of the Winkler-Morden area. So he cannot have it or he should not try to have it both ways.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, in this Legislature, during our Estimates on May 7, 2001, certainly for the record there is no intent on this side to do as the member might suggest, to make it a private hospital. So, I guess I cannot understand why he would have one position in Estimates and have another position in this Chamber in Question Period.

Thirdly, Mr. Speaker, the committee for health alternatives has already articulated when you have a private system adjacent to a public system, and they looked at the issue of Alberta and cataract waiting lists, both systems become more expensive. Again, very germane to the question that the Leader of the Opposition asked in his first question.

Fourthly, Mr. Speaker, we have talked to Premier Romanow. The Minister of Health (Mr. Chomiak) has talked to former Premier Romanow. I have talked to him on three occasions, and a number of items arose out of the health care action plan with the other premiers: a co-ordinated approach to pharmaceuticals, a co-ordinated approach to human resources across Canada, a co-ordinated information approach for all our jurisdictions.

We have even implemented something that is very specific to today's issues. We have initiated and are working with western provinces to make sure that each of us has a Centre of Excellence for Children's Health, not try to duplicate those services and unfortunately fail, Mr. Speaker. We think we have a very, very co-ordinated approach and a very good look at how to modernize and innovate health care, but a health care system that will be available for all our citizens, no matter what their wealth.

Pan Am Clinic Overnight Stays

Mr. Stuart Murray (Leader of the Official Opposition): On a new question, it was a little difficult to follow that very disjointed attempt at an answer. But I will ask the Premier, Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Doer government introduced an ideologically driven piece of legislation that many fear will put patient safety at risk, would reduce patient choice and prevent needed innovation in health care. Through his legislation, the Premier is preventing overnight stays at surgical centres, surgical facilities. I was going to ask the Premier: Can he tell Manitobans if his Pan Am Clinic will be the exception to the rule and will in fact be allowing overnight stays in the future?

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): Last year when there was a debate in Alberta on Bill 11, many

people talked about the fact that in Manitoba the College of Physicians and Surgeons had a by-law that specifically prohibited overnight stays. This legislation deals with what was found to be a loophole.

There was a debate in the last election campaign on health care. We had a number of differences with members opposite, but I certainly recall very directly that the former Premier and the former Leader of the Opposition did not campaign on profit hospitals in Manitoba. Let us make that very clear, Mr. Speaker.

Private Health Care Clinics Overnight Stays

Mr. Stuart Murray (Leader of the Official Opposition): Mr. Speaker, the honourable member mentions the fact that there was a debate on health care at the last election. There was. They promised to end hallway medicine in six months, in fifteen, and they failed. They failed in that debate.

Mr. Speaker, just as the Premier has stated in this House on many occasions that a baby is a baby. Well, we believe that a surgical centre is a surgical centre is a surgical centre. Dr. Brian Postl has stated that the WRHA is considering allowing the Pan Am to have overnight stays. I would tell you we on this side of the House would support that move because it would ensure patient safety. It would ensure patient safety in the event that post-operative care needs ends up being longer than anticipated.

So I would like to ask the Premier, Mr. Speaker, can he please explain why he put forward his legislation that would prevent all other surgical centres from doing everything possible to ensure patient safety?

* (13:55)

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, the College of Physicians and Surgeons has rules that say if you have a surgical centre you have to have admitting privileges to a hospital or you have to have access to a hospital for procedures. Day surgical centres are precisely what they are, day surgical centres.

They are not designed for overnight stays. They have not been allowed to be overnight. We are simply extending and dealing with a loophole, so, no, they will not be overnight. If a patient requires the kind of intensive surgery required to be overnight, they should be in a hospital.

Finally, if members opposite were so intent upon hospital service and providing surgery, they should not have closed the largest hospital in the history of Manitoba, that is, the Misericordia Hospital.

Mr. Murray: Mr. Speaker, I find it incredible that the Minister of Health would try to convince Manitobans that a politician would know better than a doctor.

Mr. Speaker, existing legislation, I think we all understand this, allows clinics such as The Maples Surgical Centre to have up to four overnight beds. This is not a loophole as they would suggest. It is a means of ensuring patient safety. The Maples Surgical clinic is a clinic, not a hospital. Can the Premier (Mr. Doer) explain why he has put forward legislation that will stop clinics from having a few beds? Is he so opposed to overnight stays that he would endanger patient safety to ensure his ideology is not compromised?

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, first off, I will correct a wrong statement of the Leader of the Opposition. The four beds is a provision, and surgical centres can have beds. They have had beds; they continue to have beds. His former Minister of Health indicated they did not want to have private hospitals.

The Maples Surgical Centre, any clinic, can have beds but there are specific rules with the College of Physicians and Surgeons. It says that you have to have admitting privileges to a hospital, or you ought to have access to a hospital if you are going to have that kind of procedure. There are day surgery centres that offer day surgery. If a surgery is so complex that it requires overnight stay, it ought to be in a hospital, but nothing is precluded in this legislation that was not permitted under existing laws, and we have never until now allowed private hospitals in Manitoba. I am sorry that the Opposition party has now changed its position on that.

* (14:00)

Mr. Speaker: Order. The honourable Government House Leader, on a point of order. The honourable Government House Leader, were you up on a point of order?

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader): I will pass.

Nursing Profession Full-time Employment Opportunities

Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East): Mr. Speaker, the track record of this Doer government in addressing the nursing shortage in the province of Manitoba is deplorable. In less than two years, the nursing shortage—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Speaker, I think nurses would like to hear the answer, the truthful answers to these questions.

In less than two years, the nursing shortage in Manitoba has doubled to 1 100, and 600 nurses have been fired in this province under this Government.

Mr. Speaker, can the Minister of Health explain to Manitoba nurses why he failed to keep his promise to convert part-time positions to full-time positions? I quote from September of 1999: Today's NDP will immediately implement our nurses first program and will begin to hire permanent full-time nurses to fulfil our pledge to end hallway medicine within six months of forming Government.

What have they done with this promise?

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Health): I am glad the member referenced our five-point nurses plan, because it gives me an opportunity to again express the fact that we have doubled the number of nurses in education for the first time in a decade. We brought back the diploma program that was slashed by members opposite. We put in place a nurses task force to deal with nursing conditions. It has a number of

recommendations to improve the working conditions of nurses. In addition, we have increased, though not as much as I would like, the number of full-time nurses, and we are continuing to work at that. We are not doing what members opposite did, Mr. Speaker, and fire a thousand nurses.

Mrs. Mitchelson: The facts speak for themselves. What can the Minister of Health say to the 60 percent of nursing graduates that graduated last year that could not get full-time jobs in this province?

Mr. Chomiak: We have sent directives to all of the regional health authorities to hire full-time nurses in all occasions that they can, which is something that was not done by the previous government. We also work with nurses to try to improve the conditions so that we can have more full-time nurses, and we will be announcing further strategy regarding full-time nurses.

The root of the problem lies in the fact that in the last two years the numbers of nursing graduates were 135 and 153 respectively, Mr. Speaker, which is one quarter of what it was a decade ago. That is a result of the fact that members opposite slashed the nursing programs and cut them down from graduations of 502 in 1998 to 190 now.

Point of Order

Mr. Marcel Laurendeau (Opposition House Leader): Mr. Speaker, *Beauchesne's* 417: Answers to questions should be as brief as possible, deal with the matter raised and should not provoke debate. There is no need for this minister to talk about slashing. We know what type of slashing this minister is going to be doing with the underfunding he has done.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Minister of Health, on the same point of order?

Mr. Chomiak: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I was just pointing out the fact that we have so few nurses graduate because members opposite had cut the programs and we are not graduating even a quarter of the nurses that we used to graduate.

Mr. Speaker: On the point of order raised by the honourable Official Opposition House

Leader, it is not a point of order. It is a dispute over the facts.

* * *

Mrs. Mitchelson: Will the Minister of Health cut the rhetoric, admit now that he has failed to keep his promises that were made during the election campaign, that he has failed Manitoba nurses, and the situation in our hospitals today is in a crisis situation because of the lack of action? All talk, no action and no plan.

Mr. Chomiak: As I already outlined in March of 2000, we put in place a five-point nurses plan that saw the doubling of nurses in training for the first time in a decade, which saw for the first time the reintroduction of LPNs at acute care centres, LPNs in rural Manitoba; thirdly, put in place a workforce task force; fourth, brought back the diploma program; fifth, put in place a more extensive recruitment and retention program, sixth, put in place an education program to provide \$3 million for nurses to be upgraded in their program and provide payment for that, which was something that nurses had asked for for some time, rather than bringing back Connie Curran.

Nursing Profession Full-time Employment Opportunities

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): Mr. Speaker, today the president of the Manitoba Nurses' Union said that for the Government, and I quote, to only create 1.5 percent more permanent, full-time positions for our members in two years is deplorable. She said it is time for the Doer government to start acting.

I would like to ask the Minister of Health what he has to say to nurses who say that his track record in creating full-time jobs for nurses is absolutely deplorable in this province.

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, we have put in place some programs to deal with full-time jobs, and our record is not great, but right now it is better than it was—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Chomiak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I was saying, our record is not great on the

creation of full-time jobs, but it is substantially better than what members opposite did during 12 years of government.

Mrs. Driedger: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the minister for his honesty in putting the fact out there that his record is not great.

I would like to ask the minister: What does he have to say to Manitoba nurses, and these are Manitoba nurses; I am just the messenger here. They are saying, and I quote from the president of the union who said today: To have only 35 percent of a predominantly female workforce working full-time in nursing is ridiculous. Women work. This is a new century. They are crying over the nursing shortage, and there is a failure to create full-time, permanent positions. What is the minister going to say to the nurses who find his record deplorable?

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, let me quote from the same nurse that the member opposite quoted from in a report that was tabled in this Legislature in 1998. My quote: We desperately need more qualified caregivers at the bedside. Over the past couple of years approximately a thousand nurses have been laid off by government.

We took that seriously. We doubled the number of nurses in training. We have brought back the diploma program. We provided training and education, and despite what the member opposite said about full-time nurses, we are still doing a better job than members opposite did when they were in government and will do better as we go on.

Mrs. Driedger: Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the minister or perhaps even the Premier (Mr. Doer), who choose to keep wanting to use the politically mischievous term that the Tories fired a thousand nurses, what does he say to the student nurses who have recently phoned me and said: Myrna, why does the Government keep on lying about that? How can you make them stop lying? That is what student nurses have said to me. How can I answer them, and how does this minister want to answer student nurses and others out there where this Government is making these accusations that are absolutely false?

*(14:10)

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, I think that members opposite have exhibited, both in that question and in the way they deal with Question Period, their attitude when they were in government and their attitude now with respect to health care.

I will just quote from a report that was tabled in this Legislature in 1998 which said: Over the past several years, approximately 1000 nurses have been laid off by government. In addition, many nurses laid off left the province to seek nursing jobs elsewhere, primarily in the United States.

That document was tabled in this Chamber. It was provided by the MNU.

Point of Order

Mrs. Driedger: Mr. Speaker, *Beauchesne's* 417, that indicates we should not get into debate in here.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order. May I remind all honourable members that a point of order is a very serious matter, and I would ask the co-operation of all honourable members.

The honourable Member for Charleswood, on a point of order.

Mrs. Driedger: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This Minister of Health has a tendency to provoke debate. He is choosing to quote from a report that was given to him by the Manitoba Nurses' Union, and he is deliberately choosing to avoid a document that was tabled in this House by me about a year ago from Department of Health staff, his own staff, that showed, of the nurses who were in the system during the '90s, the nurses who were redeployed within the '90s, 830 of those nurses were immediately rehired in other jobs. That is his department staff putting forward that information; yet he is choosing to use a union report on these issues.

You know, this is hard to even know, Mr. Speaker, which way to go with this Minister of

Health who is constantly provoking debate on this issue.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Minister of Health, on the same point of order?

Mr. Chomiak: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I find the member's point of order very, very curious insofar as the member stood up in this Chamber and accused me of lying, and I did not call a point of order. I simply stood up and put on the record the point that showed the member was wrong. I showed the member a report that said a thousand nurses had been laid off, a report that I had tabled in this Chamber.

So, for the member to then say that we are not answering the question after the member called us liars on this—which was very intemperate language and ought to be withdrawn—but I am so used to it, I just let it flow over me because members do that all the time.

I pointed out, No. 1, that this report was tabled in the Legislature and pointed out that a thousand nurses had been fired by this government. Secondly, on the point the same Nurses' Union that provided this report is the same group and the same people that the member cited in her other question, Mr. Speaker, she cannot have it both ways like she always does.

Mr. Speaker: Order. Before ruling on the point of order I would just like to remind all honourable members that a point of order should be raised for breaching a rule or unparliamentary language and not to be raised to be used for debate. I would just like to remind all honourable members.

On the point of order raised by the honourable Member for Charleswood, it is not a point of order. It is a dispute over the facts.

Point of Order

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Official Opposition House Leader, on a new point of order.

Mr. Marcel Laurendeau (Opposition House Leader): A new point of order, Mr. Speaker. Clearly, during his statement or his so-called speech to the member's point of order, the minister clearly stated that the member said that he lied. The member never stated that he lied. That was a call that she received. It was a call that she received from some nursing students. I think it is wrong for this minister to be coming at the Member for Charleswood and saying that she called him a liar.

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

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, first off, as the rules require, we ask that the Member for Charleswood table the letter that she was quoting from, and I will deal with the other matters later.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Official Opposition House Leader, on clarification.

Mr. Laurendeau: On clarification, Mr. Speaker. It was not a letter; it was a phone call and that was clearly stated by the member.

Mr. Mackintosh: Mr. Speaker, on the new point of order—

Mr. Speaker: I have to deal with one point of order at a time.

Mr. Mackintosh: For clarification of all members: "Tabling letters 37. Where in a debate a Member quotes from a private letter, any other Member may require the Member who quoted from the letter to table the letter from which the Member quoted but this rule does not alter any rule or practice of the House relating to the tabling of documents other than private letters."

So I ask the honourable Member for Charleswood if you were quoting from a private letter? Just for clarification, I am asking the honourable member.

Mrs. Driedger: Mr. Speaker, I had indicated in my statement that it was a phone call I received from student nurses.

Mr. Speaker: That is fine. The honourable Official Opposition House Leader, for clarification.

Mr. Laurendeau: Mr. Speaker, *Beauchesne's* 494: "It has been formally ruled by Speakers that statements by Members respecting themselves and particularly within their own knowledge must be accepted."

* (14:20)

Mr. Speaker: For clarification of all members, I am assured by the honourable Member for Charleswood, it was not a private letter. So the honourable member does not have a private letter, as far as I am concerned, to table.

On the point of order raised by the honourable Official Opposition House Leader, I did not hear the comments, so to be fair I will take the matter under advisement to peruse Hansard. I will consult the procedural authorities and I will report back to the House.

Point of Order

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Government House Leader, on a new point of order.

Mr. Mackintosh: Well, Mr. Speaker, it is a new point of order, but it follows the point of order of the House Leader of the Opposition. It is my understanding and I believe there have been rulings in this House that the words "lying" or "lies" are clearly unparliamentary; indeed it is by its very nature unparliamentary. Whether that is by way of a quote or a member's own words, they are unparliamentary and must be ruled as such.

I would ask, Mr. Speaker, that you rule accordingly and ask the member to withdraw and apologize for those remarks.

Mr. Speaker: On the point of order raised by the honourable Government House Leader, on the ruling I just made on the point of order raised by the honourable Official Opposition House Leader, that is exactly what I took under advisement.

So I have already taken that matter under advisement and I will report back to the House.

* * *

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Minister of Health, to conclude his comments.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, just to complete my response to the question, we put in place a nurses action plan that had not been put in place in over a decade. We are working on additional measures in terms of our task force that will shortly be reporting. They will have a number of recommendations to improve the working conditions of nurses.

Mr. Speaker, we are very pleased that we have doubled the number of nurses in training now than at any time in the past decade.

East St. Paul High Voltage Power Lines

Mr. Ron Schuler (Springfield): Mr. Speaker, in 1992, the current Minister of Hydro, the Member for St. Boniface (Mr. Selinger), led the attack to have a 66kV power line near Taché elementary school removed from his neighbourhood. Yet he continues to tell East St. Paul residents that nearly 2000kV of power is completely safe.

Does the minister not think there is some hypocrisy in being such a defender of 2000kV of power in someone else's community and yet lead the attack against 66kV of power in his own constituency?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Minister charged with the administration of The Manitoba Hydro Act): To set the record straight, I reviewed the impact of hydro lines in my community as a city councillor, and the information I received was that there was no negative impact.

When I was requested by the member opposite to look at the impact of hydro lines in his community, I once again went to the experts in the field, the public health officials and experts in cancer care, and asked them to review the literature, and they found that the literature had evolved, that, in fact, it was no longer inconclusive, but the weight of evidence showed that there was no association.

Yesterday, the member tabled in the House further information about the incidence of cancer in the west East St. Paul area, and by copy of the letter that I am going to table in the Legislature today, I have asked the Minister of Health (Mr.

Chomiak) to look into this matter. I am informed that the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority and CancerCare Manitoba are going to follow up on this report and check into the facts and report back to us as soon as they can. Thank you.

Mr. Schuler: Mr. Speaker, can the minister name anywhere else in Manitoba where residents live next to almost 2000kV of power as he alleged yesterday in this House?

Mr. Selinger: Yesterday, Mr. Speaker, I explained in the House that the issue is the level of electromagnetic frequency emissions in terms of proximity of people to those lines.

I indicated yesterday there are lines in Manitoba that give off higher levels of that frequency of emissions even though the amount of kilovolts is lower. That information I will make available to the member opposite, but clearly, what was examined here was the impact of these emissions on people, and it was found by the experts in the field not to be negative.

Mr. Schuler: Mr. Speaker, will the minister support our colleagues from Dauphin, The Pas, Swan River, Radisson and Wolseley in their calls for intervenor funding and provide the residents committee of East St. Paul with funds to present their case to the Clean Environment Commission's upcoming hearing?

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, I have asked health officials to follow up on the health concerns that were raised yesterday. The Winnipeg Regional Health Authority, in consultation and co-operation with CancerCare Manitoba, is going to investigate this information.

I would caution members opposite not to draw any conclusions between the incidence of cancer and the causes of cancer. The report indicated no specific causes, and there are many possibilities. For example, I have been informed that there were many petroleum spills in the East St. Paul area during the period that encompassed this study and that those petroleum spills were cleaned up by removal of the gas tanks that were causing the spills, so we have to be very careful in not making an association where it has not been proven to exist.

Foot and Mouth Disease Provincial Action Plan

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, this morning, at the meeting of legislators from Minnesota, North and South Dakota and Manitoba, foot and mouth disease was discussed. A very virulent strain of this disease has spread to 34 countries in the last 18 months, with disastrous consequences in affected countries. South Dakota shared their proactive action plan released last week. They have, as part of their plan, a series of steps to take immediately an outbreak of foot and mouth disease occurs anywhere outside of South Dakota within North America.

I have repeatedly called upon the Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk), for more than a month now, to provide details of the Province of Manitoba's action plan for foot and mouth disease and to display this action plan prominently and clearly on the provincial Web page.

I ask the minister when she will make available the specifics of the provincial action plan, and when she will display these prominently on the provincial Web page.

Hon. Rosann Wowchuk (Minister of Agriculture and Food): Mr. Speaker, this is an issue that the member has raised before. I have indicated in the past to the member we do not have foot and mouth disease in Canada, and the most important step we can take is to ensure or take every step possible that the disease does not come into Canada. This is a disease that falls under the jurisdiction of the federal government, and our Veterinary Services Branch works very closely with the federal government, as do all of the other provinces in Canada. All of the provinces work closely with the federal government.

I am confident that the plan we have in place, under the responsibility of the federal government, will be adequate to address the issue, and there is information about foot and mouth disease on the Web page.

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, my supplementary to the minister: If there is an outbreak of foot

and mouth disease anywhere in North America outside of Manitoba, will the minister act immediately to implement the same measures as South Dakota has announced in their action plan? That is to immediately prevent people from coming into the province without quarantine where they are coming from a state or a province or a region outside of Manitoba where foot and mouth disease is present and act immediately if there is a foot and mouth disease case elsewhere in North America to prevent any importation of livestock into Manitoba.

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Speaker, of course, if there is an outbreak of foot and mouth disease in Canada, governments will take action. Manitoba will take action. But the member seems to forget that this issue falls under the jurisdiction of the federal government, under the CFIA, and CFIA takes the lead on it. We are working with them to ensure that there is a plan in place and the necessary steps will be taken, but we also hope that there is no outbreak in Canada. That is the most important issue.

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, my supplementary to the Premier (Mr. Doer). I ask the Premier, who said at the press conference that he had a very aggressive approach to foot and mouth disease, where is it? Where is your action plan? Why is it not there? You are behind; you need to get it in place and have an action plan that works and that is ready if foot and mouth disease comes to North America.

* (14:30)

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order, order.

May I remind all honourable members when the Speaker stands that all members should be seated and the Speaker should be heard in silence.

Ms. Wowchuk: After that outburst I am not quite sure how to respond, but I want to tell the member that the federal government has confidence that the plan they have in place is adequate to address foot and mouth disease should we have an outbreak.

Should we have an outbreak, the federal government will take the lead and the provinces

right across Canada will work very aggressively with the federal government to ensure that the disease does not have a further spread in Canada. But the major issue is to take every possible step we can to have the disease not enter Canada and be maintained at the disease-free status that we have now.

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

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Maples Collegiate Unity Walk

Mr. Cris Aglugub (The Maples): I rise today to recognize the ongoing work that the teachers and students at Maples Collegiate are doing to address the challenges of racism and discrimination. Since 1995 students at Maples Collegiate have participated in a unity group which organizes two major annual events: Unity Day and the March for Unity.

Unity Day is a school-wide event held in conjunction with International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. I had the opportunity to speak at this year's Unity Day, and I was very impressed by the work done by students to raise awareness of racism and to celebrate our cultural diversity.

Today is the fifth annual March for Unity for students from various schools to walk to the steps of the Legislature to bring their message to members of the Assembly. After walking part of the way with the students, the honourable Minister of Education (Mr. Caldwell) and I met with the students when they arrived at the Legislature this afternoon.

I was honoured to participate in today's march and to support their efforts to end discrimination. I would like to congratulate some of this year's organizers: students Kerri Woloszyn, Meagan Rusnak, Marco Vieira, Hoanglan Vu, Melissa Raposo, Mimi Vu and teachers Cindy Blicq, Fil Costa and Verna Isfeld. The leadership shown by these young people involved in this march is combating racism and discrimination. It is an inspiring example for all of us.

Legislators Forum

Mr. Larry Maguire (Arthur-Virden): It was my pleasure to participate in the meetings that

were just held with our American neighbours. One of the recommendations that came out of the International Flood Mitigation Initiative regarding the Red River basin which was completed in November of 2000 was for the four jurisdictions to get together to meet on a regular basis to discuss the flood mitigation and other policy issues of mutual interest in this area.

Attendees at this first annual Legislators Forum involving the bipartisan representation from neighbouring states of Minnesota, North Dakota and South Dakota, as well as an all-party delegation of Manitoba representatives, included our Progressive Conservative Leader, the Member for Kirkfield Park (Mr. Murray) and my colleague from Emerson and myself, the ministers of Finance, Agriculture, Conservation and Sport in Manitoba.

I would like to congratulate the Premier (Mr. Doer), as our leader has done, and Senate Majority Leader Moe from Minnesota for initiating this forum held over the last two days here in Winnipeg, along with Senator Brown of South Dakota and Senator Ken Solberg, a veritable neighbour of mine from Rugby, North Dakota.

Mr. Speaker, a meeting of this group will again take place, hopefully within a year's time. A committee has been put together to look at the follow-up on some of the findings and results of our program. Discussions dealt with future flood alleviation, including watershed management and, in particular, a green way on the Red, a program that includes working of a multistate conservation reserve enhancement program, water storage and retention, conservation reserve-style programs for compensation in many of these areas of land set aside and an educational mechanism, including media, to get the message out to our citizens in regard to the importance of this initiative.

Each jurisdiction raised an issue that ranged from energy, tourism, agriculture, and the topic of foot and mouth disease, as pointed out here in this House earlier, was raised by our South Dakota neighbours, a good package put forward by the state of Minnesota, as well as our own Manitoba program. Whether it was the two-nation vacation destination mechanism for tourism and enhancement of the Lewis and Clark

program that is coming in 2004, or whether it was Folklorama here in Manitoba, or Mount Rushmore in South Dakota, or the Twins in Minneapolis, there was agreement that a North American approach with emphasis on "North" could be taken in this whole area.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to end by saying that we are definitely a region. That was the unified point that came out of this area, and these issues will be followed up on. Thank you.

Golden West Centennial Lodge Centenarians

Mr. Jim Rondeau (Assiniboia): Good afternoon, Mr. Speaker. Last week I had the pleasure of attending a celebration at Golden West Centennial Lodge. The reason for this celebration was that seven of the residents are a hundred years old or older in this one institution. It was an excellent event, with the Golden West Auxiliary Lodge staff, many friends and family in attendance to celebrate the lives and accomplishments of these seven amazing ladies.

One of the ladies, Dorothy Samuels, still lives alone and attends the Golden West outreach program regularly. The other six live in the lodge.

I would like to bring all honourable members' attention to these wonderful ladies who I will name in order of age: Kathleen Anderson, 107; Marianne Hodgson, 105; Anna Herms, 101; Olive Nevill, 100; Isabel Kossats, 100; Mae Jarvis, 100; Dorothy Samuels, 101. I would like to congratulate the Golden West Centennial Lodge, the family and friends and, most importantly, seven ladies for reaching this milestone of history.

It is interesting to note the changes that we talked about during this event and the changes in their lives that have been made in the past century. These people were born mostly in the 1800s and have had a huge, wonderful life. I would like to congratulate these ladies of attaining 714 years for the seven people. Thank you very much.

* (14:40)

Missing Children's Week

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to

remind all honourable members that May 20 to 26 is Missing Children's Week and especially to invite all members to commemorate Friday, May 25, Missing Children's Day. This is a time when the people of Manitoba remember missing children and their families and when we can raise awareness of the potential dangers and protective measures we can take to assure that our children are safe from harm.

According to the Missing Children's Registry, in Manitoba, in the year 2000, there were 3680 missing children and, in Canada, over 60 000 missing kids. The effect of these disappearances has a devastating effect, not only on the victims and their families who must struggle with the fear and pain their loss must cause but also on the communities as a whole who are left with worry and apprehension about the safety of their own loved ones.

Today we watch with sympathy the suffering the Koopmans family is forced to endure as they mourn the loss of their daughter Jessica in Lethbridge, Alberta. Unfortunately, the Koopmans family is not alone in their pain. Across Canada, countless children disappear every single day, and far too many of them never return home. In order to help protect our children from such dangers, it is important that parents talk to their children and teach them how to avoid potentially dangerous situations. Hazards such as talking to strangers or confiding in people they meet on the Internet can go a long way to ensuring that our children are out of danger's way.

So, on the eve of this Missing Children's Day, I would encourage all Manitobans to review their family safety rules and to remember all of the Canadian children who have gone missing and who are still greatly loved and missed by their families and loved ones at home. This week, we remember Kristen French, Leslie Mahaffy, Michael Dunahee, Sarah Kelly from The Pas, and others, and our thoughts and prayers are with their families. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Full Citizenship: A Manitoba Provincial Strategy on Disability

Ms. Marianne Cerilli (Radisson): I want to draw attention to an important initiative of our Government. On May 4, we released a white

paper, "Full Citizenship: A Manitoba Provincial Strategy on Disability." Tomorrow, on May 25, at the Crescentwood community club, a task force begins a series of meetings to hear feedback on this paper for the province to improve employment opportunities and supports for people with disabilities.

I am pleased to be heading up this task force, and I will be joined by the MLAs for Assiniboia, Burrows, Rossmere and The Maples, to tour Winnipeg, Brandon, Thompson and Steinbach, to ensure Manitobans call tell us face to face if they agree with our ideas and if they have any additional suggestions.

This white paper was produced in consultation with Manitobans. One of the key recommendations is to formulate a round table for the new Minister responsible for Persons with Disabilities (Mr. Sale) for ongoing planning and feedback from this community. Secondly, there will be a disabilities lens to ensure that all government policies are analyzed for how they impact on people living with disabilities.

It will also co-ordinate through disabilities issues office, work with all government departments as well as the Human Rights Commission. There will be specific attention paid to Aboriginal people to address the challenges they face for access and supports related to income, employment and access to government.

Mr. Speaker, I know that we will be having extremely interesting meetings given that the launch had an overwhelming response on May 4, and I look forward to hearing from any Manitobans throughout the province on these matters. Thank you.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

House Business

Hon. Tim Sale (Acting Government House Leader): Can you canvass the House to see if there is unanimous consent to allow the Member for Steinbach (Mr. Jim Penner), to speak a second time on Bill 26, The Winnipeg Commodity Exchange Restructuring Act, and that the member be allowed to speak for a full 40 minutes?

Mr. Speaker: Is there unanimous consent of the House to allow the Member for Steinbach to speak a second time on Bill 26, The Winnipeg Commodity Exchange Restructuring Act, and that the member be allowed to speak for a full 40 minutes. *[Agreed]*

Mr. Sale: I move, seconded by the Minister of Advanced Education (Ms. McGifford), Mr. Speaker, that the House resolve itself into a Committee of Supply.

Motion agreed to.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY (Concurrent Sections)

HEALTH

* (15:20)

Mr. Chairperson (Harry Schellenberg): Good afternoon. 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 Health.

There was a previous agreement of this committee to have a global discussion on the entire department and after completion of all questioning pass all resolutions. We will continue with the global discussion. We are open for questions.

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Health): Mr. Chairperson, we have brought the staff from the Capital branch of Health. I appreciate the member letting me know this morning that she would be questioning this area, so we will try to do the best we can.

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): Mr. Chairman, I had indicated to the minister's office when I phoned this morning that would it be possible to have the staff here for around 4:30. Is that going to be a problem, or you have them here now?

Mr. Chomiak: Oh, they are here now. Just hang on a second.

Mrs. Driedger: I would like to ask the minister about the Order-in-Council of May 17, 2000. It

is in relationship to the hiring of Dr. Ron Hikel as Acting Deputy Minister of Health. It indicates that according to the Order-in-Council: therefore he the president of the Council recommends that Dr. Ron Hikel be appointed Acting Deputy Minister of Health, effective May 16, 2000, with terms and conditions as set out in an employment agreement that the Clerk of Executive Council be authorized to enter into an employment agreement with Dr. Ron Hikel respecting terms and conditions of employment, and that Order-in-Council 349/1998 is revoked effective May 16, 2000.

I wonder if the Minister of Health could tell me whether Dr. Ron Hikel was remunerated by a contract or through a contract or through an employment agreement.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, I am not trying to be difficult, but I do not know what difference the member is making. What is the difference between an employment agreement and a contract? Insofar as from my understanding of law, an employment agreement is a contract and an actual what we classify as a written contract is a contract. So I am not trying to be difficult. I just do not understand what distinction the member is trying to make.

Mrs. Driedger: I guess as far as looking at the specific wording, the Order-in-Council had indicated that it be set out in an employment agreement, and, in fact, it appears he was hired through a contract. Now if, as the minister says, they are both the same, then perhaps that is a non-issue. It would probably be something that I need to just have further clarification on, and perhaps I would make some calls myself just in terms of finding out whether or not the Order-in-Council was actually followed appropriately.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, as far as I can recollect, there was a contract with Hampshire Consulting, correct, that I think was made public. The member had a copy of it, and that was the agreement that was entered into between us and Mr. Hikel.

Mrs. Driedger: That is accurate. We were able, through Freedom of Information, to obtain Doctor Hikel's contract. It did indicate the contract with him was actually with his company

and not directly with him. The Order-in-Council does direct that the employment agreement be set up with Dr. Ron Hikel himself, and yet we find the employment agreement or contract, whichever would be the accurate term, was set up with his company. What I am wondering is if in fact the Order-in-Council therefore was not followed as it is stated.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, as I understand it, Mr. Hikel was the sole individual, director, person, the only person at that particular company. It was a company of which he was the sole proprietor, the sole comptroller, the sole shareholder. He did work under that company's name.

Mrs. Driedger: While that certainly could be technically accurate, and it being relatively new to the Legislature, I guess it begged a question for me in terms of whether or not the Order-in-Council was being accurately followed when it said that Doctor Hikel was to be appointed and yet the contract was set up with his company. It indicated that, I believe, if we look at The Civil Service Act, if we are looking at that, it indicates that Doctor Hikel should have been hired as an employee, but there is no Order-in-Council showing that he was hired as an employee, that in fact it was his company. I am wondering if there was any other legislation that might have been used in setting up this particular contract with the acting deputy minister.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, insofar as I do not have the Order-in-Council in front of me, let me see if I understand correctly. The member is saying there was the Order-in-Council between Mr. Hikel and the Government. It would be pursuant to an agreement. The member is asking whether or not this is correct. As I understand it, from what the member is saying, there was an agreement with Ron Hikel under Order-in-Council that was pursuant to an agreement. Is that correct?

Mrs. Driedger: Actually the Order-in-Council indicated the appointment of Dr. Ron Hikel as Acting Deputy Minister of Health, effective May 16, 2000, with terms and conditions as set out in an employment agreement. It appears that the Order-in-Council may not directly have been followed because the contract was actually set up with Dr. Ron Hikel, and whether or not the

contract is the same as an employment agreement I guess is something that I am not totally clear about. Either through the minister or on my own, I would be seeking clarification.

My concern, I guess, with all of this is whether or not Doctor Hikel had authority to do his job, if in fact there may be some technicalities in all of this that show the Order-in-Council was not followed, because of just the way the contract was set up and that it was not set up with the individual but with his company. Then The Civil Service Act and The Department of Health Act provide for the deputy minister to be appointed by the Lieutenant-Governor-in-Council. Therefore, I wonder if Ron Hikel may not have had authority under either act. I am wondering, then, if the Department of Health ignored the Order-in-Council and hired Hampshire Consulting I guess, which, technically, I question whether that is in contravention of the Order-in-Council.

*(15:30)

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, what I understand from what the member is saying is that an Order-in-Council entered into with Mr. Ron Hikel that was pursuant to an employment agreement, is suggesting that that was technically incorrect. I think that from what the member has explained to me, from what I heard, the Order-in-Council indicated that Mr. Ron Hikel was hired pursuant to an employment agreement. I think that is common practice in government to have an Order-in-Council pursuant to an employment agreement. I think that became standard practice, as I recall, under the previous government that civil servants would be hired pursuant to Orders-in-Council, then pursuant to employment agreements.

From what I understand from what the member is saying, it sounds to me like it is a standard practice.

Mrs. Driedger: Mr. Chairman, I will leave this line of questioning at this point in time. I will seek to do some clarification on my own in regard to these particular issues.

I would like to go on to another issue and that is around the nursing acts, whether it is the

R.N. act, the LPN act, psychiatric nurses act, and ask the minister when he is intending to proclaim the acts. I understand from the meeting he had with the Manitoba Association of Registered Nurses the other day that he indicated August 15 at least for their act, and I am wondering if the minister could provide us with some information as to when he will actually be proclaiming all three of those acts.

Mr. Chomiak: I attended at the MARN annual convention in Brandon last week, and at the annual convention I indicated to the nurses, who were very pleased, that in fact we would proclaim the act by August 15 or sooner subject to the finalization of regulations with respect to the Manitoba Association of Registered Nurses act. I also am intending to do likewise with the various other nurses' acts as well as a couple of other acts as soon as and dependent upon the ability to finalize some regulations with respect to those acts. I have been giving every indication that the finalization of regulation, the intent and the general wording is correct but that we are subject to legislative counsel time constraints because of drafting priorities in other areas.

So I have sort of gone out on a limb to a certain extent to indicate that we will do it by August 15. I did advise each association that there might be some delays because of the drafting provisions but that we would do everything in our power to have the acts proclaimed by August 15 or sooner if in fact we could finalize the specific wording of the regulations concerning those particular acts. So that is the information that I provided to the various licensing bodies and indicated to them that that was a time frame upon which we were working.

I also had indicated at the MARN convention that, if there was difficulty in terms of proclamation of the acts, I would at least try to get the MARN act proclaimed by August 15. If there were difficulties with the drafting of regulations for the other two acts, the MARN act would probably be proclaimed first, although, quite frankly, insofar as the regulatory changes are consistent across most acts, I am hoping that it will not be a difficult process to in fact do that. But it is subject to legislative drafting priorities, and we are trying to see if we could accommodate the needs. I had made a previous

commitment that I would try to have the acts proclaimed prior to the next registration year, which means the August 15 deadline is very important to try to achieve. We in Health are going to make every effort that we can to adhere to and to achieve that particular deadline. So that is basically the situation with respect to the particular acts.

Mrs. Driedger: I understand that the minister got a standing ovation for making those comments at the MARN meeting and that the registered nurses were certainly very appreciative of the commitment that he was making to have those acts proclaimed by August 15. I think that the other two nursing regulatory bodies would certainly be appreciative of having their acts proclaimed at the same time because certainly that would seem to make the most sense.

I am wondering what is taking so long in terms of the regulations. I understand that there were not a lot of changes, that a lot of homework had been done by all three regulatory bodies. There was certainly concern amongst all three regulatory bodies about what appeared to be some real foot-dragging on the issue and wondered why it is taking so long to have all of these regulations dealt with.

The minister has indicated that the legal people within the department are really busy, but really when we look at the legislative agenda right now it is not particularly heavy. I would wonder what is taking two years in terms of proclaiming these acts because certainly when they were brought forward back in 1999 the minister was totally in favour of them, was supportive of quick passage, did not seem to have any problems with them at the time. Now it just seems a bit suspicious that we are two years down the road, and the nursing professions are actually getting quite, quite concerned about why this is taking so long.

So I would like to ask the minister: Why are the regulations taking so long to get into place when in fact according to the regulatory bodies there really was not that much to be done with them? All their homework had been done.

* (15:40)

Mr. Chomiak: Yes, I know that the member stood up in the House on several occasions and pronounced the fact that the regulations were done and that we ought to pass the acts immediately. I indicated that there was work to be done. I have had conversations with a variety of people, even colleagues of the member, with respect to the acts. There were a number of issues that we wished to have dealt with, with respect to the acts and the regulations. We had discussions with the regulatory bodies concerning some of these issues.

In terms of responsibility or my responsibility, I think it is very important that we examined, and I thought it was very important that we examine when we came into office, the various issues affecting us and review some of the legislation and some of the practices that had been put in place. In fact, I think it was incumbent upon us to do that. I should indicate that in the first 30 days or so, in fact, in the period leading up to the actual transition, I was advised, for example, of an act that needed to be proclaimed. I had recalled as critic that we had passed that particular act unanimously. I gave my authority in a transition stage to the proclamation of that particular act. Upon assuming office, I then had part of that community get back to me and complain to me about some provisions of that act that ought to have been put in place prior to the actual proclamation. So I learned a lesson. That was that, even though we had supported that particular act in opposition, once assuming office and we had an opportunity to view the landscape and to view the situation. There were conditions that had changed, and there were conditions that had to be assured, before proclamation of particular acts. So I think it is prudent, and it was prudent, to review some of the aspects of the act.

I think it is very interesting, Mr. Chairperson, that today and over the past year with respect to, for example, the Sinclair inquiry and other matters affecting us day to day in health care that issues of professional licensing bodies are paramount and are very, very much a factor with respect to the health care system. There have been some changes. There has been some need. In fact, just today when we released the Thomas report, there were suggestions, and

there are suggestions, that there may be need to amend a particular regulatory body's act.

So in this context, in fact, I received information from groups about changing some regulatory acts. So to jump in completely and proclaim acts when there were some matters that had to be reviewed and there were some concerns would have not been prudent. So, with respect to the acts, I indicated that I would be reviewing them.

There were some concerns that I had with respect to the acts that I wanted to discuss with the regulatory bodies. We had a long series of discussions. I can indicate that even as recently as several weeks ago there were some issues concerning the acts and the regulations that we had not been able to resolve. In fact, we were very close to bringing in legislation amending at least one of the acts in order to resolve a particular delicate situation. Fortunately, through negotiation, through good will, and through working together and through the professionalism of the various regulatory bodies we were able to resolve these issues to everyone's satisfaction and we were able to then proceed to draft regulations that were required to be drafted in this regard.

The member indicates that she thinks that the legislative people are not very busy. I can tell her that is not in fact the case. They are very busy and there is a long list of things that they must do and they must work on and that they are prioritizing. It therefore makes the drafting of the regulations—some regulations are drafted, but not all the regulations are drafted. Some of them require drafting. That is, in fact, the task that we are undertaking. Fortunately, we were able to negotiate a successful conclusion to some of the issues raised, and we were able to then take those results and forward them to legislative draftspeople in order to have the regulations drafted. I am pleased, and I think that the organizations are pleased, that they could proceed under their new legislation.

I do not think that it is prudent to suggest that one automatically proclaims acts upon assuming office, or that one does not reconsider or review particular acts based on changes or based on developments. I think it would be

imprudent to do that. So I am pleased, because what I think has resulted is a better act and a better situation that has occurred as a result of our discussions and our negotiations. Contrary to what might be suggested, I think that we have done and we have been able to achieve a better outcome to our legislation and an improved outcome in order to permit us to move forward.

Mrs. Driedger: I certainly do not argue with the minister that it is prudent to review aspects of the act as a new government when they came in. I believe from looking through his Hansard comments during the debate on the acts, that he was very, very supportive of them, and certainly did not give any indication that he had any concerns at that point in time. But, as a new government coming in, I would agree with him and support that a new government should take some time and review things, and he did not want to jump in and proclaim them right away and I support that.

I guess I am just wondering whether or not two years is just a bit long for this. Certainly, he has indicated that he had some concerns that I guess came to light after he became the Minister of Health and he did not feel it was prudent to proceed with that. I wonder if he is willing to share with us, what conditions changed. He indicated that some conditions had changed, and I wondered what those conditions might be that would have made this project take two years before—in fact it is going to be even more than two by the time the acts are proclaimed.

* (15:50)

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, a number of issues have changed with respect to nursing in the past two years. For example, we are training as I have indicated, double the amount of nurses than when the member left office. We have expanded, we have provided funding for nurses in terms of upgrading their education. We have a task force examining nursing conditions. We have successfully concluded negotiations to bring nurses to Manitoba in order to augment the nursing shortage that had started in the '90s and because of cutbacks in enrolment, it had got even worse in the last several years.

In addition, there were a number of factors concerning mixes of nurses, as well as conditions concerning the agreement on internal trade,

although I do not know if we have resolved all of those issues with respect to these particular regulations. There were all kinds of matters that have been referred to me for a long period of time since I have been in office respecting nurses. There is also the larger issue of the public requiring more accountability of professional bodies. We have been very conscious of this, particularly in light of Sinclair, and right across the gamut.

I just note for the record that a former Minister of Justice brought in a law reform commission report that reviewed all professional bodies and suggested different approaches to professional bodies. That was brought in by Minister McCrae when he was the minister responsible. So there are a variety of concerns, and the world does not stay the same. There are significant changes almost on a daily basis. We see that in our approach to health care. We are not locked into the old method of closing beds and going privatization, which seems to be the mantra. We are looking at change on a daily basis in our health care system and evolving on a daily basis in our health care system. Needs and demands are changing on a daily basis.

In addition, there were concerns that were brought to our attention concerning some matters of how the various professional acts applied and how there was representation. We wanted to canvass that particular issue. There has been a move towards a more arms-length agreement with professional bodies. At the same time, there are demands on the system to make professional bodies more accountable to the system. Those are two conflicting patterns of developments that have occurred. For a variety of reasons, Mr. Chairperson, we reviewed the acts. We took our time to do it properly. We had long negotiations and we successfully concluded. As the member indicated, when I spoke last week at the MARN convention they were very pleased with the fact we would be proclaiming the act shortly.

Mrs. Driedger: Certainly some of the things the minister has indicated make me wonder how that has anything to do with proclaiming the act. Some of those are just issues that are out there. The public wants more accountability from nurses, well, that is what the act will actually

help to create. So I do not understand how that is a regulation that slows things down, or a piece of the act that slows things down, because a number of those issues are very well dealt with in the acts.

Certainly, the acts have an opportunity to enhance patient care and help to improve the system through some of the changes that are in them. One would hope there is not a lot more stalling on this, because there is an opportunity here for the acts to have a positive impact on nursing.

I would like to ask the minister if he would indicate what it meant when his Assistant Deputy Minister, Rick Dedi, spoke in November to some LPNs.

He had indicated to them: We are coming here to say we are not going to proclaim the acts as they are. We are going to make amendments. That is one thing. We are also saying that the amendments we are making are not specific for one nursing profession. They are going to be the same for all three nursing professions. We are also saying that this is the first opportunity to make those changes. Some of those changes, likely the one on the minister's power to adjust regulation, will be in all subsequent legislation, and we may, and this is a big one, and we may make that change—now it says Ombudsman, but I think it maybe means omnibus way—to all professional acts, although God knows trying to do it to the College of Physicians and Surgeons without being shot with a cannon—but anyway, the point is, we are trying to make for all health professions, those changes.

Can the minister indicate what Mr. Dedi was meaning with all of that? Obviously back in November there was some movement to make some what sounds like pretty significant changes, and it was certainly something that I was a little bit surprised to hear about at the time. Is this still where we are going in terms of looking at the regulations? Is this why things are taking so long, because the minister is wanting more power to adjust regulation? Is that what is going to be happening in the new regulations?

Mr. Chomiak: Well, I do not know where to start, Mr. Chairperson. The member made reference to the acts and some of the positive benefits

of the acts, and I just say to the member you have to look at the total, big picture. You cannot just focus on specific, one issues. There is a large picture here, and there is interplay between a lot of these issues that have impact right across the health care field. That is our responsibility, and we take it very seriously. We look at the bigger picture and the interplay between some of the component parts. So, while the member would have us rush in and proclaim the acts without any further discussion or any review of change in conditions, I would say that is improvement, and I say that is not the way to manage or to govern a system. So I reject that particular solution.

As I indicated to the member, I indicated in my comments that there were negotiations about some different aspects of the legislation. I indicated to the member that as recently as a couple of weeks ago there was still consideration given to a particular amendment of the act, and if that amendment were to take place the amendment would have taken place in this Chamber. There would have been debate and public hearings, and there would have been opportunity to discuss whether or not that change should take place, and it would have been voted upon and determined.

As it turned out, we were able to achieve what we think is a better solution via regulation. The member should know that regulations change on a regular basis, almost on a daily basis, and situations change and regulations change. We entered into discussions with the various professional groups and reviewed, and we provided them with information. We discussed, we negotiated, we worked on it, and in the end we were able to achieve mutually satisfactory conclusions. There were agreements by all parties to the changes, and there are some regulatory changes that resulted.

The reference to the omnibus legislation, I made that reference in my previous answer. I indicated to the member that a report was brought down by one of her colleagues that suggested omnibus regulations. That was a Law Reform Commission of Manitoba recommendation that came down and talked about omnibus regulations. I am in fact informed that at one time the Department of Health was actually

considering omnibus regulations when the member was a member of the government, that they had looked at that particular option prior to reviewing and entering into the new regulations and the new acts that are the subject of discussions today.

* (16:00)

Again, the member has to understand, even today during the course of the Thomas committee there are suggestions of possible changes to professional acts. This is not a static process. This is a system that evolves and changes. There are different views, and we canvass those views. The assistant deputy minister, at that time, was meeting with each of the professional bodies to discuss potential changes, proposed changes, possible changes. This is what negotiation is all about. In the end, we concluded favourably with some changes that we think will improve, let me reiterate, we think will improve the acts in question. We have agreement on that, and we are proceeding to proclaim. I think that is a satisfactory solution for all concerned.

It could very well be that, as I said today, even in today during the review of the Thomas committee report, there are all kinds of recommendations, some of which actually have legislative implication that we may have to change some legislation. But we think we have been able to achieve our goals and proclaim the acts and allow the new acts to be proclaimed and for nurses to function under the new acts. That is my response, Mr. Chairperson.

Mrs. Driedger: Could the minister tell me if he is looking at seeking power to adjust regulations to try, according to what his ADM said, to do it to the College of Physicians and Surgeons without being shot with a cannon? Is the minister looking for power to adjust regulation at that level, and is that holding up anything with the nursing acts?

Mr. Chomiak: No.

Mrs. Driedger: His assistant deputy minister also indicated to the nurses at this meeting, and he was specifically talking about the regulations and the changes in the regulations, he says: The reason we want them there is that—and this is coming maybe more from the recent introduction of the diploma program—there is concern

that we would not be able to continue our diploma program. That is one example.

Can the minister tell me if that has anything to do with sitting on these regulations for two years? Is the lack of approval of the diploma program playing any role in this?

Mr. Chomiak: We have not sat on these regulations for two years.

Mrs. Driedger: Could the minister make his answer perhaps a little bit longer and indicate whether or not, as his assistant deputy minister indicated, the reason we want them there is that—and this is coming maybe more from the recent introduction of the diploma program—there is concern that we would not be able to continue our diploma program? That is one example.

Can the minister indicate if the reason he is stalling on the regulations has something to do with him waiting for MARN to approve the diploma program?

Mr. Chomiak: I will take the opportunity to lengthen my response to the member so she can clearly understand the circumstances of the situation. First off, we are not stalling. You know, the member used that word and I think that is an inappropriate word. We are not stalling on the passage of the regulations. I have just provided the member with an indication that we are planning to proclaim the acts by August 15 or sooner, depending upon the drafting of legislation. Now first the member said she did not believe that the draftspersons were that busy. They are that busy. Then the member said we are sitting on the regulations. And I said we have been negotiating, Mr. Chairperson. I even indicated as recently as a couple of weeks ago, we were still involved in negotiations in this regard. But still the member insists on using the word "stalling."

With reference to the diploma program, I am glad that the member brought up the diploma program. I am still waiting to see why the member has such opposition to the diploma program.

Point of Order

Mrs. Driedger: The minister continues, and this just seems to be a continuation from last year's Estimates, to constantly take every chance he

can to put on the record and otherwise that we oppose the nursing program. The minister has never heard that out of anybody's mouth. Again, I go back to the reason I have to ask questions in my job as an accountable opposition. Just because I ask questions, and he was very crafty about this all last Estimates, he is continuing to behave the same way any time he gets a chance to talk about this. He still really does not have a clue where we stand on the issue of the two-year diploma program, because what we do in opposition is ask questions. I believe that is my role. That is the expectation of the public around this issue.

The minister can take pot shots on this all he likes but the fact is in opposition we have an obligation to ask questions. Because I ask a question one way or the other, I would encourage the minister not to make assumptions and put words in my mouth about what he thinks I mean or do not mean. All I am doing is asking questions. I would expect a direct and honest answer.

Mr. Chomiak: Certainly the member will get direct and honest answers. I agree with the member that it is very hard that the Opposition party does not have a clue about many policy issues. I agree with her on that assertion.

Mr. Chairperson: Order, please. On this point of order raised by the honourable Member for Charleswood, I must advise that there is no point of order. It is clearly a dispute over the facts.

I would like to take this opportunity to remind all honourable members of the purpose of a point of order. A point of order is to bring to the Chairperson's attention a breach of the rules. Points of order are not a time for debate. I would like to ask all honourable members for their co-operation.

* * *

Mr. Chomiak: To continue my response to the member concerning the points, I listened very carefully to what the member stated. The member said we were stalling after I advised the member that we were in negotiations and we had been in negotiations as recently as a couple of weeks ago. I do not how much clearer I have to be, but the member still persists in putting on the

record a point of view, I suppose, one way or the other. So it is very difficult to know and it makes it very awkward to answer questions when the member hears an answer and completely rejects the answer or seeks to not pay any attention to it.

But to continue, the member asked about the diploma program. The member mentioned the diploma program. I was simply stating a fact.

But to return to the issue of the diploma program, the diploma program, as I understand it, has been approved. I want to indicate that it has been from all indications an overwhelming success with respect to the nurses. It is one of the reasons why we think we have—we do not think, we know—statistically we have many more nurses in training than at any time in the past few years. There has been an increase in enrolment as a result of the diploma program and at the BN program. We are very pleased that we finally reversed the trend of declining nurse education and declining programs and declining enrolments and that we are going to build up in the future for the significant shortfalls and shortages that have occurred in the health care system.

There were a series of issues with respect to the acts that I indicated several answers ago that we are dealing with, that we are negotiating with, and that we successfully concluded that will result and that will see passage of the various acts very soon, and we think have sought to ameliorate, that is improve the functioning of the act, and I am very pleased that has occurred. I am very pleased that we were able to discuss these issues and negotiate these issues, and I make no apologies from a policy sense for trying to improve the situation and dealing with the situation. As I had indicated, these situations are not static. They are constantly changing; there are constantly new developments. The acts will be proclaimed as I indicated subject to legal drafting of some regulations. We are targeting for August 15, certainly for the MARN, and I am very hopeful that we can also achieve it with the other acts. It would be really helpful if we could, and we are trying our best efforts in order to do that.

Mrs. Driedger: Could the minister tell me then: Is Mr. Dedi's statement accurate? This is talking

about the changes in the regulations or the minister's power over regulations. He is saying: The reason we want them there is that—and this is coming maybe more from the recent introduction of the diploma program—there is concern that we would not be able to continue our diploma program. That is one example.

Would the minister concur with Mr. Dedi's statement to nurses at a meeting that in fact he wanted to change regulations in order to ensure that the diploma program would then be approved, as Mr. Dedi is saying?

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, I would have to see the exact quotes, confirm that they were in fact quotes, see the context in which they were uttered. I have had too many experiences of members taking quotes out of context or quoting information that was not reflective of what actually was said. So this is meant with no disrespect, but I think it is only fair that I have the opportunity to review not only the specific quotes but the context in which the quotes were made in order to give a reasoned response to that particular question.

Mrs. Driedger: Well, that is a good way to avoid answering the question, but it looks a little bit obvious here. It appears now that the diploma program has been approved. The minister has just indicated that, and it now looks like MARN gets to have their act proclaimed by August 15. But he is indicating then that that is not the same with the other two regulatory bodies. I have to wonder then, and I will ask the minister: Can he assure Manitobans that this ongoing delay with the other two regulatory bodies is in no way politically motivated in order to garner leverage against them?

* (16:10)

Mr. Chomiak: This causes difficulty, Mr. Chairperson. Yesterday the member quoted from a letter and read it into the record and asked me to look at a letter. She did not include certain aspects of the letter that when I read it in context resulted in me having a different perspective than what the member read. So I am not going to take the member's quotes and comments out of context. I will look at them.

Now the member is speculating about a whole series of political motivations. That may

be the way the member operated when she was in government. That may be the way the previous government operated in terms of political motivations, but our goal and our objective is to try to provide the best quality health care to Manitobans under the circumstances that we can. The member can make allegations about political motivation, but it has been my experience that good policies are generally good politics, that if you proceed to try to factually do the best job you can, that is generally good politics.

So for the member to start accusing of political motivations, and talk about delays, when I have indicated we have been in discussions, can get us into a battle here.

The member said earlier that I was avoiding answering the question. I said if the member would give me the specific information, if I could see the context and the quotes, I would refer to it. I am not going to simply holus-bolus respond to interpretations of written text from I do not know where by the member, and comment on it, or comment on government policy, as indicated by the member, without having an opportunity to both review the particular statements, the source of those statements, and the actual context in which those statements were made. I do not think that is appropriate, and I do not think that is correct.

So I do not know how the member can accuse me of avoiding an answer. I outlined to the member that I would like that information. Generally when we refer to documents, certainly in the House, when you refer to a written correspondence in the House, you have to table it.

Earlier in Question Period the member talked about some telephone conversation she had had, and purportedly quoted it. I could do that pretty regularly about telephone conversations that I have had and quote from what those telephone conversations are, but the member would have no way of knowing if in fact that was actually factual. So I do not think the member can accuse me of not answering the question when all I ask for is clarification and more information with respect to the quotes the member made.

Secondly, for the member to suggest that the negotiations were "politically motivated," I do not think is appropriate, in terms of this particular process. The member seems to find political motivation behind every decision. That may have been the way that they operated when they were in government. That is not the way that we operate in government.

Mrs. Driedger: The minister certainly seemed a little extra sensitive about that. I was not making an accusation. All I asked was his assurances. It was quite simple and straightforward. All I wanted was his assurance that the delays were in no way politically motivated in order to garner leverage against any organization. I was not making an accusation that that was happening. All I was asking for was his assurance that that was not the case. I am surprised that the minister jumped on that as sensitively as he did. I guess that is his right.

I was speaking with a nurse last night, I will say, however. The nurse reminded me how often this minister talked about respect for nurses. She indicated to me that, since the 1980s, she has never encountered a government that has been as disrespectful to nurses as this one is. I guess I am wondering why will the minister not show more respect for the nursing professions who are anxiously awaiting these acts. These acts are 20 years old. There is a good opportunity to improve care with enhanced acts. I would just ask the minister why will he not show more respect for the nursing professions who are anxiously awaiting these acts, and just get out there and proclaim all three.

Mr. Chomiak: I just spent 45 minutes discussing with the member the issues concerning the proclamation of these acts. I do not want to spend another 45 minutes repeating the answers to the member.

The member then makes a statement on record that a nurse made a comment. Everyone is entitled to their comments. All I know is that I have a report in front of me that was provided to the Legislature that said in 1998, and I am quoting: We desperately need more qualified caregivers at the bedside. Over the past several years, approximately 1000 nurses have been laid off by government. In addition, many nurses,

whether laid-off or new grads, left the province to seek nursing jobs elsewhere, primarily in the U.S. Mr. Chair, statistics show that a total out-migration in the early '90s of registered nurses, for example, exceeded the total number of newly registered, including new Manitoba graduates. Young people planning their careers no longer see the nursing profession as a potentially satisfying career choice. Job prospects are poor.

Full-time employment is almost unattainable. With the growing use of casual nurses in hospital and personal care homes, many nurses juggle several positions in several institutions, being able to secure casual work at each. The workload and stress factors alone make the profession less attractive to potential nursing students. The prospect of working a profession where those presently practising say they cannot give good care, they are not always able to meet basic standards of practice required to maintain their licences frightens me.

These factors, in combination with years of rollbacks to nursing salaries and compensation packages has resulted in the current shortage of nurses. Let me repeat: these factors, in combination with years of rollbacks to nursing salaries and compensation packages has resulted in the current shortage of nurses. That is a report that was provided in the Legislature, April 1998, after 10 years of the member's colleagues leading the nursing profession.

So, Mr. Chairperson, everyone and every individual is entitled to their opinion. The nurse the member spoke to might be entitled to her opinion, is entitled to her opinion. Certainly, that is the member's opinion obviously, but I just indicate and I indicated today in Question Period what we have done since we obtained office for nurses.

The members constantly deny this report that was provided in the Legislature in April 1998. Remember, these were not my words. These are the words of the very people that the member quoted from in her questions in Question Period today, the very people. You cannot have it both ways. You cannot quote the MNU one day and say we are doing something, but what the MNU said a couple of years ago is not true, because the only difference is that when

you were in government and the MNU made those claims, the member rejected it, as did the previous government. So you cannot have this selective memory and the selective use of quotes.

So that individual is entitled to her opinion, Mr. Chairperson. I have indicated that we have listened to nurses. The two top things that nurses said to us when we came to office were bring back the diploma program. Now, it was not me out front; it was the Conservative Party out front that was speaking to the protesters when they rallied here against the diploma program. We brought it in. The applications were monumental, and we are now training double the number of nurses that have been trained in the past decade. Now, I do not know, if we had continued the same practice as members opposite, we would have been in even more trouble than we are in.

Secondly, nurses said get us more educational funding, and we allocated the \$3 million from the Nursing Recruitment and Retention Fund to get education to nurses. We put in place a task force to examine nursing conditions. We actively and very purposely and aggressively recruited offshore in order to augment the nursing situation.

I know the member does not like us to change regulations, but we changed the regulations to permit nurses to sit on boards of certain agencies and authorities, Mr. Chair. We have nurses sitting on boards of directors of major health care institutions, something that members opposite by regulation were not permitting. Just to make a point about the way regulations change, had we not changed that regulation, we would not have been able to do that, but we came into office and changed the regulation, and I do not apologize that we changed the regulations.

So, Mr. Chairperson, the member may have a take on the situation. The member may have spoken to a nurse who says what the member says that that nurse said. We are working on a regular basis with nurses, on a regular basis, to improve the situation. It is very clear and we hear it over and over again, that if there had not been such terrible circumstances that prevailed

in the 1990s, we would not be in this situation we are with respect to nursing and nursing shortages and nursing difficulties, but we have to deal with what we have. That is why we have been very active in this field.

Today the member indicated there are not enough full-time jobs. I acknowledged there are not enough full-time jobs, Mr. Chairperson, but there is more than there was when the member was in office. I am not going to campaign and champion that. I am not going to campaign and champion that and rub it in to members opposite. The fact is that is what I understand, and there will be more action in this area.

* (16:20)

Clearly we are going to have to disagree, but I have to indicate that if we continued the policies that the members opposite had doggedly pursued over the 1990s, if we had kept cutting nursing programs, if we had not actively put in place active nurses' plans, if we had not brought back the diploma program, if we had allowed programs to deteriorate, we would have been in worse shape. That is what the public voted for in September 1999, for a change in our policy approach to health care, Mr. Chairperson.

I am the first to admit that we are not perfect. You know, Mr. Chairperson, I said in the House today that we had to do better, and the members, they were gleeful. They were gleeful. I guess being frank is something that members opposite do not understand. I said we have not done as good as I would like, but we have done better than members opposite, and we are going to continue to do better.

The members opposite have to acknowledge that this report, when it was tabled in April 1998 in the Legislature, was significant. You know, it is in writing. It is ironic that the same people that the member quoted today were the people that provided this information, this report.

So, Mr. Chairperson, clearly there are situations where we can improve. We are working at it every single day and will continue to work at it every single day, but we will not do what I saw happen during the '90s and pretend

there are no problems and pretend that there is nothing wrong and there is nothing that needs to be fixed. Because when you start to pretend there are no problems and you do not realize that there are things that can be fixed, you do not do anything about it. That is unfortunately what happened through much of the late '90s.

Mrs. Driedger: Mr. Chairman, the minister again in that little speech that he gave certainly put some words in my mouth. There is nowhere I have ever said I do not like regulations to be changed. I do not know where he got that from, other than the fact I am questioning regulations today. All of a sudden he is spinning this way out of control to indicate that I do not like regulations to be changed. That is a stretch. I am not sure how he goes from my questions to that comment, but in fact just for the record, let us just say that nothing stays static. When one is looking at improvements in anything, I appreciate that changes have to be made.

The minister has a tendency to shoot the messenger. When I had indicated this nurse spoke to me last night, those were her words. She had indicated she has been a nurse for a long time and she indicated to me that this Government was the most disrespectful towards nurses since the '80s. Again, I am the messenger of that. I thought it was important that the minister hear what a nurse out there has to say.

The report that the minister is referencing, I was not an elected official at the time that was tabled in the House. I would wonder if the minister would be able to provide me with a copy of that report from April 1998?

I am assuming it is from the Manitoba Nurses' Union. I would be very interested in having a look at the report and in what they have to say. I do want to say that I appreciate the efforts of all nursing groups that work hard to improve the health care situation in Manitoba, whether it is believing and working hard to improve conditions for nurses or whether it is groups working hard to create a better health care system overall. I appreciate the efforts of everybody in trying to look at health care in Manitoba. You know, I applaud when people put passion behind what they do. I am not going to ever argue against that, but if the minister would

be prepared, I would very much appreciate seeing a copy of that particular report.

The minister has also talked about the diploma program being approved. I have not seen anything in the news about that. I wondered if the minister could give us an indication as to when that program was approved.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, I certainly will undertake to provide the member with a copy of that particular report. It was striking at the time what happened, and it was unfortunate. Maybe it would have been better if the member had been in the Chamber at that time, because the government of the day refused to acknowledge it, refused to look at it, and refused to deal with it. It was unfortunate, because it identified a whole series of problems and difficulties that had they been dealt with earlier would have caused us less difficulty today. So I would be very pleased to provide the member with a copy of that.

With respect to the approval of the diploma program, I was verbally advised that in fact it was approved. I am going through my memory. I will have to just confirm that. When I say I am going from memory, I know it has in fact been approved. I just want to confirm the actual details of that for the member. I will endeavour to provide the member with that information.

Mrs. Driedger: I understand that when the program started, there were going to be 90 students. I understood that they may have accepted 97 students. The assistant deputy minister at the time had indicated that he expected I believe it was a 25% attrition rate, or he said 30 percent and the minister said 25 percent. It was one or the other or both of them saying 25 percent to 30 percent.

I am wondering if the minister has any idea of what that attrition rate has been in the first year?

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, now I am going totally from memory on this, but from my understanding, the attrition rate has been remarkably low. In fact, I think I am correct in saying the attrition rate has been less than that in the regular BN program and that they have been

quite pleased with the ratios, and I am also going from memory here, but I believe, for the few that left the program, they have been replaced by LPNs who are, in fact, enhancing their skills, so that is my recollection of that particular information.

Mrs. Driedger: I wonder if the minister would be willing to do a bit more checking into that. I do know that there was bad feeling with the LPNs and that there had been some that had dropped out of the program. I wonder if we could have, of the original numbers who had entered the program, how many of those original people had actually dropped out, and how much of that was backfilled with LPNs. I do understand that it is probably a fairly intensive program, and it is probably something we should all be watching in terms of the challenges that these students have to face. I wondered if the minister would be willing to provide us with that.

* (16:30)

Mr. Chomiak: Yes, I will undertake to provide that information. It is contrary to questions and advice that was given to me in the Chamber by particular members in respect to the program. It appears to be functioning much more effectively than particular comments that have been made concerning the program, and I certainly will try to get that specific information.

The member can continue her line of questioning. I am not trying to preclude anything she may want to do, but I want to indicate that Chris Hauch, the acting director, and Marie O'Neill, the senior planner of capital projects, have joined us, so I am not trying to determine when the member goes down the Capital line but just advise her that those particular people are here.

Mrs. Driedger: Mr. Chairman, no, that is as we had indicated earlier. We are quite prepared to set aside the time right now to look at some of that, and I will save my questions on that for a little while and defer the questioning right now to my colleague.

Mr. Jim Penner (Steinbach): Mr. Chairman, sometimes I feel like sitting in southeastern

Manitoba that there is some kind of a government vendetta against the health care system, but I guess, when the minister repeats himself often enough, I think he actually believes what he is saying. I would say that the questions that we need to answer in regard to the dilemma for health care in southeast and maybe other rural areas would start with, can the minister provide me with information, what the average cost per person is for the southeast regional health authority? I believe there are 52 000 people under their area.

Mr. Chomiak: I do not know what reference the member is making to a vendetta. It may be that there was a vendetta under the previous government to the region. I cannot speak to that, Mr. Chairperson, but certainly that is not the case. That is not even part of my vocabulary, so to suggest vendetta, and I am not being even facetious on this one. I think the use of that word is, you know, Mr. Chairperson, I do not think it is appropriate, but that is a question of judgment, but to suggest that a government has a vendetta against a particular region is not, I think, appropriate, and that may have been the way the former government operated, but that is not the way this Government operates.

The South Eastman region, contrary to the member's statement in the House when he said the region is not asking for more money, I believe, to paraphrase what the member said, we recognized that there was a significant shortfall in the funding. There has historically been a significant shortfall in the South Eastman and North Eastman, I believe, and we identified that when we came into office. In fact, as I recall, when the region was forced, several months ago to do some changes in terms of delivery of programs, they indicated that the reason for the problems had started in the '90s. We cannot in one year, or even in two years, overcome some of the legacy of the shortfalls that occurred. We did do significant negotiations with that region to try to deal with their budget situation. As a share and a percentage of increase we gave them more this year, as I recall, than other years. With respect to the per capita costs per individual, I will take a look at that particular information, but I can tell you that that is one way of calculating a particular need and requirement. There are a whole series of other ways of

calculating needs and requirements that might give a better reflection than necessarily per capita spending.

Mr. Jim Penner: Let me try again. There is an average cost in each health authority for the per person average to the cost of the Province for that region. I am just wondering if I could find out what the amount of money is per person that is paid to the Eastman or South Eastman Regional Health Authority.

Mr. Chomiak: I will just repeat part of what I said in my previous response. I said I would undertake to try to find out that information for the member. I have the Capital people here, so I do not know if I actually have that information now quite at hand. I guess I do not, Mr. Chairperson.

Now you know, Mr. Chairperson, just in regard to this issue, I will undertake to determine that issue. There are a variety of ways of measuring allocations and per capita is one of them.

Mr. Jim Penner: I thought we were prepared to deal with some money matters today, and that is capital, and obviously the amount of money that we have for beds, the amount of money that we have for extended care, the amount of money we have for personal care, the amount of money we have for equipment, and all the capital costs and operating, it boils down to a cost per person. It seems to me that it would be responsible for the minister to understand that he would know what each region's cost per person was. I have a hard time believing that he is that incompetent that he would not know the cost per person. Do we know the cost per person, Mr. Chairman, for the Province?

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, far be it for me to suggest—the member opposite is experienced in a number of things—that that is the one solution. But for the member to suggest that per capita expenditures per person is the way of judging the way we allocate funding in our health care system completely, I think is perhaps reflective of some of the general thinking that—the member is the one who stood up in the Legislature and said we have funded, his region did not want more money. I think the member was wrong on that. There were more

requirements, and we now subsequently discovered that there are more requirements for the member's region.

We will provide that information with respect to those regions. In the area of health care, the question of per capita costs per person is not the only criteria that one should use in terms of determination of the allocation of resources. For if that was the case, we would not be able to provide for certain needs and requirements in this province for high-risk areas, or for areas where there are higher needs and other requirements. I have indicated to the member I will provide that information but I am just actually trying to assist the member in interpreting some of the information.

Mr. Jim Penner: I know it is not the only criterion. I respect that. But I do not respect the misuse of my quote when I was trying to explain that throwing money at issues is not the way to run. They inherited a \$600-million increase, I think, from the federal government in funding when they took office, that we were trying to manage without, and they inherited a province that had a balanced budget and that was in reasonably good shape considering what we had to work with out of the 1990s with the recession.

As far as I am concerned, the statement I was trying to make, and if I did not come across I will explain it once more, is that throwing money at things is no substitute for good management. In the southeast, we do not want just throwing money at things. That is not the issue. We are short of money, and everybody knows, that but throwing money at things is not a substitute for good planning and good management.

I know there will always be problems but I cannot believe that we do not know what an average cost per person is. Mr. Chairman, can the minister confirm that our Health budget is approximately \$2.6 billion?

Mr. Chomiak: Let me repeat it again to the member. I will provide that information, Mr. Chairperson. I was under the impression that we were dealing with capital items at this point. The information will be provided.

* (16:40)

Mr. Jim Penner: Well, it just seems to me that part of the budgeting process would be reflected in the average cost. I understand that the average cost in the North definitely would be higher, although there are a lot less people. I think we have about 1.15 million people living in the province, and I think our budget is around \$2.6 billion. It has been suggested to me that that would be an average of about \$2,400, \$2,500 per person in Manitoba.

I understand that the average for south-eastern Manitoba is around \$660. If that was the case, then we would understand some of the concerns of my constituents who feel that the budget problems for the coming year are almost insurmountable.

An unauthorized letter, dated April 18, to the honourable Minister of Health, the funding was supposedly increased by \$3.4 million when in fact after covering the previous year's deficit there was only an increase of \$700,000 because there was a \$2.7-million deficit that had not been covered from the previous year. We understood that the deficits were reasonable and that they would be picked up and that they would not be included in the next year's funding. So the actual increase that we experienced was only two percent. When you look at the amount of money that we actually had left to use, the collective agreements needed that were agreed to by all parties, they needed \$850,000 in increased funds, even though our nurses are probably underpaid compared to some of the provinces. That is why we are training them and losing them. Our contract costs for one year are approximately \$850,000 so we were left with approximately a shortfall of \$400,000 just to cover the collective agreements, let alone, you know, the basic other needs for the province.

So we came up with the question: What do we have to cut out if that is the way the southeast is going to be treated?

Mr. Gregory Dewar, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair

Mr. Chomiak: As I indicated in the House, we have been working pretty consistently with the

regions with respect to dealing with their budgets. We looked at the allocation of resources this year in the health care budget, and we provided a significant increase to regions, in fact, a disproportionate, for the most part, increase to regions outside of Winnipeg relative to increases to Winnipeg, for example. We provided significant funding to those regions. In fact, in the case of that particular region, in terms of actual dollars it is a bigger increase than any other time they received it since they have been in existence.

Now, Mr. Chairperson, I acknowledged earlier that there were problems historically with South Eastman and North Eastman. I think I acknowledged last year in Estimates, as well, that there were difficulties because the base for South Eastman and North Eastman, as I remembered, was set up and established by the previous government. It was probably not sufficient—that is, at least, what I was advised—and we tried to recognize that in our funding allocations to the regions.

The letter the member referred to was a letter, I believe, that was forwarded to me and then leaked, Mr. Chairperson, and used in the House. It was suggestions from, I believe it was the board Chair, as to the ramifications of funding deficits and some of the options that might have to be proceeded with under those kinds of circumstances. We have met with them subsequently. I have met with them subsequently. We are continuing to meet with them.

I do not know if the member can appreciate this, but normally under the previous government budgets came to the regions at the end of the year, which did not make for good planning. Generally, it was very difficult to manage. What we did this year is try to provide up front the funding allocations and the total funding allocations and not suggest over the year, well, you may or may not get funding for a particular program. We tried to be up front and provide the overall funding.

We are still continuing to work with that region in order to allocate the funding. We are continuing to discuss it. We do recognize, even though they had a more significant increase than any other time, that there is some difficulties that

they are experiencing. We are cognizant of that, and we are working with them.

Mr. Jim Penner: Mr. Chair, the reason I was asking about the average cost and trying to compare it to per person in Manitoba and compare it to the southeast region is that there seems to be a penalty being charged against the southeast for frugality. This is what one of the hospital managers told me one day, and he said, you know, we have been so careful with the use of money, and our equipment has deteriorated and our facilities are getting older. I know in Emerson or Vita, wherever it was, they said it looked like a Third World country. We were just being too careful and too frugal. So, because we were not spending money more freely, we did not get money, and every year it seems like we get cut back a little bit. So it is time to maybe make up a little bit, and we are concerned that the personal care homes may not be able to operate until next year.

Could the minister confirm that this is a possibility?

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, a couple of comments, again. There has been an acknowledgement of the base of that particular region and North Eastman, the base may have not been established sufficient. Again, we did try to recognize that in terms of our funding allocation. Clearly, the region suggested we have not done enough. As I said, we are discussing those issues.

While the member was talking on a per capita, I was just reminded of the fact that 30 percent of the services done in Winnipeg, for example, are done from rural and northern Manitoba which would help skew any per capita comparisons on a straight per capita basis. Having said that, I will admit, and we have said, that there have been difficulties in South Eastman and North Eastman. As far as I understand, Mr. Chairperson, the personal care homes are on target.

Mr. Jim Penner: Mr. Chairperson, I have a copy of a letter signed by the Minister of Health, and, you know, just a couple of lines here which really scare me. On the third last paragraph, the first line says: I recognize that the funding level

discussed here may fall short. Then on the last line of the second last paragraph he says: Any anticipated shortfalls or year-end deficits will remain your responsibility. I am just wondering how we get capital to cover the nurses' wages that were agreed upon by all parties.

* (16:50)

Mr. Chomiak: The demands and the requests always fall short of what has actually been met. Generally, the demands are never entirely met. It does fall short. We could certainly use, and there certainly would be a need for several hundred more million dollars in the health care system, and it could easily be put to very good use, but we have to make prioritizations with respect to our funding and the allocation of funds. I do not have the letter in front of me, but I believe the reference in that particular letter was to the shortfall in terms of the original demands from that region, because no region was able to achieve its total demand with respect to its funding.

The other issues, of course, we are very hopeful that we can continue the positive progress we made last year in dealing with deficits in regions. We had some success last year. It is very clear too that you cannot continue operating a health care system and continue to have ongoing deficits. We are trying to manage deficits and manage needs and demands, and we are trying to do it in a prudent fashion.

Mr. Jim Penner: As was stated in the House in the Legislature today, all 57 MLAs want to represent our people well.

It is very disturbing when the southeast health authority writes: I would not be overstating to say that the direction established in your letter will be disastrous for the region and the provision of health care for South Eastman residents.

Then it goes on to identify some of the problems with the funding. Mr. Chairman, is it possible that the CAT scan will be cancelled, or that there will be no funding to operate it?

Mr. Chomiak: The letter in question was a letter of options and alternatives that were

provided to us with respect to some of the funding. It might surprise the member to know that this happens. In fact it used to happen throughout the year and later in the year by regions. We are trying to provide it up front and deal with it up front. There are a variety of options and decisions that are going to be determined and made by the health care region.

Mr. Chairperson in the Chair

We certainly wanted to put the CAT scan in that region because of needs and requirements. We certainly want to meet the needs and requirements for CAT scans in that region.

Mr. Jim Penner: Just on the side, I want to come back to this, I am wondering if the funds that are being conserved by shutting down 20 beds in Steinbach and 10 beds in Ste. Anne, if those funds could be directed toward the purchase of a dialysis machine. There are 52 000 people in that health authority.

Mr. Chomiak: We are right now looking and reviewing some of the plans and some of the intentions of the district over the next year.

Mr. Jim Penner: I am aware that some of the procedures are done in Winnipeg, for example, in urology. I am very aware of the challenges here. Probably we have 14 urologists and we have a demand for 22. I am wondering if any progress has been made on filling those positions. Could I ask the minister whether that has happened?

Mr. Chomiak: Again, I will have to take that question as notice and get back to the member with respect to the question. The member indicated that it is his recollection that there were needs for 22 urologists. He indicated that there were 14, and he is wondering whether or not we have been able to fill those particular positions. I will undertake to get back to the member on that particular item.

Mr. Jim Penner: I am told that 1 of the 14 is terminally ill. Another one is approaching 80 years of age. I personally have experienced a need for these specialists. I am very thankful for the service that I received in Manitoba. It appears to me that the organization is placing a great deal of stress because of the number of

procedures that are carried out in the Grace Hospital and Concordia Hospital per doctor as compared to the larger hospitals. I am just wondering if the minister is supportive of bringing the services within a reasonable range of the need in the urological treating hospitals in Concordia and Grace.

Mr. Chomiak: I wonder if the member would repeat the question. I am not clear what the member is asking.

Mr. Jim Penner: We have built up demands for prostate surgery and treatment with laser surgery of non-cancerous and cancerous situations. The number of urologists available in Manitoba is probably 14, although some of them only specialize in one specific area. So there is a great deal of concern among some of the urologists that I talked to last week that these issues are not being addressed.

We are wondering, because the Government is talking about taking over beds in Concordia and Grace, these are the places where the greatest efficiency is retained. It costs about a thousand dollars a day at Concordia to keep a patient in there. But using the laser system, they can go on an outpatient. So what I am being told is that the cost of doing 472 cases at the other hospitals would be \$1,227,000, whereas the cost of doing 239 cases at Concordia would be \$215,000. So we are spending two to three times as much money per person without the proper equipment. The equipment that was supplied at Concordia was raised mostly through donations, which a doctor would call laser turf.

I am just wondering if some of these moves to close the hospital beds in Grace and Concordia have really been thought through and what that would cost in terms of the more expensive methods used by HSC and St. Boniface.

* (17:00)

Mr. Chomiak: There have been some long-standing differences of opinion amongst the urologist community with respect to the delivery of service. That has been long-standing. There have been various streams of advice with respect to how we should proceed in that area.

When the member talks about the Government closing beds, that is not happening. There is a proposal forward for reconfiguration of beds to make them more efficient and in fact to do more procedures and put through more. The member might be surprised to know that the plan is very similar to a plan that was put in place concerning critical care ICU beds by the former government which effectively enhanced service, the same plan. So the thinking was to consider a plan similar for medical beds in order to free up more appropriate beds for more appropriate services, i.e. more intensive surgeries, et cetera, at Health Sciences Centre and St. Boniface Hospital, in terms of cardiac, stroke and other procedures, and allowing for procedures at the community hospitals to be pushed through.

But there has been long-standing different viewpoints of opinion as concerns the urology programs and how they should be organized. There are differing viewpoints and that has been a long-standing issue I am aware of. I am aware of it because I know that the deputy minister had met with some of the urologists and that there is an ongoing discussion. What I will undertake is I will check with the WRHA and confirm what the latest developments are concerning the urologists and the recruitment of urologists, and I will provide that information to the member.

Mr. Jim Penner: I thank the minister for that answer. I really believe that it is a very serious issue. I think everybody around this table would believe that. I know that is an ongoing problem, it is not a new problem. Still it seems very critical that some of the doctors are becoming discouraged.

One more question from me and that is the South Eastman Regional Health Authority was wondering whether the previous discussions, while the new Government was in opposition, recommended electing members to the health authority. That does not seem to have happened at this point.

Then there was a letter sent and a motion made by the Rural Municipality of Hanover that the council of the Rural Municipality of Hanover is very concerned over the fact that two rural representatives are leaving the board and being replaced with outside representation. When I

look at the list of the board members today, the only board member that actually resides in the R.M. of Hanover is one person in Grunthal. This is doubtful that there is equal representation from the southeast region. I am wondering if the minister would take a look at the way this has happened.

Mr. Chomiak: Yes.

An Honourable Member: Ow.

An Honourable Member: What was that?

An Honourable Member: Hard on the headphones.

Mr. Peter Dyck (Pembina): I do apologize to Hansard and all those, but it was a wake-up call for everyone. How is that? Now we are awake.

First of all, I would like to thank the minister for coming out to the Boundary Trails opening on May 10. I think it was an excellent event. It went well. I also want to, on this, put on the record that I want to thank Eileen Vodden and some of the other staff, well, actually all of the staff, for the work that they did in moving into a new facility. I am told that the move went very smoothly. It started at 7 in the morning. They were finished, by what I am told, by 20 to 10, 10 o'clock, somewhere around there, and by 20 to 12 of that same day they had the first baby born. So we see that there is activity out there.

I basically have one question, and I guess that centres around the demographics of the area which I am sure the minister is aware. I know I brought it to his attention before but it is an area where Morden-Winkler, a lot of people are retiring. I am told it is the highest percentage in the province of Manitoba with 65-plus people. *[interjection]* The member mentions Dauphin; I think we surpass the number there. This is not a criticism of anyone; it is just that that is the way the system is working. I think the minister is also aware that when we had the combination of the two facilities, Morden and Winkler, that the number of beds in the new facility was reduced, which was understandable, because ongoing we usually had about 30 to 35 people in the facilities who needed to be in a personal care home.

So what is taking place, ongoing, is that the demographics are changing. In fact, what is happening right now, there is a project that is underway at Cedar Estates. They are going to be putting up another 72 units for 55-plus people. So I know that when they do their statistical analysis of the region, it is hard to determine what is going to be taking place a year or even two years down when you are adding the number of 55-plus units on an ongoing basis. I mean, this 55-plus unit does not mean that it is only 55-year-olds moving into there. We have a lot of people who are 70 and over who are moving into these units, and, certainly, they are welcomed within the community.

So my question comes down to—and I will just backtrack a little. I realize that we have 20 beds that are being put up at Salem. I know the minister was out there at the sod-turning, and that project is moving along well. However, we had made a commitment to Tabor, which is in Morden.

So, again, just so that the minister is aware, and I believe he is, we need to find a place for those who are awaiting placement. There are many out there. So my question to the minister is: Where is Tabor at, and what down the road do you see taking place there in order to be able to accommodate those who need placement?

Mr. Chomiak: The situation, I think, with respect to Tabor has not changed significantly since our last discussions. Actually, I think anecdotally what the member is saying is true. My sense is it is true as well, but I am told that statistically the 75-plus age category in that region is not beyond provincial standards too much, compared to the availability of beds. So the Tabor Home, the situation has not changed.

I think that one of the issues, and I raised it with the members when we were touring Boundary Trails hospital, is it is my sense that there is a whole other population that we may not be meeting the needs of. That is psychogeriatric, brain-damaged and others who are causing problems, as well, who are going to impact on our capital plans in terms of where we are going.

So at this point, Mr. Chair, the situation regarding Tabor has not changed significantly.

Mr. Dyck: So what was the original decision? It was not to build? He is nodding his head. Okay.

You are talking about statistical averages. I think I would challenge that to the point where it is a region where you are talking about the statistical number on the demographics of the people. What I am referring to is a local area.

Now, you also are well aware, Mr. Minister, that the Central Region is the largest populated area and the largest region for the RHAs in rural Manitoba. So it encompasses a large area. It is not feasible that if there is an availability of a bed north of Portage that we are going to be moving those people out there.

So I would encourage the minister to very seriously through his department look at that and, in fact, look at meeting the needs of those people who are awaiting placement. What is taking place is, and I am sure that he would agree, that people who need a place will be looked after. They will find a bed, but I do not think it is good use placing them in a hospital where the essence and the need for a bed in the hospital is totally different from that of someone who needs a personal care home.

So I would encourage him to seriously look at that, because we will have to have a place for these people to stay. If he is not going to change his commitment on Tabor, then I would ask him the following question. Where are we going to keep these people? Where will he provide a bed for them? If he could answer that, I would appreciate that.

Mr. Chomiak: First off, Mr. Chairperson, the comments the member made in the first part of his statement I agree with, I think are true, that there are factors that relate to that particular situation. I know that we are encouraging Central to work on some supportive housing. We are also working on looking at some of the needs and requirements in the future with respect to our seniors population and the kind of needs that we have to address.

I also met with people from Tabor in my office. They shared with me their first-person accounts of some of the circumstances that they were experiencing. So we are balancing the needs of the region, some of the future needs of the region, with some of our ability to provide for care. As it stands now, the Tabor Home is still in the same status that it was when we put it on hold last year.

* (17:10)

Mr. Dyck: I guess I am not getting really an answer out of this in the sense where I am just wondering, and this is the concern out there, where you have people who are awaiting placement in the hospital, where I think we would all agree that we would rather not see them there. I think there is a better place for them to be. So when they ask me where are we going to find a bed for them, rather than just, in my opinion, we understand it is sort of talking around the issue. I am just wondering where we are going to leave these people. That is, I think, a very straightforward question. Could I have an answer?

Mr. Chomiak: It is true that in a large number of centres and a large number of hospitals around the province there are people who are occupying beds or occupying what is classified as acute care beds who in fact would be better placed in a personal care home. That clearly is not the optional use of resources at this point. It is not desirable to have people inappropriately placed. The Boundary Trails hospital was designed to have significant rehab capability and rehab beds in order to provide services and hopefully reduce the need for long-term beds. We are continuing at this point. I do not think that I can give a commitment to the member that the situation with Tabor has changed. I acknowledge there are issues that have to be dealt with in terms of accommodation, and we will work on that.

Mr. Dyck: My answer to them, then, will be that the answer is no, and we will work on it.

One other, and that is another regarding other capital, and that is regarding the Bethel hospital in Winkler and the Morden hospital. These are two facilities now that have been

vacated. What is the minister's or the department's intention? What are they planning to do with these facilities, or have they not come to any resolution on that?

Mr. Chomiak: I am advised that we have asked the regions to come back to us with recommendations for those two particular facilities.

Mr. Dyck: Just further to that, when you talk about the region, do you know whether they are in fact having discussions with the local towns? I mean, they are situated within the town itself. Are they in discussion with council, or is it the RHA who is making that decision?

Mr. Chomiak: I understand there are discussions going on between the RHAs and the communities. If the member has any further information, I think that would be useful. Because of some of the circumstances that occurred over the past year, it would be useful to know if communication has improved, in fact.

Mr. Dyck: I want to thank the minister for that. Certainly I continue to work together with the councils on that, but as of I guess a week ago they were just wondering what was taking place. I think we all would agree that a vacant building does deteriorate very quickly. Whatever the ultimate resolution is, whether there is some use for it or not, that decision should be made certainly before winter. The buildings need to be heated and cared for. So we do need to make a decision as quickly as possible. Basically, unless the minister wants to respond to that and I will just wait, that is my question and comment.

Mr. Chomiak: No, thank you, Mr. Chairperson. We will just try to encourage an expeditious solving of this.

Mr. Dyck: Thank you. Those are all the questions that I have, so I will give it over to my colleague here from Arthur-Virden.

Mr. Larry Maguire (Arthur-Virden): I had just a couple of questions of the minister in regard to some of the capital initiatives that might be taking place, and inquire of him in regard to the capital in a couple of projects in South Westman RHA.

In particular, I was wondering whether the minister could give me any kind of insight into the planning that is going around the clinic in Boissevain and whether or not they will be going ahead with the funding that was authorized for that particular facility. I know Mayor Anderson of Boissevain and Reeve McCullum there have concerns of making sure this kind of a project goes forward, because of not only the need in the town and the municipality around Boissevain but being located on the main corridor or trade corridor of No. 10 highway, which of course is expanding and increased traffic on it, as well as increased accelerated use of the International Peace Gardens just to the south of them in Turtle Mountain. I wonder if the minister could give me some indication of how soon they can expect to be proceeding with that.

Mr. Chomiak: I am familiar with that project, and the Premier (Mr. Doer) is familiar with that project. I am not trying to be evasive here. When the actual capital plan is announced, the community will know the circumstances of it. The capital plan is not being announced quite yet, but it is part of the consideration we are having and will be dealt with when we make our capital announcements, which will be within several weeks, I am hopeful of.

Mr. Maguire: This being near the end of May then, would they know by the middle of June, Mr. Minister?

Mr. Chomiak: We are working as quickly as we can, Mr. Chairperson. I am aware of both their needs in the correspondence that I received from them with respect to dealing with this matter.

Mr. Maguire: I appreciate the minister has not announced his capital budget yet. I just wondered if he could provide us with any indication as to whether or not, without an amount, the Government plans on proceeding with that particular clinic.

Mr. Chomiak: I cannot at this time. I cannot indicate. That will have to wait for the capital. On the capital, again, I am not trying to be evasive. The reason I did not give you a date is I do not want to be held to a date. As soon as we can roll it out, I expect some time in June that we will be able to roll it out, we will roll it out. It

will be clear at that time with respect to the Boissevain situation.

Mr. Maguire: I wonder if the minister could indicate if there are any other capital projects in South Westman that he has been looking at and plans on having some impact on in the coming announcements.

Mr. Chomiak: Without even looking, I know that there is probably far more capital projects than we can fund. I know that for a fact. Specifically, I do not think I have a response for the member. I do know that demand has always outstripped what we have the ability to do.

Mr. Maguire: I, too, am certainly aware of that, and I appreciate the minister's concern in that area. The Budget that came down this spring talked about a number of ambulances that would be utilized in the province of Manitoba and brought on. I apologize if I am repeating questions that have been asked. I wondered if the minister could give me an indication of the distribution of those around the province, what kind of numbers. I think there were 80 they talked about, new ambulances being used in the province of Manitoba. Can he give me some indication of how those will be distributed around the province of Manitoba?

Mr. Chomiak: I think—I do not think, I know—that the plan is to replace up to 50 percent of the present fleet, which I think numbers something like 160. So we are replacing, over the next two years, 80 ambulances. I believe it is based on need. The majority of which, the vast majority, are in rural Manitoba. It is going to be I believe based on need and requirement in terms of replenishing the rolling stock. What I think will happen is, based on need, over the next 18 months or two years, if memory serves me correctly, we will replace half of the fleet. From the breakout that I saw, I think the vast majority are in rural Manitoba.

* (17:20)

Mr. Maguire: Could the minister indicate how many of those might be in South Westman?

Mr. Chomiak: I do not think I can be that precise, because I think there are still

calculations. If we do have that kind of break-down, I will provide it to the member.

Mr. Maguire: I appreciate the fact that a good number of those will go into rural Manitoba, so when I ask this question it is not to be detrimental to the minister's announcement, but would that then, in fact, be the need in rural Manitoba because there are also stretcher services here in the city of Winnipeg?

Mr. Chomiak: No, I just think that there was a need to do a couple of things. There was a need to replace some of the aging infrastructure. There was also a need to equip us to be able to deal with the increased demands and needs of the system in terms of EMS which has changed quite significantly over the past few years, and it is going to change in the years to come. There is a greater expectation on the part of the public with respect to services that are provided, and part of the announcement was to try to upgrade the rolling stock, and put us in a position where the increased need that we know is out there can be accommodated and met.

Mr. Maguire: Can the minister just lay out for me then what some of the criteria are in regard to replacing an ambulance in these rural areas?

Mr. Chomiak: I will endeavour to provide the member with that. We have specific Emergency division and branch, and I will endeavour to find out that information from them.

Mr. Maguire: I am assuming that some of that would have certainly to do with either the age of the ambulance, the amount of miles that might be on it, those kinds of criteria, and I am just assuming that a number of the RHAs, there are very few of the rural areas that have private ambulances that are still operating at this time, but I have a few of them in the constituency that I represent, and I know that we are looking at a whole change of types of services that are being offered through the EMS with the types of ambulances that will be made available in the future. I am wondering if the minister can indicate to me if all of the ambulances that will be going throughout Manitoba, these 80, will, in fact, have the same level of equipment in them across the province.

Mr. Chomiak: That is an interesting question for which I do not have an answer. My guess

would be that they will all be equipped similarly, have the potential to be equipped similarly. I will confirm that specific issue and provide that information to the member. *[interjection]* Mr. Chairperson, I am advised that they all will be the same.

Mr. Maguire: I appreciate that. It is certainly going to be a plus for the new types of services that are required and needed. I did not ask that because I have been asked, I just noted that there were 80 in the Budget and wanted to know some of these logistics about not even so much locations, because I am assured that there is a need for them in the rural area, in all of Manitoba, but it is important that if the latest equipment is available in these kinds of new equipment coming out into the rural areas, then will the present fleet, the other half of the fleet, basically, as the minister has indicated, are provisions being made for bringing that other half of the fleet up to the same level as these new ambulances will be putting in place?

Mr. Chomiak: I do not think at present we have actually allocated for that. Mr. Chairperson, what we are doing is providing new and updated equipment to half of the fleet. A good portion of the fleet is still operational and effective. I do not know this, but I would guess that we would probably do a similar process with the rest of the fleet at an appropriate point. There was a distinct financial advantage in the process we engaged in, in terms of obtaining these vehicles and the bulk. Moving in bulk saved the Province considerable funds than we would have had we done individually, my guess would be, but I do not know this, that at some point, we would probably re-equip and renew the other half of the fleet as they wear down. Clearly the new vehicles will be the most up to date available. By comparison, even the most current equipment probably will not compare, but that is just the way things develop.

* (17:30)

Mr. Maguire: Mr. Chairman, my question, then, is in regard to training. Will there be any different training required by the persons presently running ambulances in the country and in particular where these new ambulances will be going in?

I am assuming that some of the equipment in them will be more modern or more equipment or more up to date than what is presently in some of those ambulances in the country. I am wondering if I could get an indication from the minister whether or not he believes or feels that there will be increased training required. I am assuming that as there are more full-time staff in the country operating ambulances and emergency situations from hospitals and communities that there may need to be some further enhancement of that if we continue to proceed in that manner, but because of the ambulance change itself, will there be a requirement in education in regard to staffing?

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, with respect to the specific issue as to whether there is additional training required as a result of the new rolling stock, I do not have an answer, but I will get back to the member on that.

On the larger issue of increased training, obviously we are targeting for expanded training, enhanced education for EMS employees and EMS personnel. The member has probably noted that yesterday there were some of them out in front of the Legislature who were encouraging us to provide for increased benefits and wages for them as a result of their increased activities and their enhanced functions.

Mr. Maguire: I appreciate the minister's candidness in that answer. Mr. Minister, I guess, if there are 80 of these types of vehicles going out into the region in Manitoba, then obviously they are replacing some vehicles. What benefit or what use will become of the ones that are essentially, if you want to use the term, being traded in? Are they of a value to the health system in Manitoba? Will they be used in other locations? Could you give me an indication of what they do with that many?

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, I am really mad at myself because I had all these answers when I did the press conference, but the information stays in my head about 30 seconds after the press conference ends. I do not have that information specifically for the member. I will endeavour to get it. I believe most of them are time expired.

In terms of the allocation, I am not certain. I think that probably they become the property of

the region, but I am not certain. So, before I say anything, I will get the information back to the member.

Mr. Maguire: Just a couple more questions I guess in regard to the hospitals in the region. I know that some of them have lost their hospital designation. I am thinking of Reston, in that area. You know, there is still concern in the communities that I represent of Boissevain, Deloraine, Melita, Reston and Virden at this particular time. Of course, there is a full complement in Virden in our medical staff, but there is always some turnover.

I wonder if the minister could give me any indication of whether or not he has been advised as to whether there will be any closures or shutdowns as occurred in the fall of '99, I guess, particularly with the Reston case as they move towards changes in the structure there. I know that there are nursing shortages in some of those communities. It would be very tough to keep the facility open with the present staff there and still provide holidays to them all, but I wondered if the minister has been advised as to or can advise me as to whether or not there has been any indication of closures there for the summer months leading into fall.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, a couple of points in that regard, first off, it is not government policy for permanent closures of a facility. Second, there are normally summer slowdowns throughout the province with respect to beds. Thirdly, and, quite frankly, because of the nursing, and, to a lesser extent, the physician shortages, there will be temporary shutdowns and unanticipated shutdowns simply because we cannot staff the facilities.

It is hard. There are some planned overall summer closures that are still in the planning process that occur every year, but I know from experience in this last year and a half, often something as significant or insignificant, depending on how one views it, as a maternity leave, for example, because we are in such a tight line in so many centres, can skew and result in actual closures of facilities. So we are planning for usual summer closures. I would predict there will be a number of unanticipated closures on a temporary basis. That is just going

to happen, I think. To say otherwise would not be accurate. My experience has been there will be some. We will try to do what we can to prevent that and to do what we can to limit it.

I cite the example of, there was one instance where we actually flew the deputy minister of the department to try to resolve the situation. We managed to keep the hospital in Erickson open a little longer. Ultimately, it did close for a week-end or two because of another staff shortage. We are trying to do what we can. We are trying to spread out resources.

One of the things that I am hoping that we can have some impact on is the utilization of LPNs and expanding utilization of LPNs to do a better job of that, but there will be some shutdowns, unanticipated, I am quite certain.

Mr. Maguire: Yes, I appreciate that, and I thank the minister for his answer, Mr. Chairman.

Could the minister give me any indication of what kind of expanded workload that the LPNs would be asked to do in those cases?

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, we have since we have come to office tried to enhance the function and role of LPNs. They are now actually, for the first time in years, functioning at the Health Sciences Centre, or will be shortly. They are at Concordia, of course, and they have remained at Seven Oaks. So they are back in the acute care facilities. That is the one issue.

The other issue I think is we have to work with some of the institutions to better utilize the LPNs. I have ordered it on many occasions, but that is no substitution for actually doing some real work on the ground in order to do that. So we are planning to do that specifically with respect to the utilization of LPNs. So what I am saying is I am anticipating some measures that we will undertake in the next few weeks and months to enhance the functioning of LPNs and see what we can do.

Mr. Maguire: Just in closing, I would like to thank the minister for those comments and look forward to discussing any further issues with him that might arise in this area. So thank you, and I will turn it back to the critic for Health.

Mrs. Driedger: Mr. Chairman, I wonder if the minister can confirm for me the total amount allocated for capital.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, can the member perhaps clarify what she means by that question?

Mrs. Driedger: Can the minister just indicate how much money has been allocated for capital expenses in this Budget?

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, is the member asking how much money is voted to service the debt? The capital grants which provide funding to health authorities for principal repayment on approved borrowing, equipment purchases and other capital expenditures is \$75,657,000.

* (17:40)

Mrs. Driedger: Could the minister indicate the process he follows to determine how capital money is spent? He indicated that he was developing a new way in last Estimates for how he was going to go about determining where capital dollars were spent, and I wonder if he could detail for me in a step-by-step way what that process would be.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, there is a process where the regions prioritize their needs and requirements. There is also a similar process that takes place at the department where the department prioritizes the capital needs and requirements. The capital requirements come into the department from the regions and are assessed by the Capital branch and all program staff. They are reviewed and prioritized based on criteria which includes needs, which includes the extent of capital dollars that are available, which includes the prioritization, strategic fit and the cost benefit and then recommendations are made by the Capital Planning Branch with respect to these priorities.

Mrs. Driedger: Can the minister indicate to me how this process is different from when we were in government?

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, when the members opposite were in government, there used to be a process where the capital planning

came out in the early '90s and recommendations were made to the department, and the capital budgets would come out on a longer term, a year-over-year basis. What happened in the mid-to-late '90s, was, at least to my observation, that capital planning became less of a bureaucratic and scientific exercise, and determinations were made by the Government. We saw a situation where, for example, preceding the 1995 election, the largest capital program in years was announced, and shortly after the 1995 election, the capital program was frozen. It was frozen and there was considerable slowdown of a number of projects. Subsequently, and I noticed in the year preceding the 1999 election there was also a considerable capital program, a very extensive capital program was announced prior to the election.

When we came into office, we reviewed the entire capital plan and we had it more scrutinized than at any other time Capital Planning staff ever encountered. There was a very intensive review and, as a result, there was a reprioritization of projects based on some of the criteria that I outlined earlier. We also attempted to look at the longer term and the effect of future years on the capital plan.

Last year we then made our announcements which, as memory serves me correctly, a good number of the plans from the 1999 capital were proceeded with but some were not proceeded with and they go back into the mix for reconsideration and reprioritization. This year we are continuing the capital planning process in terms of the overall needs and strategic direction of the department and we are moving toward our capital announcement, hopefully relatively soon.

There are some interesting developments in the whole capital process. I notice that members opposite have commented about the no need for bricks and mortar as much, and I have listened to their comments. In terms of capital, some of the biggest capital projects ever undertaken in the province are presently under construction or very close to construction, generally completed the cancer centre, Health Sciences redevelopment and Brandon redevelopment, which comprise a considerable sum of money and considerable capital dollars. I have made no secret of the fact that there are some needs that

we have noticed in the system that bear scrutiny. I made reference earlier during the course of Estimates to the needs of psychogeriatric and for brain-damaged individuals and that whole issue relating to institutional versus community.

I have asked the Capital branch to take a look at those particular issues. I am familiar with the fact that there were some proposals to the previous government to undertake some projects in this regard. The recent developments in Brandon that occurred concerning the Horton family, I think, speak to the need to try to address some of these issues.

So it appears that the capital plan is proceeding with the needs to look at acute care, to look at long-term care, to look at also some different variations of approach to dealing with some of the health care issues facing us. Because the health plan and the capital plan have not been specifically announced, I could give the member a little bit of a flavour of some of the capital plans that will be announced this year, but then I would be in danger of giving out other stuff and other stuff, but that there will be some—

Mrs. Driedger: That is okay. You could do that. I do not mind.

Mr. Chomiak: No. I am aware of that. It would just make it then difficult for me. I want to be consistent. So it will be announced at a consistent time.

I think that clearly in terms of a strategic direction there is clearly an enhancement of regional centres, which is not dissimilar to what is happening across the country. There is some need to enhance community and primary care operations. There is this need to deal with the special population, special clientele. All of those are being reviewed.

The recommendations are coming from the Capital Planning Branch with respect to the projects. We will review them and there will be an announcement shortly.

Mrs. Driedger: Could the minister just confirm for me then in terms of the process that he says he is following in making the capital decisions? Did he mean that basically the previous

government followed the same process? I think what I probably understood him to say is that there was probably an inference that there was too much political involvement in the decision making but that generally the previous government followed this same process.

Mr. Chomiak: I will get a little bit more specific. The process that was in place in the early 1990s I thought was a better process than the process I saw in the mid- to late '90s. For me to go any further than that would prompt a rhetorical discussion between us, and I will avoid that. What we have done is put more controls on the capital process and a different planning process that sees the approval of projects in various stages and which sees us have the ability to, for example, stop projects before they become a major public announcement if, for example, the project is way out of scope in terms of its original criteria.

* (17:50)

What we found was when we examined the capital projects that projects were coming in out of scope. They had already been announced and it was very difficult then to say given what and where this project is at now and given what this project is costing us, we cannot change our decision because it is already common public knowledge; hence, we have to eat the increased costs, et cetera. So we have a revised approval process where we have approval in principle, MOU, and final approval. We are also placing more emphasis on the operating dollars associated with capital projects because we inherited a process where capital was in many cases driving the operations as opposed to the operations driving capital. I am trying to be very careful and not be rhetorical.

I observed in the early '90s a process that had staged approvals. I know we got away from that in the mid to late '90s, and when I became minister I said over and over again, let us take a look at that staged process that I used to be familiar with, and the Capital Planning people are doing that. I think it works a little bit better.

I think the downside from a public standpoint is you are not announcing up front as many projects as perhaps we did in the past. The upside is that when you are doing most of the major announcements you are far enough

advanced along in the planning process and the process so that you are going to come in with accurate figures. Again, when I observed the process in the early '90s that is what I observed, and I think that we have gone back to that as a department.

The member asked the question; it is yes and no. I have said last year and I have said consistently and I said it when I was critic that the staged approval process makes more sense to me than what I saw happening in the last few years.

Mrs. Driedger: I think I will save some of my questions that maybe arise out of this discussion and just ask some very specific questions to the minister.

I guess I am wondering in terms of the Misericordia tower that had originally been discussed. Is that something he intends to move forward with? But maybe he might want to frame that whole discussion around the number of long-term care beds that are needed in the system right now, if he has assessed that that is a need out there. Knowing that there are approximately 250 patients in the community needing long-term care beds probably on a fairly steady basis, and in the hospital there seems to be anywhere from maybe 30 to 40 to 50 patients in the hospital waiting for beds, I would wonder where the minister's assessment is of the need for more long-term care beds in the province and then how the Misericordia tower fits in there and where he might be going in order to address that if that is indeed a strategic direction.

Mr. Chomiak: As I indicated previously, we are taking another look at the long-term care beds in the province. I think the member is inaccurate in terms of the number of people in hospital waiting for long-term beds. I think it is much lower. I believe if memory serves me correctly it is lower; I think it is averaging around 20, I am advised, because I know if memory serves me correctly that it was much lower. I understand it is the lowest that it has been in years both in the community and in the hospital. It is down considerably.

There are a number of needs out there that when the member mentions long-term beds, I think we have to consider a whole number of

factors, and I would just broaden it. We have to look at rehab beds, we have to look at chronic care beds, we have to look at forensic beds, we have to look at, for a catchall, special needs beds, within that mix. So I think that we are looking at the entire needs of the province, and we are not just focussing on what might be termed the traditional long-term beds. I have alluded to that a few times during the course of these Estimates, that there are needs that we think have to be met in terms of the community.

With respect to the personal care homes, planning continues at the various stages with respect to some of the personal care homes. As I indicated, there are stages of process. Some are in the first stage of approval in principle, some are near MOU, some are closer to final approval. We are reserving the right, and it has been very clear, to deal with the approvals as needs and as requirements permit. Sometimes it is almost like a Rubik's cube with respect to some of the needs and some of the demands. One of the things that I was very concerned about—

Let me just outline an example. It kind of leaked out that we are going to be doing something at Victoria. I mean, we all knew that there was a need and demand at Victoria. As I said last Estimates, one of the first things that was asked of me was to do a Victoria project. We all knew intuitively that we needed to do something at Victoria. I was advised by the capital people, and I think correctly, to do an analysis first, because that would be the prudent thing to do. We did an analysis and it did come back and say, well, we needed to do some changes at Victoria, which has already leaked out, but will be part of the capital plan.

So there are a number of areas that we are looking for recommendations from Capital Planning staff. I also know intuitively and the member knows intuitively from her experience that we do need resources for brain-damaged, psychogeriatric was another area, forensic, chronic and rehab, variations. I have asked the Capital Planning people to look at that in the mix of what we are doing so that we can actually meet the needs that are out there.

So that is an example of something that we all know from various studies and from our

experience in the health system are in needed demand. So we are now formally taking a look at that as we develop our capital plan.

Mr. Chairperson: Order, please. The hour being 6 p.m., committee rise.

AGRICULTURE AND FOOD

* (14:50)

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Doug Martindale): 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 Agriculture and Food.

Previously this committee agreed to proceed through the remaining sections of this department's Estimates in a chronological manner with some flexibility. Consideration of these Estimates left off on page 31 of the Estimates book, resolution 3.4., Agricultural Development and Marketing. The floor is now open for questions.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): I just want to start out with a comment to the minister that it was good to have a legislators' meeting from Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota and Manitoba and to have agriculture as one of the major topics. I think that was a very positive development, both the discussion of trade issues and the discussion of foot and mouth disease.

Ms. Bonnie Korzeniowski, Madam Chairperson, in the Chair

I was also pleased to learn about the South Dakota state action plan for foot and mouth disease and, in particular, to learn about their efforts to put in place measures or to have it very clear ahead of time that there would be measures in place were it to happen that foot and mouth disease were to arrive in North America at some other jurisdiction than Manitoba.

One of the measures that the Government of South Dakota is putting in place is measures, and this is 2.(a) from their document, that no person will be allowed into South Dakota without quarantine when arriving from a state or region

where the outbreak is present. I would ask the minister: What will happen in Manitoba? Will there be similar measures put in place for people coming into Manitoba?

Hon. Rosann Wowchuk (Minister of Agriculture and Food): I certainly enjoyed the discussions we had over the last 24 hours with North Dakota, South Dakota and Minnesota, and it clearly indicates that there are areas that we can work together on, whether it be energy, trade or agriculture issues. All of those are important issues and by learning and understanding about each other, it builds for a healthier community on both sides of the border.

The member talks about the discussion that took place today on foot and mouth disease, and the steps that South Dakota has taken with their action plan. There is in Canada a very similar action plan, but because it falls under the responsibility of the federal government, it is the federal government that designates what the plan will be. The United States relies more on a state-by-state action plan, so that is the difference. In fact, the plan that we have in Canada is under review and being tested to ensure that it meets the needs should we have an outbreak in Canada, and all provinces are working together with the federal government on this plan.

The member asks about whether part of the plan is to close borders to Manitoba. There has been a lot of discussion on the issue that people who are travelling from countries where there is disease or in any country. Part of the regulation is that, when you come back from another country, you do not go to a farm for 14 days. I think that was one of the things we discussed today, where some of the plans in Minnesota and South Dakota talk about a one-week time period when you cannot go onto a farm; in Canada it is a two-week period where you should not just go to a farm if you have already visited a farm.

Mr. Gerrard: The situation in South Dakota is, from the gist of what is in the plan which they have released and shared with us, clearly broader than people visiting farms, in having no person allowed into or visiting South Dakota without quarantine. I would presume, as the minister does, that probably means several days, a week or two weeks, I am not sure, but certainly a

delay when arriving from a state or region where the outbreak is present.

The minister has indicated a plan is still under development. Is that correct, or there is a plan there? Maybe the minister can clarify that, and maybe there could be clarification on exactly what the situation will be in terms of, for instance, if there was an outbreak in Prince Edward Island, for people coming from Prince Edward Island, or if it were in the States from, say, Vermont coming to Manitoba what the situation would be for visitors from these areas.

Ms. Wowchuk: I want to specifically clear for the member that there is a plan in Canada. There has been a plan in Canada for many years. What I had indicated is that the plan is under review. As with any plan, you always update it. That is what has been happening. Certainly I would not want to give the member the impression that there is no plan to handle a disease outbreak in Canada. There is definitely a plan there.

When the member talked about a situation, should there be an outbreak in one of the provinces, if there was an outbreak in one of the provinces, automatically there would be a total shutdown of movement of livestock and livestock products out of the area until it was determined where the outbreak was and the necessary steps were put in place to control the disease. That would be what would happen. So there would be a shutdown of the area.

With respect to people travelling, there would be the same steps that are in place right now, where you would have to be concerned about movement of people who have been in contact with livestock. When the member asks about whether there would be a complete shutdown of everything, my understanding is that there is no scientific reason to have a complete shutdown; and sometimes if you go too far overboard with restrictions, then you will have people tempted to find a way to get around the system.

I think that the plan is as it is with any disease, of an outbreak, for example, with foot and mouth, there is the ability to shut down the area where the outbreak is and take the necessary steps to control.

Mr. Gerrard: One of the measures that would be taken in South Dakota if foot and mouth disease were to arrive anywhere in North America, for example, whether it would be Prince Edward Island or Vermont, or even Mexico, is that South Dakota would immediately have all livestock sales barns closed. I wonder what the minister is planning to do with livestock sales barns in Manitoba if there is an outbreak anywhere in North America. This would be not in Manitoba itself.

* (15:00)

Ms. Wowchuk: Madam Chair, if there was an outbreak of foot and mouth disease in Manitoba, all sales would be shut down, all private sales, auction marts, all of that would be shut down until such time as it was determined where the disease was and it was under control.

Mr. Gerrard: My question was not with respect to what would happen if it is foot and mouth disease in Manitoba. My question is: What will happen if foot and mouth disease is found somewhere else outside of Manitoba but yet within North America, such as Prince Edward Island, Vermont, Mexico, for example?

Ms. Wowchuk: Madam Chair, if there was an outbreak and there was a risk of that disease spreading into Manitoba, then the steps would be taken to ensure that there was not movement of animals.

Mr. Gerrard: But would livestock sales barns in Manitoba be closed if there were an outbreak in, for example, Prince Edward Island or Vermont?

Ms. Wowchuk: Madam Chair, I guess I would think that that decision would be made in conjunction with CFIA. There is always risk in the early stages of an infection in a country, but if it was determined that there was no risk of the disease moving into the province then I would assume that it would not be necessary to close down sales within the province. We would take direction from CFIA on that, because it would be CFIA that would be in control of making those decisions. I would think that that would be more in Canada than in North America, but it is a hypothetical situation. It would depend on where

the outbreak was, how large the outbreak was, and again, the Manitoba government through Vet Services would work with CFIA to make a decision on that.

Mr. Gerrard: It would seem to me that it would be helpful to have agreement between the Province of Manitoba and CFIA ahead of time, exactly what measures would be taken under what circumstances. I would urge the minister to try and have that down, so that it would certainly greatly simplify things and avoid any confusion. Certainly, if you have a clear agreement of what happens under particular circumstances, it would help in terms of being able to act and respond quickly.

One of the measures that would be taken in South Dakota, should there be a case of foot and mouth disease anywhere in North America but outside of South Dakota, is that they would act immediately to have packing plants in the state not allowed to receive any out-of-state livestock, I would ask the minister what the plans would be in Manitoba.

I think that the basis for this caution is that there is a fairly widespread movement of animals in North America and that in the immediate period after the diagnosis of the first case in North America, there would be an intensive effort to trace back and trace any contacts to find out the extent of the disease. In that interim period, until it is clear where there could be contacts or where this disease might possibly have moved because of contacts, it would be urgent to have some immediate clamp-down on any activities which could be the basis for any spread of the disease until you know where animals may have moved, and what animals could be implicated.

So I would ask the minister: If foot and mouth disease appeared in Prince Edward Island or Vermont, as examples, again, would packing plants in Manitoba be not allowed then to receive any out-of-state livestock under these conditions?

Ms. Wowchuk: The plan is in place and if it warrants that the borders are closed or packing facilities are closed, then that is exactly what will happen. It will depend on where there is an

outbreak of disease. If it is P.E.I., there is less risk of transportation of livestock to Manitoba, although it possibly can happen. But, if it is in Saskatchewan, that would be a much different situation for Manitobans.

The plan is in place. The plan applies not only to foot and mouth disease but to all diseases, but foot and mouth disease is one of those diseases that spreads very quickly, and one that would have to be monitored very closely. The plan is in place, developed by the federal government. It is under review. There is communication between the federal government and all the provincial governments to be sure that should there be an outbreak of a disease, under the leadership of CFIA, the steps will be taken.

I tell the member the plan is in place, has been in place for many years, and is being updated because technology changes, movement changes, and it is always necessary to update plans that are in place. Given what has happened and the publicity of the outbreak in Britain, there has been additional focus put on it.

Mr. Gerrard: In follow-up, I am in a sense at a loss when you say there is a plan in place, and yet you cannot be very clear on whether or not Manitoba will stop livestock coming into Manitoba from elsewhere to packing plants if there was a case detected in Prince Edward Island. Clearly, by the way you answered the question, you sort of hemmed and hawed.

Ms. Wowchuk: Madam Chairperson, the decision is interpreted by specialists. There are specialists in the field. There are specialists with CFIA who make the decision and put the plan in place and the Province works with the federal government, because this is the responsibility of the federal government. The administration and the responsibility of foreign diseases is the responsibility of the federal government. The federal government has a plan in place. The Province and our Vet Services Branch work with the federal government when a situation arises. So to say this is exactly what we will do in this province varies according to each disease and the recommendations of the specialists under CFIA.

* (15:10)

Mr. Gerrard: I would in this case suggest to the minister that it is the responsibility of the Province to work with the Canadian Food Inspection Agency and to have a very clear set of steps and actions that would be taken the moment that there was foot and mouth disease detected or confirmed anywhere outside of Manitoba but within North America, and that it is quite important to have this clearly ahead of time so that the actions can be taken immediately. It is then quite possible to make changes afterwards and to perhaps relax some of the standards, but clearly if under the circumstances, given the virulence, the transmissibility of this condition, it would seem to me to be prudent that there is an action plan in place which is very clearly laid out, which is communicated widely, as is the South Dakota plan.

One of the steps that South Dakota will take if there is foot and mouth disease detected elsewhere in North America than South Dakota—this would include places like P.E.I., Mexico, Vermont—is that South Dakota will act immediately to stop the importation into South Dakota of all livestock from all places outside of South Dakota, and they will mobilize all necessary law enforcement officers to effectuate the operation. I would ask the minister if there is any comparable plan in place for Manitoba.

Ms. Wowchuk: Madam Chairperson, if here is an outbreak, there is the mechanism in place in Canada to take those steps, to shut down movement to plants, farm-to-farm movement, packing facilities. Those plans are in place. But again I say to the member that that does not necessarily mean a shutdown right across Canada. It would be a decision made by CFIA to determine which area should be shut down depending on where the outbreak was. It would be under the direction of CFIA. The mechanisms are there to be able to do the kind of a shut-down that the member refers to, should it be necessary.

Mr. Gerrard: I would ask the minister if a case occurred in, for example, Prince Edward Island, it depends, right? Can you not be clear as to whether we would be stopping then importation at least for the short run until it is known where the animals have been and some trace-back has

been done? Is the minister in fact not going to stop importation of animals into Manitoba from outside the province until there has been some ability to trace back and find out where there might have been contacts?

Ms. Wowchuk: Madam Chairperson, if there was an outbreak of foot and mouth disease in P.E.I., the first step would be to shut down all movement in and out of P.E.I. P.E.I. would be the first place. Then there would have to be an evaluation of the situation, and then a decision would be made about how far the circle would have to be extended as far as movement.

We would take direction from the CFIA because they have the responsibility. They would give the direction on where movement would have to cease, but the main objective would be to isolate the area where there is an outbreak. The member uses the example of P.E.I. That would have to be isolated. P.E.I.'s livestock would probably move to somewhere in the Maritimes area. I am sure that would be the area that would be confined as quickly as possible to ensure that there was not further spread, and then the situation would be assessed as to what movement should be contained.

Mr. Gerrard: If we have a case in P.E.I. and it is an animal, whether it is a sheep or a cow or a pig, a sheep in particular, it may be that that has not been confirmed in terms of diagnosis for some two to three weeks because the incubation period is two weeks. Clearly, it is not just a matter of knowing what animals have been in Prince Edward Island, but where animals have moved and what animals might have left Prince Edward Island over the course of the last two to three weeks, perhaps longer. It would seem to me that it might take a number of days to do the tracing to find out all the animals that have moved outside of P.E.I. from the area where the case was over the previous two to three weeks, perhaps longer.

Is the minister going to have Manitoba wait until all that trace-back is done, or will there be action taken immediately upon the detection and confirmation of the first case?

Ms. Wowchuk: That is exactly the decision Vet Services would make with CFIA. Isolate the

situation as quickly as possible and then look at where the movement of animals is. There is a pretty good idea of where animals move. There would have to be a discussion with the individual whose herd or flock is infected and look at how you can trace the movement of those animals. Certainly, those are the kinds of things that would be done immediately with the provinces and with Vet Services and CFIA.

Mr. Gerrard: What you are saying is that there is not a clear action plan, as there is for South Dakota, in Manitoba as to what measures would be taken immediately upon the first confirmation of a case in North America, but rather everything would be dependent on decisions taken and investigations done after that first case is confirmed.

Ms. Wowchuk: The member is saying that we do not have as good a plan as what South Dakota has. I guess it will depend in Canada where there is an outbreak. If there is an outbreak in Prince Edward Island, as the member says, that is a different situation. If there was an outbreak in Alberta, where there are a lot more cattle, that might be a different situation. That might indicate, if there was an outbreak where there is a lot of cattle, that there would be a total shutdown.

* (15:20)

There are two approaches that can be taken. There can be the total shutdown of an area or there can be the approach where you zone off an area and you determine, as I had indicated with Prince Edward Island, that you would immediately shut off the area and then look at movement.

So each situation will be different. It will be the severity, the location of the case, that will determine what plan of action is taken. Canada is a very big country. That is why CFIA take the lead, work with the vets across the country, and determine what plan of action is needed. Now, that does not mean that there is no plan of action. There is a plan but it will be adapted differently depending on when and where there is an outbreak.

Ultimately, I guess, I say to the member I hope that we can take the necessary steps to

ensure that there is not an outbreak. We have had a disease-free status for a long time. The United States had a longer time. But the plan is in place. Should there be an outbreak, an action plan will be called up very quickly.

Mr. Gerrard: The South Dakota plan has put in place different levels of action. At this point I have been talking at levels of action that would occur for South Dakota and for Manitoba should the disease be found in a state or province which is some distance away. I used Prince Edward Island and Vermont. Now, the State of South Dakota has a separate action plan for circumstances where the foot and mouth disease is confirmed in an adjacent state. From what you say, yes, it would be logical to have a different action plan for Manitoba if foot and mouth disease was found in Saskatchewan or perhaps Alberta, being close enough, and the numbers were different, for foot and mouth disease, which is present in, say, Prince Edward Island, which is more distant and isolated.

The circumstances where foot and mouth disease is declared in an adjacent jurisdiction, Ontario or Minnesota or Saskatchewan or North Dakota, as examples, for Manitoba that what South Dakota would do is the governor would immediately declare an emergency and take measures consistent with the presence of the emergency threat. I do not know what the size of the livestock industry in South Dakota is, but we do know what it is in Manitoba. It is about a \$1.6-billion, \$1.7-billion industry a year. It would be a very grave threat. So I would ask the minister whether Manitoba has plans to declare an emergency situation should foot and mouth disease be found in an adjacent jurisdiction.

Ms. Wowchuk: I think the difference between Canada and the United States is that the States work on a state-by-state basis, and they put in their plans. It could be a very different plan in North Dakota or South Dakota, because in Canada we have a national plan.

The first goal is to keep the disease out of the country, and that is what the major focus is. Should there be an outbreak, the goal will be, wherever the outbreak is, to isolate the disease wherever it is, and then look at the zones where there might be spread and then take direction from CFIA. I think it is very important that we

recognize this is a national plan. We in Canada do not put in separate plans in each province. To close borders, it will be determined by CFIA and the Vet Services who work very closely with CFIA to look at where the training patterns might be, where the animal movement might be, and work as quickly as possible to isolate it rather than take the risk of having the disease spread across the country, because the member is very right, the livestock industry is a very important industry to the economy of Canada.

Mr. Gerrard: I would suggest to the minister that the greater extent the details of what actions would be taken are known and known broadly ahead of time, the better it will help in terms of being able to implement them. For example, the plan that South Dakota has, if foot and mouth disease were detected in an adjacent jurisdiction, which for them would be, for example, Minnesota or North Dakota, one would expect be similar to the situation in Manitoba if disease were found in Saskatchewan or Minnesota or Ontario. On that basis, the action that would be taken if foot and mouth disease were detected in an adjacent jurisdiction in South Dakota would be to act immediately to close all packing plants and prohibit all livestock movement into and within South Dakota.

Clearly, if one knows ahead of time that this is going to happen if there is disease detected in adjacent jurisdiction, it is going to be of great help in facilitating and implementing fast action and in getting co-operation. There could be great accentuation of problems if people are not informed and know ahead of time exactly what actions will be taken. It would seem to me that it is important to have these sorts of details known ahead of time.

So I would ask the minister, if foot and mouth disease were found in Minnesota, North Dakota, Saskatchewan or Ontario, would Manitoba, in co-operation with the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, immediately close all packing plants in Manitoba and prohibit all livestock movement into and within Manitoba?

* (15:30)

Ms. Wowchuk: The issue of closing packing facilities and slaughterhouses is a very important

issue. I wanted to say to the member that there has been a mock-up done between Canada, the United States and Mexico looking at if there was an outbreak how all of North America would coordinate their efforts to restrict the spread of the disease. That issue is being addressed by all three governments. That trial run has been done and it is being reviewed by the industry right now.

It is important, and we are, through the CFIA, working with the United States. It is important that we work very closely with those states to which there is trade with Canada and with Manitoba. I also want to tell the member that we are working very closely with the industry, the Manitoba Cattle Producers, with the packing industry. Everybody is involved and there is information put out and discussions taking place to ensure that there is a proper flow of information and that there is a plan in place throughout North America should there be an outbreak.

Mr. Gerrard: The minister seems unable to confirm precisely what would happen if a case of foot and mouth disease was detected in an adjacent jurisdiction to Manitoba. Surely it would be very helpful to owners of packing plants, to livestock producers, to others who may be involved in the transport of animals to know ahead of time what circumstances and what actions will be taken. It would greatly improve the situation were there to be foot and mouth disease occurring in one of these jurisdictions. It would certainly alleviate a lot of confusion to have people know precisely what actions are going to be taken ahead of time. All I am trying to get at is what precisely would happen in Manitoba.

Ms. Wowchuk: That is exactly why the industry, the packing industry, the processing, the cattle industry is involved in the discussions about the possibility of an outbreak and what steps should be taken. I want to let the member know that it would not be my decision. It would not be Manitoba's decision as to what would happen. The decision will lie with CFIA as to what steps will be taken, and it would be CFIA that would make the decision, after discussion with Vet Services and the expertise in the industry as to which border, what should be

closed. The decision will lie with them. That is part of the plan that is in place. This is a federal jurisdiction. A federal agency will make the decisions in conjunction with the provinces, in conjunction with Vet Services, as to what steps will be taken. Ultimately the goal will be to isolate the outbreak no matter where it is. If it is an outbreak in North America, I can assure the member that all countries will be involved in the decision making, because the livestock industry is too important to all of North America.

Mr. Gerrard: The minister again implies that decisions will be taken when this happens rather than having a plan ahead of time which is clearly agreed to by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency and the Province. If you do not have a clear direction in terms of what will happen and that is not clearly communicated then there is going to be a lot of confusion. It would seem to me highly desirable to have things laid out so that all and everybody understands what measures would be taken.

In South Dakota, I note one of the things they would provide for is, although they would impose these measures immediately, they have provision for what they call a phased stand-down as quickly and as expedient as is reasonable. In other words, their provision I presume would be to close all packing plants immediately, but then, as soon as there was clarity on the size and the nature of the outbreak, where animals may or may not have moved, then they would look at the circumstances and move to stand down those, open up the packing plants, et cetera, as soon as there was enough clarity in the circumstance to know to what extent the disease may or may not have spread.

The issue here is what measures would be taken immediately. Is there really a plan in place, or will decisions be made on an ad hoc basis, with a fair amount of confusion and possibly some mistakes because there is not a clear plan in place ahead of time?

Ms. Wowchuk: I think the difference between what the member is saying and what I am saying is the member is saying that South Dakota would shut down immediately and we are saying that CFIA and the provinces would talk to make a decision on when it would happen. This does not

necessarily have to be a long, drawn-out process. It could be immediately that a decision is made. What I am saying to the member is this is a national responsibility. The federal government has the lead in this. There is a plan in place, and the province and the federal government, no matter which province, will work together to ensure that the necessary steps are put in place so our livestock industry is not put at risk.

Mr. Gerrard: I would point out and I would suggest that you confer with the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, because clearly if there is good communication as to what would happen ahead of time, then I think that it would have the potential to alleviate a lot of possible confusion, and allow people to plan ahead. Where you have a situation where decisions are going to be made at the time, then there is likely to be a greater degree of uncertainty leading up to when those decisions are taken and much more confusion and delay in having those decisions implemented clearly and precisely by all concerned.

So although the minister does differentiate the two, the problem in Manitoba's situation is that none of these details are spelled out in advance. So there is a potential for confusion, uncertainty, delay, in having them broadly implemented. I think that this can be quite an important aspect of the handling of this disease, given as how quickly it can spread, that we would be very wise, given what happened in Europe, to have a much clearer action plan laid out ahead of time so that, as South Dakota has said, they can always move, have a phased stand-down.

There are clear advantages to letting everybody know ahead of time precisely what is going to happen. It is disappointing that the minister cannot today be a little bit more clear on what the plan will be, except to say that the minister and CFIA will decide when the time arises, depending on circumstances. There is a lot of perhaps dependence, uncertainty that results from this.

* (15:40)

One of the issues has been discussed at some length and increasingly over the last number of months is the issue of regionalization of the foot

and mouth disease. Can the minister provide an update on what progress has been made in plans to be able to regionalize the disease, as it is called, so that it may be possible to have the Prairie Provinces, for example, or Manitoba, for example, operating on a more open basis because you have a foot and mouth disease-free zone, than just having all of Canada treated the same for international purposes because the disease is, for instance, in Prince Edward Island?

Ms. Wowchuk: The member talks about confusion, delay, uncertainty in the industry. I have to tell the member that there has been very good communication with the cattle industry, with all aspects of the livestock industry. I am quite certain that there is a very good understanding of the risks and understanding of the plan amongst the people in the industry. There has been very good communication. Vets have been holding workshops throughout the province. There has been very good attendance at them. So information is being provided. I would not want the member to imply that there is confusion or uncertainty, because there has been a wealth of information put out. The department is working with the industry.

The member talks about regionalizing areas of disease. Again that is a concept that has been accepted. If you look at the import of hogs and areas of pseudorabies, there are areas that hogs can come in from. So regionalization is an accepted concept. But, again, that is the responsibility of the federal government to determine whether regionalization will be accepted in this area.

The member makes suggestions about the plan. We will accept your suggestions, and we will give them to the CFIA and ask them to work on a more detailed plan. The member has to remember that it is their responsibility, so we will take your suggestion and give it to CFIA.

Mr. Gerrard: I think that the greater clarity ahead of time would certainly be helpful in terms of what measures will be taken. I am pleased that the minister is going to take this to the CFIA and get a better definition of precisely what actions will be taken under what circumstances so that that can be communicated more broadly.

I would like to ask the minister in terms of what her plans are for foot and mouth disease on the provincial government Web page. Let me start with the primary page of the Province of Manitoba, the provincial Web site. The first page has travel and immigration, business, government, living in Manitoba, working in Manitoba, Travel Manitoba. Manitoba Hydro Bonds are featured, but there is not anything featured on that first page on foot and mouth disease in spite of the potential importance of this.

I would compare that to the Alberta Web page where, in fact, foot and mouth disease is featured right in the front on the very first page because of the potential concern in Alberta. It would seem to me that we should be no less concerned about this disease than the Province of Alberta.

Ms. Wowchuk: Madam Chairperson, we do take this issue very seriously, and that is why the amount of information has been put out. That is why the department is involved in public education meetings with people involved in the industry. Foot and mouth disease is an agriculture issue, and it is listed on the home page of Agriculture with links to other sites for further information. So it is listed in Agriculture where it should be listed. I also say that there has been a tremendous amount of information put out to schools or travelling to other groups, to people who should be able to have access to the information.

Mr. Gerrard: I thank the minister for her answer. I have in front of me the copy of the Manitoba Agriculture and Food home page. I note that there is a section on the consumer, there is a section on the producer and agri-business, there is section on international marketing. There is a particular button that you can press that will take you to Manitoba farm and rural stress line. There is a button for Manitoba farm business management. There is a button for flood information, but foot and mouth disease is certainly not featured, indeed, as I glance at this. I am not even sure that foot and mouth disease is specifically mentioned on this first home page.

Ms. Wowchuk: When we are finished with these Estimates, I will go back to my office and

check, but I understand it is on the front page of the home page of the Department of Agriculture and Food.

Mr. Gerrard: One of the interesting aspects of the Government of Manitoba and the Department of Agriculture and Food homepage is that there is a search feature which, when operating well, should allow one to type in, foot and mouth disease, and it will immediately take you to the critical information that producers, or anybody else, would want to know about foot and mouth disease.

The interesting aspect, though, of the Manitoba government and the Manitoba Web site of Agriculture and Food is that if one puts in—and I typed this in, only a few hours ago for the latest time, but I have done this several times over the last month—foot and mouth disease, precisely like that, it will come back as an ineligible query. Now, the reason for that is that the search engine, as it is designed, does not accept the "and" as part of a phrase, like foot and mouth disease. The reality of that is that you then have to go back and you can put "foot and mouth" in, for example, or you can play around with the words. I put in the separate terms, and these are the documents that it provided me.

* (15:50)

1. Health Status as a Risk Factor: A Systems and Unit Perspective – Manitoba Agriculture and Food

2. Grains and Oilseeds Market – Manitoba Agriculture and Food

3. Grains and Oilseeds Market – Manitoba Agriculture and Food

4. Grains and Oilseeds Market – Manitoba Agriculture and Food

5. Manitoba Agriculture and Food – Manitoba Markets – Grains and Oilseeds

6. Global Trade – Processed Pork – Manitoba Agriculture and Food

7. Manitoba Agriculture and Food – Manitoba Markets – Livestock

8. Grains and Oilseeds Markets – Manitoba Agriculture and Food

9. Manitoba Agriculture and Food – Manitoba Markets – Grains and Oilseeds

10. Pork in Manitoba – Manitoba Agriculture and Food

Now the list here is illustrative. I am sure that there is information on foot and mouth disease, or a reference to foot and mouth disease, and a variety of documents. Clearly, for somebody—whether a producer or a citizen in Manitoba, or somebody from outside Manitoba—who wants to know what the provincial approach to foot and mouth disease is, it would serve people very well if there was one major location. Clearly from the list here, one has to search around to find out what is the main message of the Province of Manitoba.

There is reference to foot and mouth disease certainly on the page, but clearly in terms of one major place that, you know, people should be zoning in on to get the primary information and then move from there. I mean, there is not on the front page of the Manitoba government, there is not on the front page of the Manitoba Agriculture and Food, a foot and mouth disease sort of button that will take you right there, easily and prominently, and recognition right on the Web page that foot and mouth disease is a major concern.

I think I have raised this issue several times before, and it is one that we, in the modern day and age, when the Internet is important. It was used very well in the flood of '97 when it was an emergency. It would seem to me that it would be quite important to have a well designed approach to foot and mouth disease on the Manitoba government's Web site. I would urge the minister to go back and have a careful look and to pay some attention and to make sure that this has been done as expeditiously as possible.

Ms. Wowchuk: I thank the member for that information and I will, as soon as we finish these Estimates, take the opportunity to check what information is on the Web site.

Mr. Gerrard: With foot and mouth disease, the circumstance of which there can be very little

argument and variation in terms of what would be done if foot and mouth disease were to be found anywhere within Manitoba. The situation in South Dakota is that there is a very clearly outlined action plan in terms of what would happen. The question that I would have to the minister is about the provincial Web site, the action plan. I mean, you can argue about what decisions may be if it were foot and mouth disease that was detected somewhere else in North America and where it is and what movements might be, but surely it would seem to me that if foot and mouth disease is found detected and confirmed somewhere within Manitoba, it should be possible to provide a detailed outline of the immediate measures that would be taken for all of Manitoba and it should be possible to put those as part of an effective provincial action plan on the Web page, not having to wait for some decision to be taken after the fact.

Ms. Wowchuk: Canadian producers have an awful lot of confidence in the system that we have in Canada for the control of foreign diseases. The member talks about the public wanting to know what the action plan is. Well, I can tell the member that the calls that we receive concern what the implications are if we get it and what we can do to prevent it. We have not had calls from people looking for what the action plan is. There is a mechanism in place through CFIA that, should there be an outbreak, the steps will be taken. I can assure the member, and I know that producers have confidence in the system in Canada, that we do not have producers calling and looking for what the plan is going to be. The producers are talking about what preventative measures can be taken and what steps are being taken to keep the disease out.

During the time when we first heard about the outbreak, there were calls about people travelling, what kind of information we had. That is why we provide information to schools; that is why we hold public meetings with producers and provide information. But I can tell the member that people are not asking about what it is that we are going to do. They are asking about what they can do to prevent, how they can keep their herds healthy. They recognize the role that the CFIA plays in this and

they know that they will take a lead responsibility. There have been incidents of other diseases and it has been a very swift action plan that has been taken and producers do have the confidence in the plan that we have here in Canada.

Mr. Gerrard: Whether or not there have been people asking for this, I am asking today, and I have asked numerous times over more than a month for details. It would seem to me that it would be important to have these kinds of details set out clearly ahead of time so that people understand the seriousness, the implications, of what they will need to do. In a whole lot of other emergency circumstances, plans are laid out quite carefully ahead of time. In this circumstance, because there needs to be such broad participation in an effort to make sure that there is no spread, it clearly is a circumstance where there is a major advantage in communicating clearly, precisely what measures would be taken.

In South Dakota, as an example, they will quarantine all suspected and neighbour properties, with no movements by humans, livestock or property, with exceptions only being made on a case-by-case basis for emergencies and only after total and complete decontamination procedures have been followed.

* (16:00)

Mr. Chris Aglugub, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair

One of the aspects of foot and mouth disease is this importance of decontamination. The question needs to be raised that if there were to be a foot and mouth disease, do we have the adequate instruction, supplies and so on for rapid decontamination of any areas which may have been contaminated. I suggest to you, to the minister, this is not just theoretical. This is important in terms of being prepared for an emergency which could threaten the livestock herd. It is not so far distant.

A few weeks ago there were, I think, a number of animals brought in to the department of Veterinary Medicine at the University of Saskatchewan because there was concern it might be foot and mouth disease. It was necessary to take very extensive decontamination procedures. Now, it turned out, as I

understand, that it was not foot and mouth disease, thankfully, but clearly this is not such a simple and straightforward matter. Clearly it will be important to be prepared and to be ready with not only sort of the veterinary expertise but the appropriate supplies and other things which are necessary to be able to act quite quickly should there be an outbreak.

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Chairperson, quarantine, eradication, vaccination, vet staff and the requirement of staff, disposal, all of those issues are part of the tri-national plan. All of those things were under discussion when the model was looked at for North America, and there is certainly a plan for co-operation within the countries should there be an outbreak.

I want to also tell the member that in preparation and in the event of an outbreak and the need for additional knowledge on the disease, two vets from Manitoba have been in Britain. They are working with CFIA and the British government. It is part of a learning experience, but it is also part of carrying out the plan that they have in Britain, to learn about it.

So all of the issues that the member raised are part of the mock plan that has been carried out and part of the review by the industry to take the necessary steps in preparation of a possible outbreak.

Mr. Gerrard: I am going to wrap up and pass over to the Member for Emerson (Mr. Jack Penner), but I just want to say in closing I look forward to a greater presence of foot and mouth disease on the Web page, and I look forward to some evidence that the minister is carrying out the expressed wishes of the Premier during the conference that there would be a very aggressive plan for foot and mouth disease.

Madam Chairperson, in the Chair

This was at the press conference after the session today in Manitoba, and I look forward to seeing more evidence of this very aggressive position that the minister is taking. Thank you.

Ms. Wowchuk: And indeed there is. There is co-operation and a lot of work going on between Vet Services Branch and CFIA. I also talked about a much larger plan working between

Canada, the United States and Mexico looking at a model of how we could eradicate an outbreak should there be one.

Mr. Jack Penner (Emerson): Just a question or two on market development. I see your Estimates indicate that there is about 13 percent of the budget is going to be spent on marketing, market development kind of initiatives. I wonder, Madam Minister, whether you could give me just a brief overview as to where or how many developing markets you see in the food industry for the coming year.

Ms. Wowchuk: Madam Chairperson, if I understood the member's question correctly, he is talking about where our developing markets are. Our major markets and opportunities for growth are in the United States, Japan, Mexico. There is also some activity in China, some activity in Europe. There has been some contact with Iran as well, so there are a wide variety of markets, but, as I indicate, the ones closest to home, right across the border, are our largest market. There is also some market contact and missions from Korea as well.

Mr. Jack Penner: The reason I asked is twofold, and, first of all, I will ask the other question: Can the minister give us an idea of what the total GDP contribution would be of the agricultural industry to the Province of Manitoba?

Ms. Wowchuk: The ag and food and beverage industry would be between 10 percent and 12 percent of the GDP of the province.

Mr. Jack Penner: Would that include the manufacturing sector as well as the primary sector?

Ms. Wowchuk: Yes, Madam Chair.

Mr. Jack Penner: The reason I asked this question—we had a pie chart distributed to the American legislators that we met with over the last couple of days. On that pie chart, I do not know who developed it, but there was no mention of the agricultural industry whatsoever. I found that interesting. I looked at some of the other material that was distributed by South Dakota and North Dakota, Minnesota, and all of

them identified the contribution of the agricultural sector. The other reason I mention it is, we met just a week ago with the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce and again in their presentation and in the documentation that they left with us, there was not one word mentioned about agriculture. That concerns me greatly, because I still believe that in a broader-based sense the agricultural industry is one of the most important industries to this province.

* (16:10)

It always surprises me, when we have these kinds of pie charts that indicate economic activity or the economic contribution that agriculture makes to the total economic base, that we reflect so negatively in many ways on this industry. When one considers the broader base of support that the industry in its entirety gives to the economy of Manitoba, I would suspect that it is significantly higher than the 13 percent. When you look at the economic activity in most of the rural communities, and the support bases that are derived from it, I would wonder whether that calculation might not be significantly higher. I would encourage the minister to raise this with her Cabinet colleagues, that when, in future, we have opportunities to distribute material to a group, such as we had, we at least reflect the agricultural contribution that the agricultural sector makes or the economic contribution that the agricultural sector makes to this province. I think that truly would be beneficial to us in negotiations and discussions, such as we just finished with our American counterparts.

Ms. Wowchuk: I want to tell the member that I do believe that agriculture is very important to the economy of Manitoba, and I will look very closely at those charts. Certainly we should be profiling agriculture as an important area, and it is. It is one of the areas, this raw material that we have the opportunity to build on, and it is very important for many rural communities.

Madam Chairperson, I want to take the opportunity before we end this session to raise an issue that the member addressed the other day, and that is to the departmental spending. The member had concern about the actual spending and the spending this year by our

Government. His indication was that the previous government had put far more money into agriculture than our department had. He talked about the number of \$107.1 million in actual spending in 1999-2000 as being the money that his government had put in place before they took office and that our office had put nothing, had really reduced the funding for agriculture.

So I looked at that number, and I knew that, when it came to the Disaster Assistance program, the previous government had only put in \$12 million. But I did not have that information with me, so I had to go back and get the Estimates books from 1999-2000. I want to share this with the member, that in fact in his government's budget in 1999-2000, they had only budgeted \$12 million for disaster assistance. So I would like to share with the member where the \$107 million comes from.

The \$107 million comes from \$40 million that was put into CMAP by our Government, and then there is \$67 million that was put in by our Government into AIDA, because the previous government did not budget enough. So for 1998 AIDA, we had to put in \$21.1 million. For 1999 AIDA, we put in \$46 million. Those are the numbers of what our Government put in above what the previous government put in. The previous government only budgeted \$12 million for AIDA and for support for farmers for disaster assistance. It was our Government that came in and had to fill the gap to address the needs of farmers.

What the previous government did, his administration did, was put in \$12 million. If you look at the numbers, what we have budgeted for this year in 2000-2001, we have budgeted \$16.2 million and then had to put additional funds in, recognizing the farm crisis that is there and the difficulty farmers are facing. This year, we have budgeted \$25.4 million, double what his government budgeted for AIDA and for support for disaster assistance for farmers.

The member also indicated in his comments that the agriculture budget was decreasing. So I would just look back, for the member, during their administration, I will not go all the way back.

I will go back to 1994-95. It was \$114.9 million. The next year, 1995-96, it dropped to \$107.9 million. In 1996-97, it was \$96.4 million. In '97-98, it was \$97.7 million. In 1998-99, it was \$99 million. In 1999-2000, it was \$112.96 million. In 2001, it was \$114.08 million. This year, it is \$122.08 million. So since we have taken office, there has been a steady increase in the Agriculture budget.

I would really like to see a much larger increase in the Agriculture budget. Each of us would like to see an increase in our budget, but there are areas of priority. We have education and health care issues. We have balanced budget legislation that we have to live within. There is an increase in the budget. The amount of money put in by the previous government was not \$107.1 million, as the member had indicated in their budget. It was \$12 million. It was our administration that added those additional dollars in.

So I raise that with the member because in his comments the last day he was indicating that there was no commitment on the part of our Government for Agriculture. I wanted to clarify that.

Mr. Jack Penner: I only want to reiterate what I said the other day. If the departmental numbers that are published here are wrong, then I would suggest that the minister see to it that they are corrected, because the departmental numbers that are published within the Estimates clearly indicate that there is \$95,784,900 in the '97-98 budget. In '98-99 budget, there is \$99,684,900. The '99-2000, there is \$205,568,500 that has been budgeted. That is the last year that the Conservative administration was in power. If those numbers are wrong, then I would suggest they be corrected.

The other thing that I want to say to the minister, and this is irrespective of what previous governments, whether it is the Schreyer, the Pawley, the Filmon administration, it does not matter to me. If and when the total contribution, the GDP in Agriculture and Food, is somewhere in the neighbourhood of 12 to 25 percent, and that is why I asked the question before. If that is the number, then I would suspect when you have revenue increases, as this

Government has had over the last two years—this year of \$850-some-odd-million additional revenue than what was there two years ago—that they would want to proportionately add, at least, an amount of money that would be equivalent to the rate of increases in revenue. I would strongly suggest to the minister that she argue in her Treasury Board, and that she argue in her Cabinet, of the importance of the agricultural industry in manufacturing, Madam Chair, and the contribution that we make to the employment side in community building, in community development.

We are terribly, terribly disappointed, on this side of the House, that the Government's first action was to disband the Department of Rural Development. I know the minister sits here and laughs at that. I think that it is not funny at all because the Department of Rural Development focussed a lot of attention, brought a lot of trade issues, a lot of market issues, a lot of developmental issues, to rural Manitoba and now the big loss is rural Manitoba's. I know that the minister laughs at that. Let her laugh at that. I think it is unfortunate that she thinks that it is funny because I do not. Rural Manitobans do not, and the people in the city of Winnipeg do not either. I think the electorate next time will voice its displeasure with actions that they have taken in regard to the primary sector, development and rural development, in this Government.

With that, Madam Chairperson, I am willing to deal with the finalization of the Estimates, and I understand and see that the Department of Education is waiting with anticipation to take their turn.

* (16:20)

Ms. Wowchuk: I would encourage the member to travel around rural Manitoba a little bit. What he is hearing in rural Manitoba is certainly not what we are hearing in rural Manitoba. The member continues to talk about the elimination of the Department of Rural Development. I can tell him nobody believes him. He might want to talk about that. There have been two departments, Municipal Affairs and Rural Development, that have been combined into one Department of Intergovernmental Affairs. All

the staff is still there. In fact, there has been an increase in activity in that area. The member is wrong to say that we do not care about rural Manitoba, and I think that is clear from the response that we have had in rural Manitoba.

I also want to clarify for the member, when he looks at schedule 7 in the Department of Agriculture Estimates Books, where he says the budget for 1999-2000 was \$205.568 million, if the member will look at that schedule, that is the actual spending. In fact, his government in 1999-2000 budgeted \$112.9 million. The additional spending that the member sees there is money that was put into the budget after there was a change of government, when our Government put in place the funding that was needed for AIDA. Our Government negotiated the CMAP program, right after we formed Government. We took a delegation to Ottawa, we got emergency money, we got additional emergency money this year, and we have stood by the farmers and we will continue to stand by the farmers.

Mr. Jack Penner: Well, I suppose we could go on like this for another hour and a half, hour and 36 minutes and go into another day if we chose to. However, I will choose not to do that because there are other Estimates that have to be dealt with.

I just want to say, in final comment—and if the minister chooses to verbalize after that, that is up to her—in final comment, I want to say to the minister that the travels that I have undertaken over the last two years, as critic for Agriculture, clearly have demonstrated the displeasure that communities in rural Manitoba have indicated over the dissolution of the Department of Rural Development.

It is clear by comments that we have heard from municipal leaders, from chambers of commerce, from farm leaders and specifically small communities that had seen significant activity through the Department of Rural Development in developmental initiatives that were taken with respect to rural Manitoba. I believe that there is a tremendous opportunity to expand on that, but it cannot be done with no minister in charge, with no deputy minister in charge, with no assistant deputy minister in charge, with no staff in charge, of promoting

this. I say to the minister the people will judge very harshly come next election, and they will tell the minister exactly what they think of their disbanding a very important department in Manitoba that Manitobans became quite supportive of—not only supportive of but became very fond of. So I say to the minister: Think very long and hard about what you put on the record because we will remind you of those things.

Ms. Wowchuk: I thank the member for his comments. I only want to correct him on one matter. He says there is no minister responsible for rural development. I believe the Department of Intergovernmental Affairs is doing their Estimates right now, and the Member for Wolesey, Ms. Friesen, is an excellent minister responsible for municipal affairs and rural development and is very well respected in the rural community and has received tremendous support.

In closing, I would like to thank the member for his comments and all who have participated. I would also like to thank the staff for their patience and support during this Estimates process.

Madam Chairperson: Resolution 3.5: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$15,390,200 for Agriculture and Food, Regional Agricultural Services, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2002.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 3.6: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$2,663,800 for Agriculture and Food, Policy and Economics, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2002.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 3.7: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$3,300,800 for Agriculture and Food, Agriculture Research and Development, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2002.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 3.8: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$25,400,000 for Agriculture and Food, Agriculture Disaster Aid Programming, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2002.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 3.9: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$844,300 for Agriculture and Food, Amortization of Capital Assets, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2002.

Resolution agreed to.

* (16:30)

The last item to be considered for the Estimates of this department is item 3.1.(a) Minister's Salary contained in Resolution 3.1.

Resolution 3.1: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$2,756,000 for Agriculture and Food, Administration and Finance, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2002.

Resolution agreed to.

This completes the Estimates of the Department of Agriculture and Food.

Mr. Jack Penner: Just a brief comment to the minister and her staff. I want to thank the minister and her staff for what I think is an exemplary job in promoting the agricultural industry. I think staff have done a wonderful job over the last number of years. I would encourage them to continue the good work that they do for the farm community, and in a large part for trying to work as hard as they can on behalf of the development of new opportunities for our young people in rural Manitoba. So thanks a lot.

I also want to compliment the minister. I think the minister has done a good job of directing the department this year. Even though we have our moments of disagreement, I think she has done a good job.

Madam Chairperson: This completes the Estimates of the Department of Agriculture and

Food. The next set of Estimates to be considered by this section of the Committee of Supply is for the Department of Education, Training and Youth.

Shall we briefly recess to allow the minister and critics the opportunity to prepare for the commencement of the next set of Estimates?
[Agreed]

The committee recessed at 4:32 p.m.

The committee resumed at 4:36 p.m.

EDUCATION, TRAINING AND YOUTH

Madam Chairperson (Bonnie Korzeniowski): Will the Committee of Supply please come to order. When the Committee of Supply met to consider this department on May 17, 2001, it was agreed to have a global discussion on resolution 16.1. The floor is now open for questions.

Mr. Jack Reimer (Southdale): I just have one question for the minister, and it is a question that actually is in regard to a school in my constituency, a school that is not even open yet, the Island Lakes Community School. It was built over the last year and a half or so. It is actually ready for occupancy for this September. It was late in coming in a sense because of the development in the Island Lakes area, and the school is built under actually I guess it was not last year but the year before's guidelines. Believe it or not, the school is not even open, and the school board in the area is already looking for an expansion of the school because of the enrolment. The established enrolment that has already been taken for that school is over the limit for what the school was built for.

My understanding is the St. Boniface School Division has asked, through the Public Schools Finance Board, for a consideration of four new classrooms to be added to this school in the next, I guess, school term. I do not imagine it is for the upcoming term but the term after that, before it can be built. I wonder whether it has been brought to the minister's attention and possibly he could update me as to what the possibilities are of that expansion at that school.

Hon. Drew Caldwell (Minister of Education, Training and Youth): No, I have not had any conversation or dialogue with Jean-Yves Rochon, the superintendent of St. Boniface, about this particular matter. We do meet pretty regularly. I saw Jean-Yves, it might have been last week. It was not raised with me, but the process by which projects appear before the Public Schools Finance Board in a prioritized basis is a procedure that is pretty well understood and pretty well accepted, I suppose, by the public school system.

The way that it would appear before the PSFB would be for St. Boniface School Division to put it as one of their priority projects and then they would submit that to the Public Schools Finance Board for their global analysis. If the school was the top one or two priorities of St. Boniface, it would have a high level of prioritization as it went to the Public Schools Finance Board. I would expect that a decision would be made on the merits of the school in terms of the global budget, as a matter of course, from that process.

It has not been raised with me directly, and I am not aware of the same issue as you have outlined, but certainly it would appear on the Public Schools Finance Board's list of school projects in accord with the relative weight that St. Boniface School Division would give it. So, if there was a need and it was perceived by the St. Boniface School Division as being a pressing one for the next school year, it would likely be one of their top priorities and therefore be considered accordingly by the Public Schools Finance Board.

Mr. Tom Nevakshonoff, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair

I have only been in the office for 19 months, but I have had a couple of cycles now to see this. Oftentimes a project takes one or two years before it does get to the top of the Public Schools Finance Board's list. For example, I was in St. James, St. James Collegiate, it would have been last month I guess, and they are building a gymnasium out at St. James Collegiate. That has been a priority of the St. James school division for about a decade, but it is a matter of catching

up with other projects, because we have 730-odd schools.

If the member would like, I would raise it with Mr. Rochon next time I saw him and just touch base with him.

Mr. Reimer: I would appreciate it if the minister would, because it is a unique situation. A brand-new school is built. It has not even been occupied yet, but the enrolment is over what they anticipated. From what I understand, they have approached the PSFB, the Public Schools Finance Board, and have asked for consideration on it. I do not want to prolong the question on it, but is there a time frame when answers are given back to the school or the school board? My understanding is the request has been made already.

Mr. Caldwell: I believe the submissions for the next round of the Public Schools Finance Board project considerations is mid-June, so it is coming up for the next cycle. We just made an announcement. The Government made an announcement. It would have been a couple or three weeks ago for the capital for this year, and roughly June 15—and I am just speaking off the top of my head, but I believe it is mid-June that school divisions would submit their priority list for the following year's funding announcement.

I will give a call to Mr. Rochon and find out how they are proceeding, just to touch base with them. I am not aware of this particular project. I do know oftentimes it takes a year or two before things get to the top of the PSFB's list, but I also know the relative degree of urgency or priority that the local school division places on a project has some bearing on how quickly a project moves.

Mr. Reimer: One last comment, the school is situated in my constituency, which is Island Lakes, which is one of the fastest-growing areas of Winnipeg, and just as the enrolment is over expectation now, within two years, I know, from the way the homes are going up in that area, that there will be a tremendous demand for those additional classrooms. So, if the minister, as indicated, could do possibly some personal calls, it would be greatly appreciated. Thank you very much.

Mr. Caldwell: No, I do not mind doing that. I am really impressed, frankly, at the St. Boniface School Division, and certainly, Mr. Rochon, I have a very, very good relationship with. I think they do an excellent job in St. Boniface, so that would be a delight, actually, to give him a call.

Mr. Ron Schuler (Springfield): I do have a few questions, as well, with a school issue out in Anola, and I know the minister has been doing some correspondence in regard to that.

Before I do start on my questions, I do want to make a few comments for the record on the Assistant Deputy Minister, Gerald Farthing, whom I have a great amount of respect for, and I am pleased to see him at the table today. In fact, Gerald Farthing and I first met at the department of Crown Investments. I was a university student, and my boss was Gerald Farthing. I am very, very impressed. I was at that time. He hired me and taught me just at the beginning of—*[interjection]* Summer student. He taught me a lot about management style, and I have, over the years, modelled myself in regard to some of the things that Mr. Farthing did. So I am a great fan, like I think most of us are, of Gerald Farthing. I was going to say I am pleased to see that the minister now also gets to work for Mr. Farthing, so now he knows the feeling.

* (16:40)

I did want to ask some questions about the Anola School. The school has written the minister a letter. The minister responded, and I got a copy of that. Thank you. They have, since then, written a letter again to the minister, dated May 23, 2001, and I just want to, for the record, know: Did the minister receive that letter?

Mr. Caldwell: I have not seen a May 23 letter yet. That is yesterday, is that right, the day before yesterday. So it is probably on my desk in a file. I did, when you mentioned Anola School, ask one of my staffers to go downstairs and see if there was something on Anola School on my desk right now, but I have not seen it as of yet. Perhaps, I will see it in a moment.

Mr. Schuler: I know this is a very difficult position for the minister to be in. You have a lot of residents who are very frustrated, clearly, by

the correspondence. They have written a letter. They have cc'd me a copy, and the frustration is clearly there. I believe they are going to be meeting May 29, and if possible I will try to attend the meeting to exactly find out where they are coming from. The feeling out there is, to a large degree, they are neglected. They raise issues about the safety of the portables. I just want to go through the letter and if I can just bring some points out for the minister's attention.

They talk about the portable classrooms which were moved to an old school, due to an identified need for middle years programming. They feel they have deteriorated significantly.

We believe you, as the Minister of Education—I know I am not allowed to direct, but I will just quote it: We believe you, as the Minister of Education, should request not only an engineering evaluation, but you should also request a determination from Workplace Safety and Health as to any safety issues posed by these structures. We do not believe snow in the hallways in the winter or mosquitoes and other insects entering the school through cracks on the floor during the warmer season promotes learning. We do not believe it is reasonable to require our teachers to perform their duties in an unsafe environment.

Has the minister been aware that the portables seem to be in a deteriorated shape? Is that the information the minister has?

Mr. Caldwell: The Anola issue, as I said, I have not seen the most recent letter you are quoting from, but I do know across the system it kind of reflects, I suppose, a little bit on the remarks the Member for Southdale (Mr. Reimer) raised in terms of the Public Schools Finance Board in the budget and the different priorities around the schools and school divisions in the province.

We have, in the public school system, about a quarter of a billion dollars worth of capital infrastructure improvements needed broadly. I am aware of some pretty serious issues surrounding mould in walls from leaks that have not been attended to over the last number of years. In Beausejour, for example, I believe it is Beausejour middle years school, I was out in Beausejour, it would be last fall, and they are

building a new school in Beausejour as we speak. In fact, there is a school going up in Beausejour. The old school had pretty significant mould remediation issues around leaking walls and mildew and so forth. I know there are a number of schools with concerns that have to do with health and safety, particularly with mould, but, as you suggested, perhaps also for snow and insects.

The Anola situation, I have not familiarized myself totally with it, although I just got handed a note that the Public Schools Finance Board is aware of the portable classroom problem. In fact it recently received a condition report directly from the school division consultant, MCM Architects, on this matter. The Public Schools Finance Board, Mr. Chairperson, has advised the Transcona-Springfield School Division to send a letter to the PSFB indicating that it concurs with the scope of the work recommended by the architect. The Public Schools Finance Board has not yet received this letter from the Transcona-Springfield School Division. However, when it does, it will immediately assess the situation and authorize necessary corrective measures.

There is an awareness now with the Public Schools Finance Board that there has been some concern raised with the portables in Anola and that they are awaiting a series of recommendations from the Transcona-Springfield School Division. That may allay some of your concerns about that particular issue, but there are, just to put it into context, a great many schools across the province that have significant infrastructure needs, mechanical systems, electrical systems, roofs, windows, but it does sound like there is an awareness now on behalf of the Public Schools Finance Board, and they are awaiting Transcona-Springfield's recommendations to them.

Mr. Schuler: Thank you. To the minister, I think what I am going to do is defer any further questions and ask, through you to the minister, if perhaps he could take some time, have a look at the letter and go over the concerns.

I think the minister has seen, he has been in politics probably about the same length that I have, that people's issues sometimes go unaddressed because it is not quite within the realm

of this group and it is not quite in the realm of that group. People do get frustrated because they feel that nobody is paying attention, nobody is listening. They do bring up some serious concerns in their letter.

Somewhere, and I cannot remember which letter it was, there was a comment made that doing some building out in Anola might harm Hazelridge, that by doing some work in Anola it might harm Hazelridge. There are all these sort of statements out there. The parents really are frustrated. I have spoken to them. We have seen their correspondence.

So basically what I will do is I will leave my questions and ask the minister and certainly the individual sitting to the minister's side, former member of the Public Schools Finance Board, certainly was the director of PSFB.

An Honourable Member: Schools Finance Branch.

Mr. Schuler: Okay, I had that one wrong, but I am sure that Doctor Farthing will have some knowledge in this area. Perhaps the citizens' concerns could be addressed. I think their sense of frustration is probably felt by all of us. If the minister could perhaps direct his staff to do an in-depth look, certainly I do appreciate the fact that I am copied. I always make sure that my honourable colleague from Fort Garry gets a copy too.

In the end what we want is what is best for the children. I know that we may disagree sometimes how we get there, but we all want what is in the best interests of the children. I know that is the case here too. I will leave my comments at that. I would appreciate if the minister would have a look into the situation.

Mr. Caldwell: I appreciate the member from Springfield raising it. I know that I am very much a constituency politician myself, and we are concerned about our constituents and so forth. This is an issue that has been raised with the member. I am now looking at the letter from May 23. I will review it this evening so I am more apprised of the situation for the next time we meet here.

I have to say, though, in terms of the process that is involved for capital projects in the province, it is a process that has a long history in the province. As the member knows, as a former

school trustee, that process has served the needs of Manitoba very well over the years, whereby school divisions prioritize the projects that they deem most important in their individual division and submit a list of proposals for capital works to the Public Schools Finance Board, which in turn manages the resources provided by this Legislature for capital infrastructure work in the individual schools.

*(16:50)

Having said that, I am always engaged with the field, with the superintendents and trustees on matters around capital infrastructure. Just a moment ago I assured the Member for Southdale (Mr. Reimer) that I would have a chat with the superintendent of the St. Boniface School Division around the Island Lake school. I will touch base with the acting superintendent in Transcona-Springfield around this issue and find out where it is on their list of priorities.

I do think that the process by which locally elected officials in school divisions prioritize their needs and then transmit them to the Public Schools Finance Board for a global assessment for the Province is a process that has served successive governments for the last number of decades very well. I want to ensure that it is understood that I do not politically interfere in these things, but I do try and facilitate concerns when they are raised to me such as has been raised by the member from Southdale and the member from Transcona-Springfield. So I will take a look at this tonight, have a chat with the acting superintendent, and find out what their prioritization on this project is. In fact, I would urge the member to do the same, to raise it with the school board, and we will move forward from there.

Mrs. Joy Smith (Fort Garry): We had agreed earlier in the week that the minister would provide for me all the information on boards and commissions by Thursday, which is today, and I am requesting that information now.

Mr. Caldwell: The material that was requested last week I do have, so I will review them.

The Public Schools Finance Board, PSFB, which we have been talking about I guess for the last few minutes, is a statutory and active board. The authority of the Public Schools Finance Board was established in 1967 under The Public

Schools Act. It consists of five members. The mandate of the Public Schools Finance Board is to supervise the marketing of debentures issued by school divisions and to review and approve construction of new school buildings and renovations to older buildings. The current board consists of Mr. Ben Zaidman, who is chair, Dr. Glenn Nicholls, Mr. George Druwe, Mr. Howard Mathieson. Mr. Paul Birston provides administrative support. The terms of the PSFB will expire on May 31, 2002.

The second board under my responsibility as Minister of Education, Training and Youth is the Teachers' Retirement Allowances Fund board, TRAF. It is a statutory and active board as well. This board was established under section 41.1 of The Teachers' Pension Act. Its function and mandate is to administer The Teachers' Pension Act. TRAF is composed of seven members, three of whom are appointed from among the persons whose names are submitted by the Manitoba Teachers' Society, two of whom are appointed from among persons whose names are submitted by the Manitoba Association of School Trustees, and two are appointed by the Minister of Education and Training.

The citizen members of TRAF currently are Mr. Ian Sutherland, chair, and I believe Mr. Sutherland has served for quite a number of years, and Mr. Robert Malazdrewich, who was appointed February 9, 2000, to replace Lorne Ross, who resigned at that time. The Manitoba Teachers' Society representatives are Mr. Art Reimer, Ms. Pat Isaac and Mr. Cordell Barker. The Manitoba Association of School Trustees' representatives are Mr. Doug McGiffin and Mr. Bruce Chegus. Terms are set to expire on June 30, 2001 for the Teachers' Retirement Allowances Fund board.

The third board that I have responsibility for as Minister of Education, Training and Youth is the Board of Reference, which is always a statutory inactive board. The Board of Reference for the Province of Manitoba was established in 1960 under authority provided by The Public Schools Act, section 8.1. The board's main function is to decide upon matters related to boundaries of school divisions and districts at the request of resident electors, school boards, municipal councillors and/or Indian band

councils. Other matters considered include school division and district wards and trustee representation. Awards of the board are subject to appeal through the Manitoba Court of Queen's Bench. The composition of the board to date: Mr. Tony Frechette serves as chair, Ms. Kathy Mc Ilroy serves as vice-chair, Ms. Marion Robinsong, Mr. Don Burt, Mr. David Kicenko, Mr. Bill McBride, Mr. Alex Boyes. Mr. David Yeo serves as secretary, and Ms. Joanne Muller serves as administrative support. The last two are non-voting members. The terms of the Board of Reference expire June 30, 2002.

The fourth board of which I am responsible for as Minister of Education, Training and Youth, and this rounds out my responsibility, as I had a lot more when I had community colleges and universities and so forth, is the Apprenticeship and Trades Qualifications Board. The board was established under The Apprenticeship and Trades Qualification Act, L.M. 1998, c. 54 – Chapter A110. Section 3 of the act outlines the functions of the board.

"The functions of the board include the following:

(a) to make regulations respecting trades and apprenticeship provided for in sections 15, 19 and 24;

(b) to advise the minister about

(i) the needs of the Manitoba labour market for skilled workers,

(ii) the training and certification of persons in designated trades,

(iii) the fees to be prescribed under clause 25(a),

(iv) and any other matter about which the minister requests advice;

(c) to develop objectives, standards or requirements for apprenticeship training and to monitor and assess practical experience offered by employers in designated trades in technical training provided in those trades in Manitoba;

(d) to assess programs of instruction that could be suitable for apprenticeship training in Manitoba;

(e) to establish trade advisory committees for designated trades or groups of related designated trades and establish policies and procedures for those committees;

(f) to consider recommendations made by the trade advisory committees respecting the matters described in section 10."

Membership of the Apprenticeship and Trades Qualification Board includes Mrs. Joyce Sobering, who is the chair and whose term expires on June 30, 2002. Mrs. Sobering was appointed by one of my predecessors in the Filmon government. I am quite pleased to have her continue under my appointment. Her term expires on June 30, 2002. Mr. Ron Tate is vice-chair. Mr. Tate works for Inco in Thompson, Manitoba. He is an employer representative. His term also expires in 2002 on June 30. Mr. Brian Baker from Custom Vac Limited, who is a member of the Apprenticeship and Trades Qualification Board, is a public interest representative. Mr. Baker's term expires on June 30, 2001. Ms. Marileen McCormick is a public interest representative, and a member of the Apprenticeship and Trades Qualification Board. She is from the Centre for Aboriginal Human Resource Development. Ms. McCormick's term expires on June 30, 2002.

Mr. Brian De Baets is a member, an employee representative from Lodge 550 Local 100 of the CAW, Canadian Automobile Workers. Mr. De Baets' term expires on June 30, 2001. Mr. Patrick McDonnell, from the Manitoba Government Employees Union, is a member. He is an employee representative. Mr. McDonnell's term expires June 30, 2003. Mr. Joe Miller is a member, also an employee representative, and represents the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 2085. Mr. Miller's term expires June 30, 2003. Mr. David Martin is an employee representative. He is from the Sheet Metal Workers International Union Local 511. Mr. Martin's term expires on June 30, 2001.

* (17:00)

Mr. Dennis Decker is another member of the Apprenticeship Trades and Qualifications Board. He is employed at Hudson Bay Mining and Smelting in Leaf Rapids. Mr. Decker's appointment expires on June 30, 2004. Mr. Chuck Judd is an employer representative. Mr. Judd is from the wheat city of Canada, my hometown, Brandon, Manitoba. Mr. Judd's term of office expires on June 30, 2001. Mr. John Schubert from McCaine Electric Limited is an employer representative on the board. Mr. Schubert's term of office expires on June 30, 2003. Mr. Peter Klein is an employer representative and he is from K & S Tool and Die Ltd. here in Winnipeg. Mr. Klein's term expires June 30, 2003. Miss Susann Sinclair from Sinclair's Hairport in Dallas, Manitoba is also an employer representative. Her term expires June 30, 2002. Ms. Sinclair is completing a term previously vacated by Marina Smith-Kulba.

The legislative requirements for the board composition are that five persons shall represent the interests of employees, five persons shall represent the interests of employers, two persons shall represent the public interest, and one shall be chair. Each member must, in the opinion of the minister, be knowledgeable about designated trades or the needs of the Manitoba labour market for skilled workers. A term of office for a member must be not more than three years. After serving for six consecutive years, a member is not eligible to be appointed for a further term until at least three years have elapsed since the end of the member's last term. A member whose term expires continues to hold office until reappointed or a successor is reappointed.

I should add that Mr. Klein is in his second term, as is Mr. McDonnell. They are in their second terms right now.

I used to have quite a stack of these, but I only have four now. I was quite surprised myself when I got these, but that concludes the boards for which I have responsibility at this juncture.

Mrs. Smith: Mr. Chair, I thank the minister for taking the time to get that together. I was wondering if the minister would share his hard copy copies. Then I do not have to take them off the Hansard. I am trying to be as concise as I can in the Estimates not to waste time, but to get

down to the factual information. I want to thank the minister for that.

I would also ask the minister, I had requested also the salaries, or I think I did, and if I did not, I am amiss, for each of the board people and the commissions. If he has the salaries or the remuneration that these people get, it would be very much appreciated. If the minister just would prefer to give that to me in hard copy, he does not have to go through the tedious time of reading the whole thing. As I say, it is just information that is required. If he prefers to just give me the hard copies, I can peruse through it, and if I have any questions, just ask him at that time.

Mr. Caldwell: I do not have the remuneration, if there is any. Some of these likely do not have remuneration. Others maybe just the chair does, but I will—

Mrs. Smith: Most of them do not.

Mr. Caldwell: Yes, I think most of them do not, you are right, but if the member would like, I will take these back and get salaries or remuneration or honorarium or what have you attached to them.

Mrs. Smith: I thank the minister for doing that, because I do not believe most of them would, actually. Maybe I was amiss last time in not requesting that. I know certain commissions have it and certain commissions do not.

To shortcut some of the Estimates, instead of asking the same questions over and over again and for the minister not to have to worry about what staff needs to be here when, I am just going to make an all-over request and give you this so we do not sit here and go through hours of the same thing.

I am going to be requesting all departments inclusive Administration and Finance and all departments of Education, Training and Youth, K to Senior 4 only, No. 1, a list of all department political staff, including name, position, and FTE, whether they are full-time or part-time—I will give you this copy as well so you do not have to write a whole bunch of stuff down; a specific list of all staff in the minister's and

deputy minister's office; the number of staff currently employed in the department and the number of staff employed by the department for each year from 1998 through the year 2000-2001; the names of staff that have been hired since 1999, including whether they were hired through competition or appointment; a description of any position that has been reclassified; a listing of all vacant positions currently; if all staff years are filled, details of how many and what type of contracts are being awarded directly and why this is happening; how many contracts are going to tender; the last thing is how many positions have been relocated since taking office, i.e., relocated from rural or northern Manitoba into Winnipeg or relocated around the province and why. I know this takes some time and I know it takes different staff.

I thought to be fair to the minister I would just list this and let the minister know what I was going to be asking. Also please include salaries where it is relevant. One of my requests, in looking over the Estimates book per se, is a description of any position that has been reclassified. Looking through the Estimates book from cover to cover, I think some have been, and that is fine. So that might shortcut, and I will give you this piece of paper. I am sorry it is so tattered and torn. If perhaps I could ask the minister if we could have that by Tuesday. I think it is quite straightforward and the listings should be quite available through Manitoba Education, Training and Youth.

My goal is to not keep the minister here from his busy schedule any longer than is needed. So I thought I would just ask that blanket request, and I have given you some background on why I was asking it. Thank you.

Mr. Caldwell: I appreciate it. I noted that none of my staff fell out of their chairs when you were making the request, so I think we can likely get it here by Tuesday. We will do our best to get it by Tuesday. I appreciate the list of requests so that staff can be put to work on it.

Also, while we are here, a request was made yesterday by the Member for Fort Garry about details on Heather Hunter and her status in the department. Heather Hunter is in a term position until September 21, 2001, in the Research and

Planning branch, and Ms. Hunter's classification is as a planning consultant, PCO. She works in the Research and Planning unit, as I said, as a research consultant. She provides background information for government initiatives to substantiate evidence-based decision making in that capacity. Her salary range is \$54,148 to \$72,248. I am committed to bring that back to the member.

Madam Chairperson in the Chair

Mrs. Smith: I thank the minister for that timely information. I do appreciate that, and I will say again my intent is just to get information that is needed during the Estimates process and try to make it as timely and as easy for the minister as I can. He knows what I will be asking and why I will be asking it, and to help prepare him for anything, and his staff as well, because I know their time is very precious at Manitoba Education and Training.

I notice, Madam Chair, the minister is reading through some other information. I notice that he is reading through the request. I am just wondering if the minister can read my writing at the side there.

* (17:10)

Mr. Caldwell: Yes, I can, and I am okay with this. Maybe for a point of clarification, the first bullet, a list of all department and political staff. All department staff, this is just a clarification, Madam Chair, if the member wants a list of all the department staff, including name, position, FT. There are some 1100 department staff.

Mrs. Smith: Yes, I know. Yes, I do.

Mr. Caldwell: Okay.

Mrs. Smith: Yes, Madam Chair, I do want that, along with the salary allocation. I know there is a database on it, it is quite simple to get through resources, and I would appreciate having that very much. It is a matter of pulling them up on the computer and running them off. So I thank the minister for doing that. Are there any other questions the minister might have?

Mr. Caldwell: No, thank you. I just wanted to clarify that it was a request for a list of all

department staff, including name, position, FTE, and the member has clarified that, so we will do our best to get that here for early next week.

Mrs. Smith: I thank the minister for that. I want to go on. This is still in the same department. If the minister could bear with me during the next few minutes, I would like to go into the trips that the minister has made this year.

Madam Chair, I would ask if the minister could list the trips that he has made out of the province and where he has gone and the times. I will ask that question, first of all, and if the minister would like time to just get that together. I know he has been several places out of province, and if he would be so kind just to let me know what trips he has made out of province.

I am not talking about in province, I probably know about most of those, but the ones outside of province and the purpose in making those trips, because I know in a minister's normal duties there are trips that need to be made, there are places that ministers need to go to get new ideas and see the kinds of educational progress that has been made across Canada and the States, and I daresay across the globe. So I would like the minister to let me know what trips the minister has made since coming into office until this second set of Estimates.

Mr. Caldwell: Sure. I serve, I suppose, Canada in the position as co-chair of the Forum of Labour Market Ministers. I co-chair the Labour Market Ministers with the Honourable Jane Stewart, Minister of Human Resources Development Canada, in the capacity as FLMM co-chair and in my capacity as a member of the Canadian Ministers of Education who meet regularly. As the members knows, there is no federal minister of Education so the provincial ministers meet on a fairly regular basis, and by that I mean twice or three times a year.

In my capacity as a member of the Forum of Labour Market Ministers and the Canadian Ministers of Education, I have travelled to Toronto twice and Fredericton once. I do not think I went any place else in Canada in that regard. Just off the top of my head here, as I am speaking right now, I do not think I have gone

any place else in Canada. The costs for those conferences, which are a regular part of the ongoing responsibilities of ministers of Education in every province, are borne by the department.

In addition, in my capacity on the Canadian Ministers of Education, as I stated earlier there is no federal minister of Education so whenever the federal government has an educational delegation for whatever it may be, the OECD, SEAMEO, the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization, CIDA projects and so forth, a provincial minister is delegated to represent the political component of federal Canadian delegations internationally.

In fact, it is kind of an interesting story. Maybe I should refer to it a little bit because it is interesting for me. Before being elected as an MLA, I was quite a traveller and in fact spent almost three years of my life in primarily Asia but Third World. When I became minister and was elected an MLA, obviously the opportunity to have flexibility in one's life, as the member knows, is pretty dramatically decreased. She is nodding her head so she understands exactly what I mean. We are very busy in this House.

I was appointed Minister of Education in Manitoba in early October 1999 and shortly after that appointment was contacted by the CMEC, the Secretariat in Toronto, Dr. Paul Cappon, and was asked if I would be interested in leading a federal delegation, a Canadian delegation, to Indonesia. I replied by saying, you know, I have just been appointed. Surely to heavens, there must be some of my colleagues in other provinces who would want to lead this delegation. Having travelled to Indonesia myself in years past, I felt it would be a tremendous opportunity for somebody to serve their country Canada in terms of leading the political wing of the international delegation, but equally an opportunity for someone to see a part of the world that not many Canadians have an opportunity to see, that is Indonesia.

So I said, well, I decline. I am brand-new on the block. Perhaps another member would like to go. I was advised that none of my colleagues wanted to go because of the political instability in Indonesia, which has been for decades, frankly, in the news. The last time I was in

Indonesia, previous to this trip, the problem was the state being quite aggressive with its citizenry. With the democratization of Indonesia, we still have high levels of violence and civil unrest, but it is less due to the state and more due to the opening up of the country and the various tensions inherent in a very, very large country.

At any rate, none of my colleagues, for the sake of their own personal safety as perceived by them, wanted to travel to Indonesia as leading this delegation. When I was apprised of that fact, in fact, we had a conference call with External Affairs, because they were trying to determine whether or not the delegation should proceed at all because of this reticence on the part of some of my colleagues to attend a conference in that country during this time.

The outcome of the conference call at the end of the day was that I agreed to lead the delegation on behalf of the federal government. All costs, obviously, were borne by the federal government. This was a federal delegation and part of the responsibilities of the Canadian Ministers of Education, and had a very eye-opening experience leading a delegation, a Canadian delegation, to the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education conference, which is an annual affair in Indonesia, and actually met the President of Indonesia during that time, President Wahid, who right now is under some considerable stress in his country. I know that parliament is giving him a great degree of pressure right now.

So I did travel to Indonesia in I think it was February 2000, which would be about five months after I was appointed to office, and kind of lead that delegation by default. Following this year, in February, in the same capacity to the same conference, a SEAMEO conference, I represented the federal government in a political capacity with a delegation of four or five representatives from Canada, from the Canadian Association of Community Colleges and from the DFAIT, Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, lead a delegation this February to Sabah, Malaysia. Again, all costs borne by the federal government, as this was and is a federal delegation, and was quite pleased at the response, frankly, when I did return, because of course all the other countries involved with

this region of the planet have national ministers of education, and they had been used to a revolving door of members or ministers from Canada. They were quite pleased to see a minister returning for the second time, because certain relationships had been established in the first meeting in Indonesia the year previous.

* (17:20)

It was a great privilege, a great honour and a great experience to represent Canada at both of these international conferences. Canada has a great many projects in most, if not all, of the countries in the southeast Asian region, primarily through the CIDA, Canadian International Development Agency. We, as a delegation, had some very good work to do there.

The regrettable part of this is someone who has been a world traveller in the past, and those who attend conferences on a regular basis, I am not one of them, but those who do attend conferences on a regular basis know that it is not so sexy, because usually you get to see the inside of your hotel room and the inside of the meeting halls in the hotels you are staying with, but you do meet some very interesting people and you are exposed to some very interesting facets of educational policy that you would not otherwise have an opportunity to familiarize yourself with. So I have represented Canada twice in southeast Asia, in Malaysia this year, and in Indonesia last year.

I have also internationally travelled to China, Henan province, Beijing, Zhengzhou in Henan province, and Hong Kong in November of 2000. In Beijing, the previous government, the Filmon government, had initiated six years ago a partnership agreement with Henan province. In fact, tomorrow the Premier (Mr. Doer) and I are meeting with the governor of Henan and a delegation from Henan to follow up on a number of trade initiatives that have been undertaken between our two provinces.

I believe the volume of business that Manitoba does with Henan province, with China right now, is in the range of \$250 million a year. I thought that was a very good initiative, frankly,

of the Filmon government. I believe very strongly in international education and providing opportunities for international trade and international understanding. I think the previous government was very wise to get in at the ground floor, as it were, in the Chinese market, a huge market of somewhere over a billion people.

In Beijing, in Zhengzhou I was working towards solidifying high school agreements using Manitoba curricula for high schools in Beijing and Zhengzhou, which were initiatives previously begun by the Filmon government.

In Hong Kong, I had the opportunity to meet with Mr. Stan Cheung, a very distinguished alumnus of the University of Manitoba, and quite a benefactor frankly of the University of Manitoba, for an afternoon, actually an entire day and an evening. We had quite a pleasant dinner, discussing issues of the University of Manitoba primarily revolving around creating channels for philanthropy and fundraising in the Asian context, but moreover just to reflect upon what an extraordinarily good quality of education is provided by the University of Manitoba, and to get a perspective from Mr. Cheung about how the University of Manitoba, and Manitoba more broadly, could make itself more highly visible in that region of the world in this time of a global marketplace.

I know the Premier followed up on some of this work during the Team Canada visits subsequent to that. As I mentioned, tomorrow the Premier and I will be meeting with the governor of Henan province and his delegation to further some of these trade contacts.

I have travelled quite a bit now in reflecting about it in terms of my responsibilities, but they have all been very, very positive, and I am very pleased and honoured to be able to represent Canada at some of these international conferences. Having a familiarity with southeast Asia certainly helped when I am talking to ministers from Thailand, Indonesia, other countries, India, and so forth. They are always quite tickled that I have spent many months in their countries in years past. We do have a lot of commonality there. Certainly my colleagues from the federal level appreciate that as well.

Mrs. Smith: I thank the minister for his thorough answers. I would like to ask some questions related to the trip to China. Could the minister indicate whether the trip to China was on the advice of the department?

Mr. Caldwell: Yes, it was, Madam Chair. As I mentioned, the former government, I think it was about six years ago, it might have been seven, maybe the members can help me out a bit. The Member for River East (Mrs. Mitchelson) is here. She might remember the agreement that was signed between the Province of Manitoba and Henan province in China. I think it was six or seven years ago. I cannot remember. It was six or seven years ago, at any rate, and there were a number of trade initiatives, as well as education initiatives, that were begun during that time.

As members may know, in Asia, very little gets achieved in terms of moving policy forward from a government-to-government level without political input. I know that staff has travelled to China quite extensively. I believe Doctor Farthing has been there twice in the last year. While work does get done at the bureaucratic level of the civil service, the culture demands political interaction as well. That is certainly how agendas get moved forward, and that certainly is what predicated the recent team Canada visit to China, as well. To move deals forward in Tamil, and to move agreements forward, the culture demands political input.

So, when the Manitoba government changed in September of 1999, shortly after, it would have been a matter of a couple of months, the department began to press me to pay a visit to China to both re-establish contacts that were initiated by the previous administration, by Mr. Filmon, and to establish, or initiate, some further discussions around the implementation of Manitoba curriculum in schools, particularly in Zhengzhou and Beijing.

Certainly, it took a few months of persuading, but when I had the briefing on the matter and understood that Manitoba's educational business internationally was about \$30 million a year. Our budget provincially has been pretty consistent over the last number of years, about \$180,000; between \$150,000 and

\$200,000 over the last half decade or so in Manitoba. I did see, I suppose, the department's advice, and did take the trip to China and had a very busy time.

It was a little bit more pleasurable than these federal conferences that I went to, because at least you were out of the hotel and into different schools and not just in the meeting room. So it was quite a pleasure to visit some of the schools in Beijing and Zhengzhou particularly, and to begin to sign off on the utilization of Manitoba curriculum in these schools, so that young students leaving the schools would attain Manitoba credentials, in terms of their high school diploma, and be able to move into Manitoba colleges and universities with no impediment.

Mrs. Smith: I thank the minister for his answer. How many schools did the minister sign off in China?

* (17:30)

Mr. Caldwell: I visited a number of schools. The two schools that were most immediately affected, and, in fact, there have been teams from the department go over to certify, Yang Guang School in Beijing and Chao Yang School District in Beijing, and there is a school in Zhengzhou as well, that we reviewed for this purpose. I should add, I believe that the Premier, subsequent to this, also visited a school in Shanghai that is interested in this. Just in wrapping up, at the Chao Yang School District in Beijing, I met with Mr. Meng two days ago in Winnipeg. He is here with the Chinese delegation. So that is proceeding very well I think.

Mrs. Smith: Could the minister indicate who accompanied him on his trip? Who went with him?

Mr. Caldwell: Ms. Pat Rowantree is the Assistant Deputy Minister. and Mr. Gerald MacLeod, who is no longer with us, but was the International Development Officer for the Province for a number of years, and I believe, went on to bigger and better things. He is in the private sector doing essentially the same work. I believe he is from Fort Garry as well.

Madam Chairperson: Order, please. I would just like to remind all members to keep the tone down. Some people have voices that are louder than they think and as long as it is not disruptive, if you wish, maybe you would like to move further down to the end of the table.

Mr. Caldwell: And I just wanted to say that I believe Mr. MacLeod was from Fort Garry and he was a real delight, because he had spent quite a bit of time in that market over the years on behalf of the Manitoba government and had a great many connections. It was quite delightful to be with him and meet some people that he had extensive experience with.

I should also add that Ms. Rowantree, in her former capacity, was Dean of Education in British Columbia in an institution, and had quite extensive experience in that market as well. Travelling with both of them was kind of like old home week in Beijing. I was the odd man out and Ms. Rowantree and Mr. MacLeod would have many, many friends and acquaintances from years past meeting with us.

So we did have quite an extensive and full schedule during our time there. As I said, Mr. MacLeod who, I believe, worked up the International Development component of Fort Garry School Division, has a very good reputation and it was a real delight to have the last trip that he took on behalf of the Province before he went into the private sector. It was a delight to be with him during that time.

Mrs. Smith: I appreciate your comments, Madam Chair, in keeping the noise level down in the room. Thank you. I also wanted to say that I have a great respect for Mr. MacLeod and know him quite well. In fact, our children know Mr. MacLeod very well too, because he was a principal of one of the schools there where our children attended. He certainly has a great love for international education and he would be a great asset on your trip.

Could the minister indicate whether there were just three who accompanied him on his trip then, or were there any other people in the delegation?

Mr. Caldwell: There were just two; three including myself: Mr. MacLeod, Ms. Rowantree and myself.

Mrs. Smith: Could the minister indicate the total cost of the trip?

Mr. Caldwell: I know that there was a Freedom of Information request from my local newspaper in Brandon, the *Brandon Sun*, on the matter, and it seemed to me that the figure came in around \$6,000. That is recollecting in my mind what the newspaper story was because, as you may imagine, people stopped me in the street in Brandon and asked me that very question. It is in the neighbourhood of \$6,000.

Mrs. Smith: Upon his return, could the minister inform the committee what report was prepared for use by the department, Central Policy or Cabinet?

Mr. Caldwell: There was a meeting within the department, the certification branch, Mr. Brian Hanson; the Public School Assistant Deputy Minister, Dr. Gerald Farthing; and the ADM Training, Pat Rowantree.

When the delegation returned, we had a number of meetings based upon following up my visit with a certification visit by Mr. Hanson. I believe Mr. Hanson visited in Beijing in Chao Yang School District in December of 2000. That visit was for certification purposes for the school, Madam Chair. That was followed up by Doctor Farthing and Ms. Rowantree in March of 2001, Beijing, Shanghai, and Bangkok, Thailand, where we also have some significant interests in an international school using Manitoba curriculum.

The purpose of the trip, obviously, and the purpose of all these ventures is to provide opportunities for the development of international education in Manitoba and to attract students internationally to Manitoba, for two purposes. One is the financial and the fiscal economic opportunities that are presented to Manitoba through such international student exchange.

Students come into Manitoba, spend money here, enrol here, pay rent and so forth. It is the same philosophy as the previous government had in this matter. It is a pretty significant market. I think it is worthy of taking advantage of. That is not something, incidentally, that I

necessarily would have believed going into this office. As Minister of Education, I am usually pretty sceptical about using resources generally. It is something I believe that the former government showed a lot of foresight in doing in terms of this Chinese market. It certainly seems to me with the Chinese delegation here today and in the meeting tomorrow that we have some tremendous opportunities here.

There was also a group of teachers and students from Thailand who were in Manitoba. In fact, I had an opportunity to meet with them, the member from Seine River and the member from St. Vital. They were primarily in the St. Vital School Division, and quite extensively. I think Mr. Wayne Ruff from the Manitoba Council for Leadership in Education was central to having the group of teachers and students from Thailand in Manitoba for three weeks in April. They were a delightful group again and an extraordinary good resource for Manitoba.

So we are, I think, continuing a tradition that was begun by the previous administration in terms of capitalizing on international educational opportunities.

Mrs. Smith: I am very familiar with that Thailand group, because, as you remember, as the minister will remember, we invited him down to the luncheon to meet the Thailand students. Indeed, I am quite familiar with the process with which those students and teachers arrived in Winnipeg.

* (17:40)

Upon the minister's return from China, my understanding is that only three people went. Doctor Farthing and others went at different times. My understanding, from what the minister said, is that no staff or anybody else went with the minister to China. Please correct me if I am wrong on that.

Mr. Caldwell: Yes, I attended with Ms. Rowantree and Mr. MacLeod. The three of us went during the initial visit. Doctor Farthing and Ms. Rowantree subsequently went at one point, and Mr. Brian Hanson from the School Certification Branch did an inspection visit—oh, and Lenna Glade. So there were two staff, Lenna

Glade and—the order of things would be myself, Ms. Rowantree and Mr. MacLeod initially in November 2000, then Lenna Glade and Brian Hanson following up for an inspection visit in December, and then Doctor Farthing and Ms. Rowantree to Beijing, Shanghai, Bangkok in March.

Mrs. Smith: Could the minister share any report that was prepared for use by the department's Central Policy Agency or Cabinet following the minister's trip from China and perhaps the follow-up to when the staff was also there because I am sure that there are many productive things that were done?

Mr. Caldwell: Of course, Cabinet material is confidential, but there have been a number of letters that have transferred back and forth between Canada and China in this matter. Doctor Farthing advises me of that. As well, I signed a memorandum of agreement with Mr. Meng from Chao Yang School District in Beijing two or three days ago.

Mrs. Smith: More specifically, perhaps I will reword the question, Madam Chair. Did the minister put together a report regarding his trip and the benefits of the trip and share that report? Could he share that report from the time the minister went all the way to China to meet and dialogue with these schools? Did the minister come back with any written report on what he found out or what he experienced or the benefits of the minister going to China?

Mr. Caldwell: There were a number of, I guess, briefing notes that were shared within the department, with Ms. Rowantree, myself and Mr. MacLeod to further the agenda with the schools that were in China. We were pretty focussed on the opportunities that exist with individual schools to certify their students as having achieved a level of education equal to the Manitoba experience and following the Manitoba curriculum. So there were a number of briefings, meetings and I suppose directions for further activity in this regard on a number of our visits in schools.

Mrs. Smith: I wonder if the minister would be so kind to share some of those reports with members opposite because, as the minister

indicated, this initiative was started with the former government and I am glad to see this kind of thing continue.

Mr. Caldwell: I do appreciate that because I think it is worthy of continuance. As I said, when I came into the office I was relatively sceptical about the whole International Education Branch, but when I was further briefed on it and understood what an economic boom, frankly, it was to Manitoba, I changed my view. I was always intrinsically inclined to value international travel and international education for my own experience, but as I said I was quite sceptical going into this. That view has changed somewhat, but I have to demur in terms of sharing briefing notes on this matter with the member opposite, although I am pleased to discuss it. I do not want to get into sharing notes on these sorts of matters, either in the Department of Education, or for the precedent I might set for my colleagues. I expect the member will understand that. That is practice, I believe, in this House.

Mrs. Smith: Could the minister indicate whether the Province of Manitoba held any special functions, for example, receptions, dinners, during the course of the minister's trip?

Mr. Caldwell: I am a little bit embarrassed to say no.

Mrs. Smith: Could the minister indicate whether any meetings were held with officials from the Canadian embassy?

Mr. Caldwell: Yes, there were meetings with the Canadian embassy, primarily around the issue of visa applications and processes of visas. It is a common challenge in China and for Manitoba. There were a number of meetings to get a perspective from the Canadian officials as to their challenges with visas and Chinese migration generally. Certainly, we have all been familiar with those stories over the last number of years. We did have some meetings with Canadian embassy officials to get a better understanding of the challenges they face in issuance of visas, student visas, and so forth, and to give some perspective on the Manitoba experience with students coming into Manitoba. There were meetings at the Canadian embassy in

Beijing, primarily around visa issues and getting a better understanding of processes involved in visa applications, and so forth.

I should add, that in my last question, I said embarrassingly, no. I say that because the hospitality of the Chinese schools that I visited was absolutely astounding. There was no cost spared in entertaining myself, in terms of meals and so forth. The member is nodding. So she knows the hospitality that is extended in that part of the world to visitors. I was very humbled by the warmth in which my delegation and I were received by our Chinese friends.

I did take with me, thank goodness, about 30 Manitoba coffee-table books with pictures of Winnipeg and western Manitoba and the parks and the lakes that we have in this province. So I did distribute a number of gifts, primarily coffee table books. I am very, very thankful. They were very heavy when I was taking them over, but I was sure glad I had them when I was taken out for dinner, and so forth. It was quite an experience.

Mrs. Smith: Could the minister indicate whether any meetings were held with officials from the Chinese government?

Mr. Caldwell: Yes, there were meetings with officials from Henan province, which Manitoba has an agreement with to promote education and economic development and economic opportunities generally. I believe the Minister of Industry and Trade has got quite a network at Henan province herself. I know that the Province has been very, very bullish in that part of the world over the last six or seven years.

I did meet with government officials in Henan province, and in Zhengzhou. It was a very short meeting, about 45 minutes or so, but it was important. It essentially, I suppose, sanctified the stature of our delegation. I think again, when we started this discussion, I spoke to the culture of the region that sees it as very important that political representatives be central to any discussion. Oftentimes here, we let, and are quite happy to permit, our civil servants to handle a lot of the work and make a lot of the connections and develop a lot of the programs with a pretty free hand for the most part, because

of the sort of philosophy we have, I suppose, of civil service and so forth, but the meeting with the Henan political Communist party officials primarily, but governing officials, in the province of Henan was short, but a very important part of our journey there.

Mrs. Smith: Could the minister indicate whether any meetings were held following his meeting specifically related to his trip to China? Were there any follow-up meetings held?

* (17:50)

Mr. Caldwell: We did. As I mentioned earlier, my trip was quickly followed up by a trip by Mr. Hanson from the department for an inspection visit going on in Beijing. Certainly, the visit by Doctor Farthing and Ms. Rowantree to Beijing, Shanghai and Bangkok, at least the Beijing and Shanghai portion of that trip in China, was follow-up. As I said yesterday or the day before, I signed a memorandum of agreement with Mr. Meng from Chao Yang School District in Beijing for the Manitoba curriculum to be utilized in that school at some point. So there were a number of follow-ups that pertained to solidifying the relationships that had been established, as I said previously, by the Filmon administration and, more recently, continued by the Doer administration.

Mrs. Smith: Could the minister indicate how many times he has used the government jet?

Mr. Caldwell: I have been on the government jet once and I was travelling with somebody, I think it was the Premier, so I do not think I have used the government jet at all.

Mrs. Smith: There is just one more question. I realize that we are getting to the end of our time, but I know that I travelled out to Brandon to a meeting held in Brandon when the minister was going to come and talk to the board and the superintendent regarding the hiring of a new superintendent. I was actually in that room and the doors were open and people were listening for phones, and I read in the paper that the minister had skidded off the highway. I am very glad the minister was not hurt. However, Madam Chair, could the minister tell us specifically who helped him out of that ditch that night, because I

must have been maybe 10 minutes ahead of the minister, and I made it safely? So it is unfortunate I could not have been the knight in shining armour. However, if the minister would be so kind as to just let us know how he did get out of the ditch that night.

Mr. Caldwell: I backed out with my trusty 1986 4-wheel drive Bronco with rusting fenders.

Mrs. Smith: So, in other words, the minister helped himself out of the ditch. I must say that we waited quite a long time in the board offices. Why would the minister not continue on his way and make it to the board meeting considering the delegation of people that were waiting to meet him, if he got out of the ditch so easily and unaccompanied?

Mr. Caldwell: I suppose I value my life and once bitten, twice shy.

Mrs. Smith: So, just to clarify, the minister went into the ditch, got himself backed out, and then headed straight back to Winnipeg?

Mr. Caldwell: I had a coffee before I came back to Winnipeg, and I did, in fact, talk to the Chair of the Brandon School Division, Mr. Jim Murray. I phoned Mr. Murray's residence and had a chat with his son to advise that I was not going to take the chance to continue along my way that evening. His son told me that his father was in the shower, but he would relay the message to his father. I subsequently spoke to his father, because we are friends in Brandon, and he did not get the message that night, although I had occasion to speak to his son again. His son gave his father, I guess, a bit of a hard time about that.

I did try and phone the board division office as well from my cell, I think. It might have been from a station or back in Winnipeg, but the Brandon School Division's voice mail was on and they advised me that I could phone back the next morning when office hours were open. So it was regrettable that a message did not go through to either Mr. Murray or Mr. Swayze, the superintendent of the school division. But, certainly, the efforts were made to do so. In fact, I also phoned the manager of the Westman Cabinet office that evening and she was not

home either, regrettably, but I did leave a voice mail on her phone to transmit, if she could, to the school division the fact that the road conditions were such that I did not feel that safe continuing on.

I certainly did not feel like continuing on after doing a 360 going back into the ditch. The roads were very icy that night. There was freezing rain and I travel that road, and have travelled that road hundreds of times in the past ten years in my capacity previously as a city councillor, and working with the Manitoba Association of Urban Municipalities, whose offices are in Winnipeg, and UMM, and more recently, the Association of Manitoba Municipalities, AMM, and—it is a good road.

I often take a great deal of pity and have a great deal of empathy for my colleagues who have to travel on two lane roads, whether it is in the Interlake, or to Gimli, or Swan River, Dauphin, or where have you. I found it hard to complain because the best road in the province is the Trans Canada Highway, so, having a four-lane divided highway, I am pretty reticent to moan about the road conditions or the road travel because it is such a good road in our province and many of my colleagues, on both sides of the Legislature, do not have that luxury. They have two-lane roads, and sometimes gravel roads, depending on where they live. So I hesitate to moan it, but I have also travelled that road enough and have had a few exciting escapades on that road over the years, particularly the stretch between Winnipeg and Elie. That stretch between here and Portage is often very, very bad, so I am very glad that my trusty, rusty truck served me well, and I am very happy that I have 4-wheel drive. I am very happy I did not read or see the television reports about the roll-over potential of Broncos and Explorers until sometime after that particular accident, because my vehicle is one of those SUVs that is pretty high, with a narrow wheelbase, so I was kind of shaky after that.

Mrs. Smith: Madam Chair, I guess, maybe, I will leave a blanket invitation for the minister to come out with me in my little burgundy Lumina. We managed to get to Brandon. But I know our time is up right now, and I will resume my questioning next day.

Madam Chairperson: The hour being 6 p.m., committee rise.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

* (15:00)

Mr. Chairperson (Conrad Santos): Will the Committee of Supply come to order, please. This section of the Committee of Supply has been dealing with the Estimates of the Department of Intergovernmental Affairs. Will the minister's staff please enter the Chamber.

We are on page 106 of the Estimates book, resolution 13.1. This section of the Committee of Supply agreed to have a global discussion. The table is now open for questions.

Mr. John Loewen (Fort Whyte): Mr. Chairperson, I would just like to pick up where we left off yesterday on 13-1F. I was asking the minister to advise the committee what was the reason for the removal of the Expected Results from last year's Estimates that specifically dealt with the completion of an update to the Rural Economic Development strategy, on one hand, and also to support the development of a provincial economic strategy. I notice that that Expected Result has been removed from the Program and Policy Development Branch, and I am just in my own mind trying to clarify because I really do not understand.

In my mind there could only be three reasons. One is the work has been completed. If so, if there is a report, I would ask the minister to make those reports available to the committee and to the people of Manitoba. If the task has been moved to another department, and, in fact, it has not been finished, then that is fine. We could look at that. If the Government has decided not to move ahead with the completion of an update to the Rural Economic Development strategy and decided as a matter of policy not to provide support to the development of a provincial economic strategy, then that would be the third answer.

I must say, Mr. Chair, that I find it very disconcerting that in her response the minister would take what I believe is a very condescending position and state that, and I quote: "I

know that members opposite do not see this as a particularly significant area of vision," referring to investments in education.

I can assure the minister that I speak for myself and for this side of the House. We do recognize a very significant need to invest in education. If she goes back to 1999 to the election platform, she will understand that we made a commitment to the people of Manitoba to spend significantly, as the provincial economy grew, on education as well as health care.

In addition to that, the previous Conservative government, through a time when federal transfers were cut at an unprecedented rate by the federal government, continued to invest in education in a most significant way. Now, the minister and I can disagree over how to spend the money or what the policy would be, and that I would understand, but for her to make a statement that members on this side of the House do not see an investment in education as a significant area of investment or vision for the province is totally false and totally misleading.

I will clarify that our vision might be a little closer aligned with the position taken by the Business Council of Manitoba in their recommendation to the Finance Minister (Mr. Selinger) during the Budget process, something that maybe the minister could convey, Mr. Chair, to the Minister of Advanced Education (Ms. McGifford) if she is not aware of it.

I will quote directly from the Business Council's report and direct it to the Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger) and to the Government, and I quote: While we are supportive of the commitment to fund capital needs at our universities and community colleges, we continue to believe that your policy of rebating tuition fees to students is the wrong approach. University and college administrators and their boards of governors ought to have the autonomy to set their own tuition fees, mindful of competitive pressures across the country and keeping in mind the difficulty in attracting and retaining faculty.

Just as an example, the Asper school pays its faculty between \$67,000 and \$87,000 compared to top salaries in other universities that reach as

high as \$136,000 per year. This differential illustrates how far behind we are and how difficult it has become to attract talented professors. If our universities have no flexibility and if we cannot keep pace with post-secondary institutions to the east, west and south, we will fall further behind. Let the universities compete, free them up. Standing still is moving backwards.

The vision of the Conservative party, members on this side of the House, falls much more in line. It is not a matter of not investing in education. It is a matter of investing properly. I just wanted to clarify that for the record. I would once again ask the minister why those two specific areas, the completion of an update of Rural Economic Development strategy and providing support to the development of a provincial economic strategy, have been removed from the expected results of the Program and Policy Development Branch.

* (15:10)

Hon. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): Mr. Chairman, the member wants to make a defence of his government's education policy. I think he is on very shaky ground there. I simply cannot let those kinds of comments go by the way, although they are not necessarily part of the question that he wants to pursue.

Let me remind him that his government in 1992 produced a report or at least initiated and received a report from former Premier Duff Roblin and others which talked about the importance—this was a report, incidentally, which was asked to look at universities. That report, to its credit, those gentlemen and Kathleen Richardson who did that report, to their credit said that one of the most significant things in Manitoba was the doubling of post-secondary education places, particularly in colleges.

That government, 1993, '94, '95, '96, '97, '98 and '99 ignored those provisions. Manitoba's post-secondary education system remained in exactly the same place as it was when Duff Roblin made his report. This was a government which took away the Access programs. Yours was a government which took away—Mr. Chairman, I should say, through you, this was a

government which cancelled all the bursary programs. This was a government which increased fees over 176 percent, and this member has the audacity to try and defend that strategy because it was a strategy.

He is quite right to quote the letters that he has written to the Business Council of Manitoba because it was a strategy to privatize, to exclude, to reduce the numbers of students that went to universities and post-secondary education, and it was successful. That is where there is a difference. If the member cannot accept that, then I think he needs to go back and do some more research, although frankly that may not help when you start from such an ideologically narrow perspective. We will continue to disagree on that, because I do believe the bursaries are important. I do believe that it is important to expand accessibility. I believe that it is important to invest in the infrastructure of universities and post-secondary education.

If the member wants to disregard the \$30-million investment into downtown Winnipeg and the Exchange District for the Red River College, and if he wants to disregard the millions of dollars that are being put into the University of Winnipeg, the University of Manitoba, St. Boniface College, Red River College, Assiniboine College and the University of Brandon for their infrastructure, for the decade of infrastructure that was neglected by the previous government, then let him try and defend the record of that government, because what they did was to make very clear where post-secondary education was going in Manitoba: increasing fees, deteriorating institutions, deteriorating buildings and a mockery for accessibility, and that is what happened. So we can talk further about that if the member wishes to.

Mr. Loewen: I appreciate the fact that the minister would like to have a full-blown discussion on education because that is an area no doubt she would be much more comfortable if this was the portfolio we were dealing with, but to get back to the point, once again, the members on this side of the House do recognize the importance of investing in our universities, our post-secondary education. For her to make the comment that it is not part of our vision is totally erroneous and nonsense.

I am correcting the record on that behalf. As I said, we have disagreements in policy and how to further that, then I again will correct the record. I was not quoting from a letter I wrote. I was quoting from a presentation given to the Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger) by the Business Council of Manitoba simply indicating to the minister that, although their policy was a long way from what the Business Council was recommending, certainly the policies from this side of the House would be closer.

I would ask her the question once again: What has happened to the Expected Results that were in last year's Estimates book which stated that the Expected Results from the Program and Policy Development Branch were a completion of an update to the Rural Economic Development strategy and support to the development of a provincial economic strategy? Why are those Expected Results no longer within the purview of the Program and Policy Development Branch? Have they been moved? Have they been completed or is the Government simply determined their policy is not to move ahead with these issues?

Ms. Friesen: Let me remind the member that it was he who raised post-secondary education, and no doubt he would prefer not to talk about that. I am not surprised given the record of the previous government. If the member had read what I had said last time, he would recognize that the answer was contained in what I said before.

This program is continuing. It is always the responsibility of this department, but it is something that is being worked upon with other departments across departments. I gave the names of many of the departments that were working on this including the Community and Economic Development Committee of Cabinet, including the Department of Industry, Trade and Mines, the Department of Conservation, the Department of Agriculture, trying to give the member a sense of the approach across government in rural economic development.

Yes, there is a lead section within the department. There is a lead minister on this, but it is something which must call upon the strengths, the policies and the resources of many

different departments, and that is what I said last time and that remains the basic issue.

Mr. Loewen: Well, with all of these issues the basic issue is who is expected to produce the result? I am simply asking if the Program and Policy Development Branch, if the minister expects them to continue on with that activity and they are, in fact, the lead that will produce this expected result. That seems to me a fairly simple answer.

If that is the case that is fine. I am just curious to know why it has been deleted from the Expected Results portion of the Program and Policy Development Branch in this year's departmental expenditure Estimates. If it is not here, where is it? If it is here, that is fine. And if the decision is made that it remains here but it is just not something that was printed then that is a fairly straightforward answer too. I am just looking to find out where the responsibility lies.

Ms. Friesen: I think the member is taking a very narrow definition of Rural Economic Development strategy. I think he is looking for a particular document, something between a set of covers. What I have tried to explain to the member is that this is a responsibility across the department, it is a responsibility across government and that work is proceeding in this area, that there will be a result for the public to see. There will be different opportunities for that. I regretted when I spoke last time that I was not able to give him the time, the date or the format for the final product of that but I can assure him that this section of the department, like other sections of the department, is continuing to work on this just as other departments of government are.

Well, I have interpreted it one way. Is that what he is looking for? Is he looking for a finite book at the end of this, a finite document paper? If so, I am not able to tell him when or where that would be but what I can tell him, that across government and across the department there are many areas which support, develop, expand and listen to rural Manitobans about the kinds of economic strategies that they would see, the kinds of adjustments that we can make, the kinds of changes that they need to see, the kinds of investments that they are looking for whether it is in the public or private sector.

There are many parts of the department that do that so if he is looking for a finite product then what I would say is that is something that is being worked upon across government. If he is looking for the delivery of economic development strategies then, it is something that we can look at as we move through the department, and we can see in the different areas the approach to this in community economic development or through planning where, for example, we have been dealing with the Livestock Stewardship Initiative or through other areas of the department that he may want to ask questions about.

Mr. Loewen: I thank the minister for that response, and I will take from that response that the Program and Policy Development Branch is still continuing their work on a Rural Economic Development strategy. It seems to me fairly straightforward then when an expected result is a completion of an update to the Rural Economic Development strategy one year and that is not an expected result the next year, and quite likely the expectation should be that a report was updated or produced.

If it is still being worked on, that is fine. We will make note of that, and hopefully during the course of the year the people of Manitoba, particularly those in rural Manitoba, where I can assure the minister that the concern is very high regarding the lack of a cohesive rural development strategy, economic development strategy, is of grave concern.

So I will take the information as presented by the minister and take her at her word that this, in fact, has not been a policy change, a policy shift on behalf of the Government and she is continuing to have her departmental staff work on a completion of an update to the Rural Economic Development strategy, and we will look forward to seeing that strategy in the near future.

With that, I am prepared to move on to subappropriation 13.2. with regard to the Municipal Board, and I understand that the R.M. of Macdonald has had a zoning proposal in front of the department for I believe at least a year requesting a change in zoning for the land just west of Brady Road to be rezoned from farmland to, I believe, light industrial.

This is something that has been agreed to both by the City of Winnipeg and the R.M. of Macdonald. As I understand it, letters have been exchanged between the two parties as well as with the minister. I understand that the proposal was sent to the minister, and the minister forwarded it on to the Municipal Board. I am wondering if there has been any response from the Municipal Board on the recommendations of the City and of the R.M. of Macdonald regarding the land west of Brady Road and south of McGillivray.

* (15:20)

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Chairman, there are a number of development proposals within the Capital Region, and we are discussing with the municipalities in question, where there has been a delay, some of those issues.

In this particular case, I believe that two of our staff have met with the R.M. of Macdonald, or at least not in formal council, with two of the councillors from the R.M. of Macdonald deputized to discuss this particular issue, and I do not have any response from them yet. I assume that Macdonald is going to respond to the discussions. This was very recent, Mr. Chairman. It was last week.

Mr. Loewen: Well, I am a little bit confused by the answer, because it was over a year ago that the zoning approval was passed by the Rural Municipality of Macdonald. The City, after some discussion, and, in particular, as a result of a revised plan to create a buffer between the industrial land and the housing developments to the east of Brady Road, agreed that it was satisfied with the rezoning proposal and that the proposal had been forwarded to the minister. I am just at a bit of a loss as to understand why discussions need to take place on a formal or informal basis with the R.M. of Macdonald, when the proposal has passed council and is simply waiting on approval from the minister.

It is of particular concern to a number of my constituents who have houses that back on to Brady Road, and it is of particular concern because the property that has been rezoned is up for sale now. One would assume that the sale of the land would be conditional upon the zoning of

that land. The sale of it, I am sure, is contingent upon it being classified as light industrial.

So, for the sake of the residents, and for the sake of those who are looking at this transaction, can the minister advise when this issue might be cleared up and when we can expect a decision on the rezoning application?

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Chairman, I have a few more details here. It was received in the department on November 15 last year, that of 2000. It is not I think technically a matter of rezoning. It is part of a development plan proposal, which has had second reading at council—I do not have the date of that—and then was forwarded to the minister or to the department for consideration.

As you know, we are looking at a number of issues in the Capital Region trying to resolve them as fairly as we can, and this is one of them. Staff have met with the R.M. of Macdonald to see what the issues are that may be resolved, and I think the council is responding. So I am to you looking for a specific date; I understand that. I am not able to give you one. This is longer, I think, than anyone would hope for, but certainly we know that from the R.M. of Macdonald, and I have met with them not on this issue but on general issues. I know that it is important, and they would like some resolution. So I am aware of it.

Mr. Loewen: I thank the minister for that clarification, and hopefully her department and the Municipal Board will be able to deal with the issue expeditiously to, I guess, take the uncertainty out of the question not only for the R.M. of Macdonald, but, in particular, for the residents of Whyte Ridge who back on to Brady Road and who are concerned naturally about what might happen to the property immediately adjacent to their backyards where their children play, and any possible ramifications on property values as a result of industrial construction on what was farmland, land zoned for farming when they purchased their houses.

With regard to the Municipal Board, I understand that the minister has forwarded on to the Municipal Board, Plan Winnipeg. I understand that there is some anxiety at City Hall, and maybe the minister could just advise when Plan

Winnipeg was expected to have been updated. I believe it is now two or three years late from the proposed time. Maybe the minister could just clarify that for me?

* (15:30)

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Chairman, I think the first thing to recognize is that the existing Plan Winnipeg remains in effect until a new one is approved. So it is not that we are without a Plan Winnipeg. But the member is right that this is very late. It should have been done on June 30, '98. That is when the five-year review should have been completed. I believe that the City of Winnipeg Council asked for two extensions, certainly one to '99, and then there was another one to 2000. We granted those extensions.

I think the reasons for them, first of all, one was a change in council, I believe, or a change in administrative structures within the city. There are a number of reasons I think for delays. They also indicated that they wanted the time to do some more research on a number of issues which they had identified.

So the existing Plan Winnipeg remains in effect. The one which should have been completed in 1998 has now been made public. There were some objectors. I did decide to send it to the Municipal Board. The Municipal Board has set a date for the hearing, which is June 26, just about a month from now. There are a number of objectives, as I said. There will be time required for hearings. Then once the hearings are completed, and I do not have a sense, I do not think you really do until you start the hearings, of how long they are going to take, but once they are completed on the more straightforward cases, the Municipal Board would normally take up to a month to write its report.

On the more complex cases, and I cannot advise yet whether this will be seen as a more complex case, then it might take a little longer, but that is more or less the timetable that we are on now.

Mr. Loewen: I thank the minister for that clarification. Certainly I have heard from a number of city councillors who feel that, in their

mind, the plan that they have submitted is a plan that they are prepared to live with and are not particularly interested in hearing of any adjustments to the plan imposed on them by others.

I am just wondering if the minister has had discussions with the city councillors regarding their desire to live with the plan that they have submitted. Maybe we could get a sense of strategy in terms of what will take place should the Municipal Board reach conclusions that the City Council does not agree to, because I am sure, as the minister is aware, the present plan was, I think, approved in 1993.

We are closing in on 10 years. Certainly one of the criticisms that has been levelled at the City over the course of time is that they sometimes do not pay as much attention to the plan as some citizens would like, and that development can occur in an ad hoc way. I am just trying to get a feel from the minister regarding the policy of her department with regard to ensuring that the plan gets passed and passed with the approval of City Council. Then, secondly, what strategies would be in place to, I guess, ensure that the City operates its development within the confines of that plan?

Ms. Friesen: I wanted to emphasize for the member that what we are doing may not have been done in recent years, so it may not follow the practice of previous governments. There may have been no need for previous governments to send Plan Winnipeg to the Municipal Board, but I do want to say that this is not unusual. It is not an anomaly. It is something which is due process, not only here but in other provinces which have similar kinds of processes as well.

There were, as the member knows, a number of public objections which were filed relating to various street patterns, to questioning of demographic information and trends, issues dealing with particular neighbourhoods. I think most of these are generally public. The Municipal Board will have an opportunity to review those public objections as well as to look at the due process that was undertaken at the various readings in preparation of the bill.

The member was asking whether, I am not sure how he phrased it, but was I aware that

some city councillors were not too happy with this? I was asking whether, in fact, we had had a formal representation, but certainly informally. Some have certainly told me that they are surprised at this, but, nevertheless, it is a due process, and I am glad that we have got a hearing date and that things will move forward and the public will have their opportunity to express their concerns about the plan and that we will have a board which will be able to give some reflection to that.

* (15:40)

Mr. Loewen: I certainly understand that it is part of the due process if the minister decides to go that way. She has, and that is her choice, but, again, I reiterate that I think there is real concern, at the City level that I am hearing anywhere, in particular with regard to timing. I am wondering if she has any idea or could clarify when she would expect to be in a position to pass the plan as it stands or as is amended as a result of the Municipal Board review back to City Hall.

Ms. Friesen: The unpredictable variable in this is the length of the hearings, and I really do not have a sense yet of how long those are going to be. As I said, normally, once the hearings are completed, the Municipal Board will, and again that is unpredictable. I cannot predetermine whether the Municipal Board will see this as straightforward or whether they will view some of the complexities in it and choose to deal with those. I suppose that is the second area of unpredictability, but normally they would report within a month, and that is certainly something, I think, that we have tried to emphasize.

There were quite a number of backlog, I would say, of Municipal Board reports to be had when we first came into Government for whatever reason. I think we have cleared up many of those, and we are trying to get not necessarily a standard of turnaround because every case is different but at least to move as expeditiously as we can. So, again, I am not able to give the member a finite date. It will depend upon the length of the hearings. It will depend upon the range of issues of complexity which the board will choose to look at. Then it will depend

upon the submission of that report and then consideration by Government.

Mr. Loewen: I would ask the minister to provide a list of the Municipal Board indicating the changes that have taken place during the last year as well as the Surface Rights Board, if I could at some future point get a list.

Ms. Friesen: I can probably provide the Municipal Board present membership at the moment. I am not sure that I would be able to give you all of the revocations. But I can tell you that there have been no changes to the Surface Rights Board. That is a fairly simple and straightforward one. If you will hang on a minute, we will get the Municipal Board.

First of all, the chair of the Municipal Board is Peter Diamant, and, Mr. Chairman, what I will do is I will read out the names that I have and we will check it afterwards, and if there are any that are not up to date we will let you know at the next time. The following list of board members is the one I have that is most appropriate. There is a vice-chair as well, Ms. Lori Lavoie, and there are 27 part-time members: Herve Bahuaud, Gregory Bauman, Robert Brozzell, Tom Carter, George Corbett, Douglas Dobchuk, Gabe Forest, Georgina Garrett, Ed Hart, Jim Husiak, Cyril Keeper, David Kovnats, Inongé Aliage, Ross Martin, Monique Mulaire, Jim Neil, Jack Nicol, Becky Parkes, Donald Pratt, Wendy Sigmar, Arnold Sinclair, Pat Stewart, Ram Tiwari, Sudesh Treon, Robert Upton, Marilyn Walder and Grant Wichenko. In a minute we can give you the ones taken off.

The ones who have served the Municipal Board in the past and who are no longer on the Municipal Board are: Wayne Collins, Harvey English, Constance McLean, Rens Renooy, Donna Burner, Sophie Bulbuck, Cliff Evans, Max Goldack, Christine Harapiak, Keith Hemmings and Judy Smith.

Others who were on the board and who are no longer: Albert Bilodeau, Ken Carels, Richard Edmundson, Max Friesen, Garnet Kyle, Carole Miller, Maxine Plesiuk, Wes Reimer and Henry Wiebe of Winkler, deceased. Obviously, that was just before we came into Government. So I think some of those were just before as well.

If I can take this opportunity, as I do in letters to each of these people, to thank them for their contribution. The Municipal Board is a very interesting board. It has some very weighty decisions to make and ones that certainly affect the lives of individuals in communities right across the province. So it is important that we recognize their service and thank them for in some cases a short period of service, and in some cases some people had served many years, so, Mr. Chairman, I welcome this opportunity to put that on the record as well.

Mr. Loewen: Could the minister provide me with the number of applications that are in process for mediation services by the Surface Rights Board if there are any right now?

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Chairman, we do not have any information here on any applications which are before the board this year, but I can advise the member that generally speaking this is not a board which has by any means the same kind of level of activity as the Municipal Board. In '99-2000, for example, the Surface Rights Board held two hearings and issued five orders, and I think that would not be unusual. The Surface Rights Board generally becomes involved only if the operator and the landowner are unable to negotiate mutually agreeable compensation terms related to right of entry, abandonment, et cetera. Those are the frequent issues that they deal with. Quite often these are agreed by mutual consent before they would go to the board.

Mr. Chair, if I can add, if there are ones that are currently before the board that we have missed, we will certainly let the member know.

*(15:50)

Mr. Loewen: I would like to move on to subappropriation 13-3B, Provincial Planning Services. I know we talked about the amendments to The City of Winnipeg Act that the minister tabled in the House the previous day. I guess we will wait with bated breath until we see the details of that legislation, hopefully soon.

With regard to The Forks North Portage Partnership, I wonder if the minister would have any comments to give us on her thoughts

regarding the new development plan that has been proposed by The Forks North Portage Partnership group.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Chairman, we do intend, as we did last year, to have the Forks North Portage come to a legislative committee. I think staff are trying to schedule that now. I do not have a date for that, at least I do not think staff do yet. I am hoping that all members of the Legislature will have the opportunity to discuss those with The Forks North Portage.

One of the things that I have stressed with the new chair and the new CEO was public consultation. So the short answer to the member is that I do not have comments on their plan yet. It is certainly something that I think we have received or at least some proposals for that, but I do not have any comments for him. I do want to say that the first thing that we urged are partners, because this is a partnership agreement with the federal government and the City, and that I urged, as part of a provincial policy direction, I guess I should say, public consultation.

The Forks most recently, I think, had given rise to concern. Some of its policies had given rise to concern in the community generally, and it was particularly focussed around housing. I think some of the issues came out of the blue to the general public, and that was part of the reason for the reaction. It was not the only reason by any means.

One of the things that I had wanted to urge upon our partners and The Forks generally is the importance of keeping in touch with the public, and that can be done in many ways, but there had not been a public consultation on planning issues, on general direction for quite some time. We did have an opportunity, as a new government coming in, to say, well, let us get back to those kinds of connections. I do not want to imply that all connections with the public were lost. That would not be true.

Some of the committees of The Forks continue. They continue to work with Aboriginal people on South Point. They continue to work with their heritage committee on some of the heritage issues, but I think in terms of having a public face to the general public, as being open

to the longer-range planning, it was something that had not been visited very recently, so that was something that we wanted to move on.

I am very pleased to see that The Forks indeed has done that. It held open houses. It held public meetings. I think I have read some of the reports from that. They were at North Portage, for example. They held them at The Forks. They had a few other locations, and a very interesting range of responses from people who came to the open houses. I think, you know, if the plan reflects some of those, then I think they will be part way to where we need to be, and that is in listening to the general public and ensuring that the public has a sense of ownership for The Forks North Portage. That is my general sense of the direction The Forks has gone in the past year.

They also did come and speak to a legislative committee last year. It was not something that had been happening on an annual basis. It certainly happened from time to time, and I did want to get that back on a regular schedule.

Mr. Loewen: I thank the minister for that update. I agree that the new leadership, both at the board level and CEO level at The Forks North Portage, is working diligently to get input, not only from the public, but I know we had the opportunity to have a presentation of the development plan at caucus, and we are certainly appreciative of that.

I think the feedback that I have heard is, for the most part, very positive with two possible exceptions. I am just wondering if the minister could give us her thoughts on what seems to be the two contentious areas and perhaps explain the Province's policy with regard to that; one, in particular, being that age-old argument of housing at The Forks, and it is always a hot button for the public. I am just curious to know if there is a policy position taken by the provincial government with regard to housing at The Forks, understanding that it can take many forms.

Just to speak to that for a minute, I think, once again, unfortunately the image of the city took a bit of a beating last year when after inviting a developer from Calgary to spend time

and effort and money on a proposal for housing at The Forks under the—and I may need to be corrected on the date. It might have been 18 months to two years ago, and unfortunately, the developer went to all the trouble and expense of developing a plan for housing, only to find out when he brought the plan to the City that the City, and, in particular, the three partners in The Forks North Portage, had no desire to have housing at The Forks.

Unfortunately, we have a developer now who probably does not have much intention of looking at doing any more development in the city of Winnipeg. It is not a reflection of whether it was a good plan or a bad plan, but hopefully we will not get into a situation again where we invite developers to make proposals and to spend money only to be told well, we really did not want to go down that road in any event.

So I guess what I am looking for in this particular issue is some indication from the Province whether they have a policy regarding housing at The Forks site at this particular time, or whether, in fact, they are opposed to any form of housing development at The Forks site.

Ms. Friesen: Let me say that the views of what should happen at The Forks and how The Forks are considered is something which has changed over the last decade. I think the issue the member refers to of the developer from Calgary who was perhaps encouraged to submit bids and then ran into unexpected difficulties, it is something which happened under the previous government.

Its end may have been played out as we were in government, but I think all of the encouragement and initiation began earlier. I think it was an indication, it was an example of The Forks getting away from the public. I think if they had kept up the public consultation they would have been aware of, as the member says, the hot-button nature of housing at The Forks and the very wide range of viewpoints on this.

As far as the provincial position goes, again, we are part of a partnership so we do try to work with the other levels of government on this, and we have not had the opportunity to discuss with them either the responses to their open houses as

a partnership or to the overall plan. I anticipate that we will be doing that as shareholders and as partners in these proposals.

I should say that I was on The Forks board myself, and the member can look back at those early plans which three levels of government worked on, three different political stripes. Again, I was about to characterize the City's political stripe, but I do not think I will do that.

When I was on the board, the partners at that point did propose housing, the first five-year plan for The Forks did propose housing. It had housing down at the riverbank in the area beyond The Forks national park. It had proposals for housing up by the highline. It had even the prospect of housing at the south point that might be proposed, might be considered by an Aboriginal group as part of whatever proposals they might have for that. It was not ruling that out.

So there were a number of options for housing in the beginning, and I think one of the considerations around that was that housing be varied, that it not just be the high-end riverfront condo housing, but that there be housing for—I think in those days it was referred to as, and this is the early 1980s, third-order housing. I do not know if that term is still used.

* (16:00)

I anticipate for market reasons that that housing was never built and that other projects went ahead at The Forks of various types. There has not been the Aboriginal project yet that I think every Forks board member has wanted to see happen, but certainly there has been a great deal that has occurred that has captured the imaginations of Winnipeggers, and indeed of Manitobans generally.

I was interested to read yesterday of Canada Post identifying 10 tourism sites across Canada; it has identified The Forks as the Manitoba tourism site. Obviously, it is not the only one, but it is one that they have chosen as a recognizable one, and there will be a postage stamp of The Forks. I think that certainly would be approved and appreciated by many Manitobans, even those who come from outside

the city of Winnipeg. It is a place that people go and visit and it has succeeded as a people place in that context.

Housing, however, never became a part of it until the proposals of the late '90s I guess it was, and then I think what you have in public opinion, the expression of public opinion whether it was at City Council, whether it was in public meetings or in letters to the editor, was a real sense of ownership of The Forks. In part, I think that had been engendered by many of the projects that have gone before, whether it was the waterfront, whether it was the amenities that have been built there or the national park site. I think a lot of those over the long haul have built that kind of public support.

Mr. Jim Rondeau, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair

In addition, the Pan Am Games and the decision of the organizers of the Pan Am Games to hold ceremonies both musical, free musical events, and ceremonies at The Forks each night, I think, pushed that home. That was a very good part of the Pan Am Games, and it brought home to Winnipeggers the central importance in terms of gathering place that The Forks had come to have, and made it much more concrete in their minds about what kind of place they thought The Forks had begun.

You have to remember, if you go back 10 or 15 years now when The Forks began, it was a place of cinders. It was the old railway tracks. The old roundhouse was there, that is now the Children's Museum. I remember, as an early board member, actually going down in the spring to look at the roundhouse, and there were a couple of guys in there, one of whom, it turned out, I knew and who worked at CN. He explained to me how they had worked in that roundhouse and how the floor had never been built. It was a mud floor, and it froze and thawed in the spring and in the fall, and really had been for 80 or 90 years much as we saw it then. I thought it had actually deteriorated, but, no, those were the basic ways in which the roundhouse operated.

It was not a place that people had many great expectations from. It was not place that

people really thought that they would come to. So, I think, over 15 years, there has been quite a shift. People, at that time, much as they may do on other major public projects, were very sceptical about the investment of public monies at all levels of government and of the partnership that was being formed which was relatively new, too. We had core area agreements, but we had not had tripartnerships, I think, involved on an almost daily basis in the running of first one and then both major facilities in Winnipeg. So there was a lot of experimentation all around, a great deal of scepticism, I think, a gradual adoption by the public of The Forks as a central site and then the Pan Am Games actually making that visible and making it much more concrete in people's minds.

I think, whereas people in the 1980s accepted, with some scepticism, the possibility of some housing at The Forks, I think there has been a shift in that, and there is again scepticism but for different reasons. Some of that, I think, was expressed at the open houses. Some of it was not. There is a body of opinion which looks at False Creek. False Creek was not necessarily the only model that The Forks was based upon. We did look, at that time, at a number of what were called in those days "festive markets." False Creek has some advantages. One of its main advantages, interestingly enough, is not just housing, but it is the Emily Carr School of Art that is there that brings students and young people in on a daily basis, not necessarily living down there. But they are very much present, and then you also have the spin-off galleries and workshops that are so much a part of the visiting pattern at Emily Carr. It is interesting, actually, that The Forks new plan has some adaptations of those ideas of galleries. You also find them at Queen's Key in Toronto as well.

Mr. Chairperson in the Chair

I think there is body of opinion still which says you still have to get people downtown. You have to get people either living or coming on a regular basis. To some extent, it is hard to say what kind of impact 2000 students at Red River in the Exchange District will have on The Forks. I know that The Forks is very much aware of that and trying to build those links between the city and The Forks generally.

I have been interested and have often told the story of some teenagers that I met out in Fort Richmond, and I asked them: When do you come downtown? Well, never, never came downtown. Went to movies out at Cinema City. Went to St. Vital. Never came downtown. Well, do you ever go to The Forks? Well, of course, they went to The Forks, but, in their mind, it was not downtown. So those connections, and I think everyone is aware, have to be rebuilt both psychologically and physically. It is one of the issues that Winnipeg has always faced as a downtown region, which is very disparate and quite distant compared to downtowns such as Calgary or even Edmonton.

However, I digress. Housing, summarizing here, Mr. Chairman, was that there are diverse views. Housing was in the original plan. What I would like is the opportunity to read the discussions of the open houses and to talk with our partners about where these fit in the overall plan for The Forks.

My sense is generally that there is some public acceptance of some housing. I think there is a public, more than scepticism, I think there is a hostility to waterfront housing, the idea that the waterfront should be owned or occupied by only a few. I do not know whether the open houses actually asked the question about the third order of housing of some versions of different kinds of housing, accessible housing or however we want to describe that. But my sense is that there may well be some support for that. It is for a diversity of housing, but we will see what discussions we have for the partners.

I would be interested if the member had some advice on that. I know he has had a long connection with Centre Plan and with planning for downtown generally. Is there any advice he would like to offer or if he would perhaps be interested in discussing this with the CEO and possibly the chairman? Obviously, we do not know whether the chairman will be here for the legislative hearing, but I think that would be a good time to open up the discussion.

* (16:10)

Mr. Loewen: I thank the minister for that, and I thank her for opening the door. Maybe I will give her some advice.

My only comment really would be that I know the housing is always a contentious issue. Certainly one of the challenges for the City of Winnipeg and for The Forks for that matter is getting people downtown on a regular basis, and certainly people living in the area 24 hours a day would be a big plus. I guess my main advice to the minister—and I have shared this advice with both the chair and the CEO at The Forks North Portage—if we do continue discussion on it would be that it seems to me from my research that most of the successful downtown revitalizations have certainly included a housing component, and as the minister mentioned, a diverse housing component that would include housing for I guess a very wide strata of the public. Certainly it cannot be based on just seniors condos or just students but a combination of all of those, including people who want to live and work in downtown and those who want to live downtown and work elsewhere.

As we travel across North America I think one of the obvious factors for a city like Winnipeg, we are the only city in North America that I know of that has a major university downtown and yet we do not seem to have any students downtown. Although they come for classes, they seem to disappear pretty quickly. I think that is a real challenge and again one that I think is being taken on by the president of the university in terms of some of the housing redevelopment that she is trying to encourage.

I would say the same thing about the redevelopment of Red River College which in itself is a step forward but I believe will only be successful if some way is found to encourage the students who come to that particular institution, particularly from outside Winnipeg, to live in close proximity to the facility so that we do build the mass of people in that downtown area. One of the challenges, as the minister mentioned, is the fact that it is spread out geographically over a rather large area for the population that is there, so it is a matter of building concentration.

The other issue with regard to The Forks, and I am sure the minister is aware, we get into discussion all the time about it, is, of course, parking. Certainly there has been an indication from people who want convenient and next-door access to the Children's Museum, particularly for

their strollers and moving young children, and I am sure the development plan will have to take that into account as well.

One more area with regard to The Forks North Portage Partnership, and it particularly involves North Portage. I was shown a document which indicated that at some point during the discussion of the feasibility of building a new arena-entertainment complex in downtown Winnipeg there was some discussion, at least at the provincial level, with regard to possibly selling off the North Portage asset as one means of funding the construction of the arena. Well, maybe just leave it there and ask the minister if that continues to be under discussion or whether that plan has been shelved for the time being.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Chairman, to comment, first of all, on the parking issue that the member raised, because it is certainly something that people have raised with me. I think we have probably had copies of the same letters. It is a concern particularly for parents around the Children's Museum, and I know that some of the vendors also have some concerns about the nature of parking as do some seniors as well. It is interesting and it is one of the difficulties and challenges that The Forks faces because there is certainly a desire for new facilities, new amenities, but there is also a desire to have very close parking. It is one of the things I think that has made The Forks very attractive to such a wide range of people.

In the original plans, and I go back to that, the intent originally was to have constructed parking but again up by the high line, an area where I think The Forks is also looking at parking now. Anyway, we will see where they go with it. I just want to assure the member that The Forks board has taken note of these concerns, and I understand that they are or will be undertaking a parking study and that they are doing this in conjunction with all of the tenants, I think, of The Forks site. So it is possible that by the time we have them at the legislative committee that they may be some way into that and have a sense of how some of those issues might be resolved.

But I think, again, it is a very good example of the public process, that people I think know

where to write, know who to contact. They know that it is a partnership of three levels of government, that in a sense they have public representation on that board and that they can have some impact on that.

On the issue of the potential "sale of North Portage," I think what I can say on that is that that is not how the arena is being financed. I think the member is aware of that, and there are no plans to do that.

Mr. Loewen: Well, I thank the minister for that. I take it from her answer that those discussions were shelved. However, there has been a recent, I guess, change in senior management and ownership structure of Consolidated Properties which has led to new management of the shopping centre. I know at one point there was consideration, and certainly I think even to the point where an offer had been made, by Consolidated Properties to buy the North Portage structure.

I just wonder if there are any discussions underway at the present time involving either Consolidated or other corporations, because I also realize at one point there was an offer from I think the Ellman group in the States to buy that property from The Forks North Portage Partnership. I am just wanting to know if there are any discussions currently underway with regard to a possible sale of the shopping centre assets that we commonly refer to as north Portage shopping centre.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Chairman, no, to the best of my knowledge there are no discussions like that and there are no offers.

Mr. Loewen: I thank the minister for that. That I guess concludes the questions I would have on the Forks North Portage Partnership. Just in closing on that issue, I would like to offer my congratulations to both the chair and the CEO on the work that they have done over the last year. I think it is a year and a half. It has certainly come a long way. We are looking forward to seeing some positive results from their work.

At the same time, I offer our condolences to Bill Norrie, who is, I am sure, devastated with the loss of another son. We wish him well, and

our thoughts and prayers are with him, as I am sure they are from all members of the House.

With regard to the Capital Region report, I understand that the minister has passed that on basically or the responsibility for the Capital Region review to, I am not just exactly sure what their title is these days, but the organizations of reeves and mayors and councillors from the surrounding districts. I am just wondering if she could give us an update on the status of the Capital Region review and what is being undertaken at the present time.

* (16:20)

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Chairman, I just wanted to advise the member that we have not turned over responsibility. The responsibility for the Capital Region still obviously remains within the department. What we have done is met with the mayors and reeves of the Capital Region. I believe I have another meeting with them very shortly. The mayors and reeves of the Capital Region are a group the previous government, I do not know whether they formed them but that they certainly met with consistently, who are composed of representatives of each of the municipalities, including the City of Winnipeg. So we have met with them from time to time since we have been in government.

At the most recent meeting, what I did was propose to them a Capital Region planning initiative. This I think bears some discussion. What we are trying to do here is, if I can talk of it organically to begin with, we are trying to draw on some of the advice and some, but not all, of the elements of public discussion and planning that have gone on around the Capital Region over the last decade or so.

One of the first things I think that informed our action was the COSDI report. The member is familiar with that, I am sure. It is the sustainable development public process, which developed a lot of recommendations for government in many different departments. One of the ones that is certainly applicable to this department is the recommendation for large-area planning. The member, in effect, was looking at this when he talked about conservation districts yesterday, larger-area planning in areas around issues

dealing with land, with watershed, with soil. You know, these issues do not stop at humanly imposed boundaries. You do have to have larger areas and ways of dealing politically and administratively with the issues which cross boundaries all the time, whether it is water or soil or transport, et cetera.

So COSDI was recommending to the Province of Manitoba that we begin large-area planning, and the Province has begun that through its Capital Region initiative. It is also beginning it on the east side of Lake Winnipeg. One of the things for any planning process, and certainly emphasized by COSDI, was public process, public participation. I do not think in planning across Manitoba that it is necessarily going to take identical routes; that is, the method may not be identical on the east side of Lake Winnipeg say compared to the Capital Region, or if we were to do large-area planning in other areas of Manitoba such as the COSDI report recommended. Nevertheless, I think that would be one strand of thought that I would suggest.

Secondly, there were more specific Capital Region reviews in the previous 10 years, one which dealt with sustainability, another which came out with proposals for a particular kind of legislation of an association for the Capital Region municipalities. That was the most recent Scarth report. It was not all that was in the Scarth report, but it was one of the major conclusions. It was not one that I think all the municipalities were comfortable with, and it is not a direction that we chose to take.

What we did decide to do was to take some of the material from earlier reports, to look at the concern for sustainability, to look at some of the approaches to sustainability, some of the maps and research that had been done by previous reviews, and to try and begin to pull those together for the development of a regional plan. What we anticipate at the end of this process, a year and a half to two years from now, is a regional plan, the large-area planning that COSDI recommended.

How do we get there? We get there as COSDI recommended, as in any good planning process recommends you do it through public participation, through the gathering of information, the documenting of research, and the

moving of people towards, where possible, a general consensus. So that is the process that we have embarked upon.

I met at the end of January with the mayors and reeves of the Capital Region and laid out some of these proposals to them, and we are responding as well to the mayors and reeves of the Capital Region who had in an earlier meeting, I cannot remember the date, but it was before Christmas, talked about the importance, *[interjection]* in the fall, of the Province taking leadership in the Capital Region. They had seen over the last number of years a number of reports, but they felt that the Province needed to take leadership out of these reports; that is, take from these reports a direction.

The areas that they thought the Province could lead in is in research, the gathering and dissemination of commonly agreed-upon data and databases. So one of the things that we have already done is to create a Web site, begun to gather the data that already exists, some of which is generally agreed upon, some of which is not, and to pull that together in a Capital Region Web site so that we, whether we live in Stonewall or Selkirk or Springfield, that we have a common set of information about transport routes, about waste water systems, about septic fields, about density, about zoning plans, et cetera, for the Capital Region municipalities and that we are all more or less on the same playing field.

We also have taken leadership in the—and again, this is something that the mayors and reeves proposed to us, and we accepted. Do the data, they said; do the research; take the leadership in developing a plan and, as well; appoint a regional planner. No single municipality can do that. Co-operatively they could, but that would take some time, and what they saw as a provincial role because there are many provincial planners, not as many as there have been in the past, but certainly many provincial planners and this is a department, in part, of planning, is to appoint either a department of regional planning for the Capital Region or at least a Capital Region planner.

We have done that, and we have appointed a planner from within the department, Jennifer

Rogers, who is the planner for the Capital Region and who can draw upon staff within the planning department for specific projects, and I assume as we get closer to the end of this process, for greater assistance in developing the final policies.

The Province will be continuing to take leadership in those two areas, but in order to develop the public consultation which is a major part of any planning process, we have suggested that we would form what is called, for short, RPAC, the Regional Planning Advisory Committee.

The use of the term "advisory" in there—they are advisory to the minister—has, however, led some people to suggest that this is just another advisory body. This is not the case. This is a body which has a goal in sight. It is not, I have this opportunity again to say, this is not another level of government. One of the things we heard very loudly and clearly from municipalities generally was they do not want to see another level of government. They do want to see regional planning, but they do not want to see another level of government.

So, yes, it does certainly advise the minister but it is going to do much more than that. What it will be doing is holding the public hearings, deciding upon the nature of public consultation as they move along. I do not want to anticipate how the Chair will proceed, but the tools that he or she can call from are holding small groups, holding workshops, presenting interim papers, getting some sense of direction from the public, and doing that in different parts of the Capital Region and with different entities; whether there is a planning council, whether it is part of a conservation district, whether it is a single municipality or the City of Winnipeg.

* (16:30)

I did think that was something that a provincial government department would not be necessarily well advised to do on its own. It was something that a publicly appointed body which has a finite life, two years, and a plan will be produced, and at the end of that two years I anticipate that their job will be over.

We expect the planning policies will address issues within the Capital Region, whether they are issues dealing with growth, and I have

emphasized in all of my speeches about the Capital Region that we want to see this region grow, that we see Winnipeg and its region as very important, as any government would, to the economic future and economic direction of Winnipeg, and that we want to see this as a growing region. It has not been for some years, as a region, and we do want to see that regional growth which will benefit everyone, both the City, its surrounding municipalities, and indeed, the province as a whole.

So, we are looking from the basis of growth. We are looking at the importance of sustainability and even the possibility of through the mechanisms of a plan offering opportunities for tax-sharing agreements, such as are beginning to emerge in other parts of the province, as well as for mediation and conflict resolution such as many municipalities are involved in already.

So I anticipate that the board, when it is announced, will take a look at the task that it has been set. I hope they will not throw up their hands in horror at the task they have been given but that they will be able to, over the period that we have suggested, produce a plan for the Capital Region.

We have not announced the names of those appointed yet. There are still one or two people who have been approached and are making up their minds. This is something I would have liked to have done earlier but I hope that it will be concluded very soon, and by very soon I mean within the next two to three weeks. So we are looking at that. It is a group of people whom I anticipate will represent the interests of all the Capital Region. The simplest thing would be to have the list of names and for the members and the public to judge that I know, and I hope that we can do that very quickly. But my intent is to represent the Capital Region's interests generally through this advisory council.

Mr. Loewen: I thank the minister for that clarification. We will certainly look forward to the announcement and to the list of names. I am sure the board will be representative of the area. I guess just again from a personal point of view, I am a little surprised at what I see is the lack of direction that has been given so far. Prior to becoming an elected official certainly my

interpretation of the newspaper reports that I read over the course of the years I certainly got the indication that both the minister and the Premier (Mr. Doer), when they were in Opposition, had some very strong views in terms of Capital Region development and what types of limits should be placed on development within the region and particularly on the periphery of the city of Winnipeg, with the hopeful result I guess that some type of limit on that type of development would maybe encourage some or further revitalization of the inner city and of the core for developers in and around the city of Winnipeg waiting one to two years for, I guess, maybe a first report from the regional planning advisory committee, I am sure might prove to be extremely frustrating.

In the meantime, no doubt there will be plans. I think we have seen some in the last year for developments in the Birds Hill area, as well as, I am sure, other development plans for areas in the surrounding area. I am wondering if in the interim the minister has developed a policy with regard to dealing with these issues or whether everything is just in limbo and will be dealt with on an ad hoc basis over the course of the next couple of years while we wait for the report, and maybe what direction she would give not only to municipalities but to developers who are looking at the possibility of doing some type of development. What advice would she give those municipalities or developers on the advisability of moving ahead with plans that may already be in the works?

Ms. Friesen: I was interested and glad that the member linked the issues of the inner city with the Capital Region because that is certainly how many people do interpret it. I had forgotten to say that part of the approach to dealing with the whole issue of regional growth is to begin in the inner city.

There are, I think, certainly very deep concerns about the future of the inner city of Winnipeg and its impact upon the general economic growth of both Winnipeg and the region. That is why—and I did want to explain the sequence to him—we did begin our programs from this department in Neighbours Alive! in the inner city of Winnipeg. Not just in this department but across government too, I think there have been very strong efforts to try to, in

our case, rebuild capacity and, in the case of the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Sale), to put together a partnership that would begin to rebuild housing in some of the areas.

I think we are all well aware that this is not something that is going to turn on a dime, that there will not be magic overnight. This is a long-term process, but we did begin that process. Those were the first steps. As we look at the regional growth overall, obviously we wanted next to look at the issues that people have raised over the years and in numerous reports of the previous government about the Capital Region and about the future of the Capital Region.

I emphasized in my approach that we want to see the region grow. I think the member is aware of the steps that we have taken in immigration. We have certainly built on efforts, not just in this province but in others and not just this Government but others to give greater flexibility and direction at a provincial level to immigration. I certainly see that in the context not just of areas of the province where immigration is already expanding but also in the Winnipeg region as well.

In many departments of the Government, I think there are issues which do affect the Capital Region and which will be harnessed to help growth in the region as a whole.

Improvements to downtown, the rebuilding of housing, of capital infrastructure, the development of attractions in downtown, whether they are entertainment centres or community colleges, I think all of these will have some impact. The steps that the University of Winnipeg has taken that the member made reference to, the expansion of their housing program in downtown Winnipeg, I think is very, very good. It is an example of the kind of thing that can be done by many different organizations to build a commitment to making downtown work in many different ways, whether it is through commerce or through residents or through institutions. I think there is beginning to be that sense of direction across the city and perhaps even in a larger sense across the province.

* (16:40)

The member asked about essentially are things going to be on hold. What should developers and municipalities do while we wait for this report. It is a good question. I have been out and spoken about this in the early spring to the association of rural municipalities. I spoke recently at the University of Winnipeg at a forum that was very well attended on planning issues across government. What I am saying there I will say to the member as well. That is that we will be looking for the moment at issues on a case-by-case basis. We will be trying to solve things as quickly as we can, but mindful that there is a larger process that is moving ahead.

I am, I think, certainly mindful of the concerns that there are there in some areas about prospects for the future. The sooner that we can set out those guidelines and the sooner that we can get a general consensus on what is healthy for the region as a whole I think the better off we will all be.

What I did in next steps, and again I emphasize this in speaking to each of the groups, is that the principles or goals that we are working on, however you want to describe them, that is the sense, first of all, of the importance of growth for everyone, the importance of equity in growth, the importance of sustainability and the importance of efficiency. I think these are all general principles that Manitobans and Winnipeggers would agree to. How do we put them into effect? That is a lot tougher.

That is where we are, but what we have done is I think enunciated the sense of direction that we have. I hope that we will be able to meet some of those with the advice of citizens and generally with the consent and consensus of municipalities who are aware of their interdependence, who in some cases have already begun to act co-operatively in areas of waste management or, last year for example, in mosquito abatement programs.

So I do not want to be overboard in claiming that the province is the only actor in this. It is not. We were asked to take the leadership in some areas. We have. We I think have tried to draw on the best and will continue to try and do that, to draw on the best of what was done

before. We did not proceed with the legislation that Mr. Scarth had proposed. It was our sense in meeting with people that that was not the direction that people wanted to go, but this is not to say, nevertheless, that there are not other areas where there was solid advice that we will be mindful of. The bigger picture is, of course, the development of larger area planning processes across the province, and this is one of the area ones.

Let me say that what we are trying to do is to deal with things on a case-by-case basis, mindful of a larger process that is proceeding, trying not to do—as I always tell my kids, do not cut off your options. I have two contradictory pieces of advice for them which they have pointed out to me are quite contradictory. One is, do not go anywhere with anyone, and the other one is, keep your options open. They pointed out that these are quite contradictory and how could I continue to provide parental advice like that, but since they are all quite old now it does not matter.

Case-by-case basis, trying to deal as pragmatically as possible to keep the options open for the longer view that we hope will be within a reasonable time frame, and I guess one other piece I wanted to add, because I had not mentioned this before, is that I have emphasized to the mayors and reeves, both of the City of Winnipeg and of the rural municipalities and of the towns that are in the Capital Region, that we do anticipate that this set of guidelines or land use policies or whatever comes in the final call on this, that these will apply to the City of Winnipeg as well as to the municipalities and we do not anticipate that these will overrule the—let me put it a better way.

There were certainly municipalities at the beginning who thought that, well, they would not have planning districts anymore or that they would not have their own development plans or that they would lose their autonomy. Obviously, as you start looking at regional issues and regional planning, those are not unexpected kinds of fears. I did want to put their fears at rest. There will still be district plans. We are encouraging and we have had I think some good success in that, in encouraging people to become

part of planning districts. There will still be municipal plans. There will still be five-year reviews of those plans. So we are not attempting here, it is not our intent to take away from local decision making. I do believe very strongly in that, but what we are saying is there is a broader context here. If this region is to grow in a sustainable manner, then we are going to have to agree on a set of guidelines or land use principles that will enable us to do that in an efficient and sustainable manner.

Mr. Loewen: I thank the minister for that. Certainly that was raised by the Business Council of Manitoba, too, in their budget submission, that certainly the province as a whole suffers from a lack of growth and, I guess, a growth rate that is far too small to continue to develop to our full economic potential.

I appreciate the minister's answer. I would hope though that just before leaving this section that we would see some action as quickly as possible. Certainly, when I see the traffic flowing into the city of Winnipeg down McGillivray and on Wilkes every morning increasing and out every evening, there certainly are more and more people who are taking advantage of what they would consider a rural lifestyle in an urban setting or close to an urban setting perhaps. I am sure that it is not only causing pressure on the railway crossings that we seem to be lacking the infrastructure for but it is I am sure causing pressure on the tax rolls and the other areas with regard to the city. So, while I am disappointed that we do not have stronger action immediately, I guess we will just have to wait.

I would like to move on to subappropriation 13-4B, Assessment Services, and would ask the minister if any revision is being planned to the assessment practices on condominiums. It is certainly an issue that is raised by condominium dwellers, who see an inequity in the assessment on their property. I just wondered if the minister has any information to share with regard to possible changes to the act that would involve changes to the assessment of condominiums.

* (16:50)

Ms. Friesen: If I can introduce a new staff member here, Ken Graham, who is the provincial assessor.

I have met, as have a number of ministers because both Housing and Consumer and Corporate Affairs I understand have responsibilities in issues that condo owners are raising—and I am sure the member is aware, these are not new issues. They have been there for some time. They are difficult issues. There is no doubt about it. They are not the only assessment issues that are difficult, but they are one of the ones that are difficult. They do require I think a very careful analysis.

I have met on at least one occasion and staff have been present at several meetings over the last 18 months with condo owners. I think we are aware of the questions that they are raising. I know that their association is diligently pursuing and I think at their most recent meeting I had with them that they had somebody, an advisor, as well, from outside.

I do not have any announcements for the member. I think it would be misleading to suggest that there would be a solution soon. All I can say is we are aware of it, that staff are working on it, have been working on it for some time. I hope that there are some options that will be fair to everyone, but we are not there yet.

Mr. Loewen: I thank the minister for that. I guess I will not ask her to define "soon." It sounds like it could be a while off.

I would like to move on to 13-5, Economic and Community Development Services, and, in particular, I think we have touched on the Water Services Board, so we will not go back there. 13-5C, Regional Development Services.

Ms. Friesen: We are trying to juggle staff here. I was wondering if the member might have any more questions dealing with assessment, or assessment-type issues. I do not necessarily want to hold you to it. It is a question of managing.

Mr. Loewen: I do not believe I do. I just want to take a minute and go through some of the other subappropriations to make sure that I do not. No, I think that is it for assessment questions. Perhaps if anything else does come up, we may look for an answer in writing or something, do it

that way, hopefully not to waste any more of Mr. Graham's time.

With regard to page 61 of the departmental expenditures Estimates book, under section 13-5C, Regional Development Services, the item listed under estimate of expenditures indicates that last year it was \$781,400. In last year's book it was listed at \$1,324,900. I wonder if the minister could reconcile the discrepancy between the estimate given—oh, I am sorry, I am slipping here. The estimate expenditure—let me correct that—in 1999-2000 was \$1,324,900. That estimate has dropped to \$781,000 in the 2000-2001 expenditure and \$757,000 in the 2001-2002. I wonder if the minister could indicate what caused the reduction in the expenditure in that particular area.

* (17:00)

Ms. Friesen: Sorry for taking so long. We have not forgotten the question, but I am not sure that we actually have the answer, because we are not clear what the member is actually looking at. I am not sure if we are on the same page. Is the member on page 67 of the Estimates book? No. Well, then, that is our first problem. Which page, Mr. Chairman, is the member on?

Mr. Loewen: I am not telling. Page 61, 13-5, which is the summary of that area.

Ms. Friesen: We are still struggling with comparing these numbers. I think part of the problem is that there was a reorganization into three divisions on that side, and so that, although there was no reduction in monies for programs or for staff, it certainly moved into the three different divisions that I talked about right at the beginning, the Planning Division, the Community Economic Development, and the Municipal Finance Services.

We will take the question under advisement, as it will appear in Hansard, and see if we can sort it through, working from page 57. Is that right? Those are the numbers that matter. We will do our best to come up with the response by next time.

Mr. Loewen: I thank the minister for that. I would like to move on to 13-5C, Regional

Development Services, and, in particular, talk about initially the Grow Bonds Program, which is an activity identified under this section. As I mentioned in the opening statement, I have some fairly serious concern with regard to what seems to be an inactivity with regard to Grow Bonds over the course of the last year in particular.

I am wondering, and we raised this issue in the House when legislation was introduced with regard to expanding the Grow Bonds Program to the City of Winnipeg, and concern on this side of the House that that would spread the emphasis and perhaps spread the staff too thin to a point where, in effect, some of the emphasis on Grow Bonds that had been placed as a method of stimulating the rural economy would get lost in the process.

It certainly appears at first glance that that prediction may have come true. I just would ask the minister if there has been a change in policy with regard to the Grow Bonds Program. In general, I would ask her why the lack of activity with regard to Grow Bonds, particularly during the last year.

Ms. Friesen: The member and I will have to disagree on that. Perhaps we could put some numbers on the record and give him a sense of the history of the program. I certainly agree with him that it is a valuable program. It is one that we have maintained. Indeed, the chair of the Grow Bonds board is somebody who was appointed by the previous government. I am very grateful to him that he has stayed on and continued to work. I think there is a great valuing of this program in rural Manitoba.

As the member knows, we intend to make this available to people in the city of Winnipeg. We have not done that yet. I remember when we introduced the legislation, we had a debate over my caution and the member opposite having less caution on this. Those are two different approaches.

However, here are the numbers. The Grow Bonds Program was introduced. It is a program which has comparisons in Saskatchewan and other provinces. There are differences in Manitoba. I think overall it has been a very successful program in Manitoba. I think British

Columbia recently adapted it from the Manitoba program as well.

In 1991-92—I will use the first year as I am going through. So in 1991 there was one Grow Bond approved, and that was the first year of it. In '92 there was one Grow Bond. In '93, and you can see for the next two years, '93 there were six approved, and '94 there were seven. So there you have got the program up and running and great interest in it and activity. In '95 there were three, '96, there were two Grow Bonds; '97 was one; '98, there were two; '99, there were two; 2000, there is one Grow Bond; this fiscal year we have announced two. All of these are in rural Manitoba. I am just puzzling here, Mr. Chair, over those last numbers. I believe since we have been in office we have announced two, both in rural Manitoba, one in Crystal Springs, the other in eastern Manitoba.

So that was the basis for my expression of surprise in my responses yesterday. The member thought I think perhaps that it should be operating at a much more frequent level. I do not believe that the level it is at now, which is two Grow Bonds in the last 18 months, is that different from let us say 1995-1996. So you did get a bump when the program was first begun. Of course, some of those are still be carried. It seems to me that this would be a normal expectation for a program of this kind. As projects come forward they are evaluated thoroughly. As the member knows one of the advantages of this program is that it is local people who are interested and who know the proponents, who know the nature of the work, who know the nature of the entrepreneurs who are developing it, who know them in many different ways and probably over possibly even more than one generation.

So it is a program with very strong local input and local applicability. We are committed, as the member can see, to continuing to encourage Grow Bonds as one part of rural economic development. It is not the only part. There are obviously still many elements of REDI which expand opportunities for rural communities as well as the kinds of expansion that we have put and that I have talked about already on programs that previously existed and were developed by the previous government, whether

those were the Community Works Loan Program or the youth entrepreneurs program. So this is one part. It is not by any means the only one. It is one option for rural Manitobans. They are continuing to see it as part of their future.

We have also made a commitment and have kept that commitment to keep the Grow Bonds office in Altona even though it would also be dealing eventually with Winnipeg applicants as well, because, as the member has said, there is a very strong rural attachment to this program and there is a symbolic value to the program as well in that there is an ownership of it by many people in rural Manitoba, particularly in some communities. I hope that those numbers perhaps explain my surprise at the member's desire to suggest that this was an inactive program.

* (17:10)

Mr. Loewen: I thank the minister for that information. With regard to the extension of the Grow Bond program to Winnipeg, could the minister update us as to where we are at with that.

Ms. Friesen: Yes, as the member knows, the new legislation was put in place in August of 2000 allowing the Community Development Bonds Program, as it is called now, to be delivered in the city of Winnipeg. The program regulations are currently being devised and revised to reflect the new legislation and to provide the framework for delivery in Winnipeg. Once we have those in place, we will be able to proceed with projects in Winnipeg. We hope that it will be as useful a tool, one of a number of tools that Winnipeggers will have access to.

As the member knows, we have also contributed to SEED Winnipeg, to the Jubilee Fund and to a number of projects for community development and entrepreneurial development in some parts of the city. So, again, there are a number of initiatives that are going on around entrepreneurial and community economic development, of which I hope we will have these regulations in place so there is an additional tool for Winnipeggers.

Mr. Loewen: With regard to the REDI program, could the minister advise the number of grants

and the amount of grants that were given to businesses in the past year?

Ms. Friesen: The two programs that are in REDI, which are applicable to community accessibility, are feasibility studies, and I can give the member the numbers on those. In the fiscal year 2000-2001, there were 42 feasibility studies approved. That would be for \$319,152. If I can give the member some perspective on that, in the previous year there were 48 projects approved, in the year before that 68, the year before that 57, before that 32, before that 29, before that 40, before that 21, and before that 11. So, again, I think there was a comparability there that the member would want to aware of.

In the Infrastructure Development Program—and these are grants to municipalities that enable them to build infrastructure that expands entrepreneurial opportunities—we approved in 2000-2001, 20 projects, and the total value of those were just over \$1 million, \$1,032,000. In the previous year, '99-2000, there were 16 approved. The year before that there were 19; year before that there were 7, 7, 4, 6, 7, 1.

So I think the member can see again there is a comparable number of projects which are being approved in rural Manitoba, and probably also comparable numbers showing the development of a program. As it begins, there is not so much uptake, and then gradually it becomes more widely known, and more widely used.

Mr. Loewen: With regard to the REDI program, just following the announcements that have been made by the Government, my records indicate that in the period of June of 2000 until February of 2001 the only announcement regarding REDI funding directly to a business was the \$6,250 REDI funding for the bioethanol plant in Killarney. Part of that, I think the last record I have of REDI funding was a grant of \$6,750 to Hi-Tec Industries of Portage in June of the year 2000. Am I missing some? If so, if the minister could provide a list of that and a written list would be fine. I am speaking specifically of REDI funding to businesses as opposed to municipalities or other agencies.

* (17:20)

Ms. Friesen: Yes, I think the member must have missed some because there were 42 feasibility

projects 2000-2001, and there were 20 infrastructure development projects. It is quite possible that there has not been a press release on every one, but they are all publicly known. It has surprised me that some members opposite were not aware of some of these, because they are usually reported in local papers. It is quite possible that we have not done press releases on every feasibility study, for example, but if the member is interested in the feasibility studies which have been done—

We were just getting a list that was sorted by date and also for the member's information, I just wanted to have a final check that nothing I am about to read out is confidential, and I gather that it is not, that when someone applies to this program, they are made aware that it is public information once it has been granted.

Since the change of government, the REDI feasibility applications approved, that is from September to date, are for Ag-Quest in Minto; Atom Jet Industries in Brandon; Blanshard Community Development Corporation in Oak River; the Bothwell Co-op Dairy society in New Bothwell; Brooks Industries in Crystal City; Brooks Industries in Crystal City again, two different proposals; C.L. Malach in the R.M. of MacDonald; Cancade Company in Brandon; Crane Steel Structures in Brandon; Cresting Unlimited in Brandon; Crocus Hills Manufacturing in Crandall; Cros-Can Industries in Brandon; Custom Pipe Industrial Plastics in Selkirk; Dauphin and District Community Economic Development in Dauphin; Emerson Milling in Emerson; Almer J. Enns in Morden; Enviro-Tech Powder Coating in Winkler; Falcon Trails Resort in Falcon Lake; Glenn Fauschou in Portage la Prairie; Fluid Force in Selkirk; Frontier Woodworks, West St. Paul; Grand Valley Animal Clinic in Brandon; Hersak, Barry and Rozanna in Cornwallis; I.C.E. Marketing and Consulting in Beausejour; Johnson and Smiley in Lockport; Junction R.V. in Winkler; Keewatin Community College in The Pas; Kischikamee Treaty Council in Churchill; Leech Printing, Brandon; Linear Grain, Carman; M.G.I. Canada, Selkirk; McLean Industrial Supply, Manitou; Miller Environmental Corporation, St. Jean Baptiste; Moose Lake Logging, Moose Lake; Owl Welding, Selkirk; Parkland Industrial Hemp Growers in Dauphin; John Peters Family, Altona; Plains Processing,

Carman; Powerland Computers, Winkler; Prairie Lanes Saskatoons, Petersfield; River Band Millworks, Ste. Agathe; Rosehill Woodcrafters, MacGregor; Scaleco Inc., Brandon; The Snuffer Corporation, Oak Bluff; Southwest Fibre Co-op, Killarney; Sterling Press and Packaging, Selkirk; Sterling Press and Packaging, Selkirk again; T.R.E. Transport, Anola; Tri-Track International, Leaf Rapids; Ties Lumber, Boissevain; Welders Supplies, Thompson; West Wood Industries, Portage; Wheat Belt Equipment, Brandon; Wil-Kraft Cabinets, Hamiota; Winkler Canvas in Stanley; Saluk Sales in St. Andrews; and Zenith Paving in Brandon.

Now, that is over two years. So that is a very well-used program, I think. It is one, as the member knows, that develops feasibility studies or enables professional advice to be brought to feasibility studies. Some of those projects then go on to be full-blown business plans, not all of them do, and that too in a way is an important kind of resource for rural entrepreneurs.

Mr. Loewen: I thank the minister for that information. If she would not mind providing me with a list of the grants, the amount of grants along with companies granted, I would appreciate that if you could do that at some point.

With regard to the Green Team program, well maybe just to stay on the REDI program for a minute. Could the minister advise subappropriation 13-5D-1 on page 75, the operating grant amount. Could she indicate how much in total was spent last year? I know the estimate was close to \$10 million, if she could advise me what the actual expenditure was.

Ms. Friesen: We do not have that precise number with us, but staff advise me that we did not lapse any money. If there were some pennies, dollars, we will certainly let the member know.

Mr. Loewen: If the minister could get back to me with the amount that was expended last year I would appreciate it.

With regard to the Green Team program, can the minister indicate how many young people were employed in that program last

summer, and how many you are anticipating to be employed this year?

* (17:30)

Ms. Friesen: We are looking for the numbers for last year, but I can advise the member that for this year we would not have a final count because we have only had the first intake. There is a second intake, and that would give us the final count. I think it is unlikely that we would know that number, I think the second intake is in July, so we probably would not know that number until midway through or towards the end of July.

The numbers I have here are for Green Team, and that is the Winnipeg component. The member I think probably knows that there are three components. There is the home town component which is outside of Winnipeg and is run largely by municipalities and by Heritage and Tourism organizations, et cetera.

Mr. Jim Rondeau, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair

We did change the criteria a little bit there last year to enable a greater accessibility. There is a second component where the jobs are done in the parks, largely employed by the Department of Conservation. Then there is this third piece which I am about to give him the numbers for. For 2000-2001, that is last year, the number I have is 689 jobs were created.

Mr. Loewen: Just to confirm that, the 689 is a combination of all three programs.

Ms. Friesen: No, I should have clarified that. The 689 is just the Winnipeg portion. We do not actually have the other numbers with us, but we can provide those to the member.

Mr. Loewen: I thank the minister, and I would appreciate if at a later date she could advise me in writing of the jobs in the other two components. I have heard some concern from some rural municipalities that although the wages paid to the Green Team members have increased this year the total budget has not increased and the result will be, I guess, fewer jobs available. I wonder if the minister could

confirm whether that is the case or not, and if it is the case if there is an estimate of how many fewer jobs will be available this summer.

Ms. Friesen: Yes, the budget line in this department has remained the same for that and, yes, the wages have gone up. The reasons for the increase in wages were based upon requests from organizations. I think almost everywhere we went, particularly in the city and in the home town components, we were advised there were difficulties in hiring. There were two areas we were advised where there was difficulties, which led us to try this increase in wages to see if it would solve some of the issues.

Mr. Chairperson in the Chair

Well, actually we were advised of a number of areas where people wanted to see improvements. Some were in program criteria. Some were in issues of lead hands as they are called. That is why there are two differential wage rates and that they have both increased. One of the concerns of a number of groups, for example, where there is responsibility for young children or whether there is the responsibility to direct people who are using not really complex equipment, but certainly equipment, there was a desire to have post-secondary students or older students employed. They certainly did not think that they were able to attract older students at the wage rates which had remained the same for a number of years.

So people were certainly asking for the ability to hire lead hands who could take responsibility. We have tried to do that, and we will be reviewing that to see if that has had the desired effects and has made things easier. Many of these groups who do get Green Teams are not necessarily ones who have offices. They do not necessarily have somebody who is full time on-site. They are often volunteers in communities who have jobs and sometimes have to depend upon students who can work with relatively little supervision. So the lead hand was an issue, and we tried to address that.

We are also advised that in some areas there may have been difficulties in attracting students to these jobs, particularly in times of relatively high employment across Manitoba, something

which is not always the case for young people, but there certainly has been in recent years a great deal more choice for young people than in previous years.

So what was happening in another area was that the wages, because they had not changed in a number of years, were somewhat different. There was a greater gap between them, for example, in other summer employment programs such as those run by the federal government or even by the provincial government, the STEP programs.

So in two or three areas there were requests for consideration of increasing the wages. So we have tried that and we will review it, and we will see at the end of the day whether it has met the needs of the communities and whether this was the appropriate thing to do.

I have the numbers the member was looking for earlier. In the conservation or parks component, in the year 2000 there were 330 jobs. In the home town component, that is the one that is shared with municipalities, there were 344 in the year 2000. I think in each of those cases those numbers are quite comparable for the past two or three years.

Mr. Loewen: Would the minister have an estimated number of jobs for this summer?

Ms. Friesen: As I said to the member, there are two intakes and it really is too early to tell. The second intake for many groups is in July. We will have a better idea probably by the end of July. I do not know if the member is aware, but there are certain programs where there is—I do not know what the word to use is—but certainly changeover. You will find a student who will get the job and then may not be able to complete it for some reason or other. So I would not necessarily think that we would know in two weeks from the deadline that we would actually have the final number.

There are some cases, for example, where municipalities or parks or even the volunteer organizations are able to top up wages. That has been happening, and I know certainly in my own community in order to get the lead hands that that kind of addition to wages has been

occurring. That also affects the numbers that you can hire and the way in which you are able to distribute the money.

* (17:40)

Mr. Loewen: With regard to subappropriation 13-5E on page 77, the Urban Development Initiatives at \$17,750,000, could the minister provide a list of any changes within the organizations that are listed there? I notice the bottom line, total amount, is the same as last year's Estimates.

I guess my first question would be: Was the full Estimates of Expenditure spent during the last year? And then I would appreciate a listing of any changes in funding to the individual programs if money has been moved from one to the other. Just for clarification, I am really just interested if there has been a change in allocation to one of these particular agencies. If the funding has remained the same, that is fine. I am just looking for changes in funding year over year.

Ms. Friesen: I am just trying to go through them each one individually. Basically, the general answer is that there has been no change but there are some, for example, the Reh-Fit Centre, where it has been extended for a year, and so, in a sense, there is a difference this year from last year because no money was paid but the arrangement has been extended.

Economic Development Winnipeg, for example, I expect the member has the same list I have, Economic Development Winnipeg is the same; Urban Green Team is the same; the community centres is the same. The Arts Council, the Convention Centre, Tourism Winnipeg, Council of Community Centres, Kinsmen Reh-Fit I have explained, those are all the same. Trade and Investment is the same. Capital Region is different; it was \$160,000 in 2001-02, and it was \$139,000 in 2000. The Indigenous Games is different; it was \$250,000 in 2000, and \$600,000, approximately, in 2001. The North End Y was not on the list last year, and obviously the planning, the business plan, the community development activities that are going around that are \$100,000 estimated. The others are the same.

Mr. Loewen: I thank the minister for that. A couple of questions regarding specific issues,

with regard to Economic Development Winnipeg, it has been reported in the paper, I think on more than one occasion that the mayor was perhaps looking at moving that operation within the administration of the City and out of an arm's-length organization. Has the minister had any discussions with the City with regard to changes in Economic Development Winnipeg?

Ms. Friesen: I do not remember specifically reports talking about bringing it into the City of Winnipeg's own administration. I know that there has been talk that has happened in Brandon but not in Winnipeg. I think there have been various musings at various times by various members of City Council about the role of Economic Development Winnipeg. To the best of my knowledge, staff are advising me that their contribution is in their budget, and, as you know, we share it equally. It does advise and undertake activities on behalf of Economic Development in Winnipeg.

Ms. Friesen: We are getting close to six o'clock, Mr. Chairman, and I had a couple of things I wanted to put on the record that were questions that were asked yesterday. Should we do that now, or do you want to continue on this line?

Mr. Loewen: I just have one brief question. I wonder if the minister could give me just a brief update on the progress of the North End Y, and then, after that, if she wants to put the other information on the record, that would be fine.

* (17:50)

Ms. Friesen: I am not sure where to begin updating the member, since I know he has had an active interest in this. Perhaps we should start with the last contact I had with him on this, which was sending him a copy of Jim August report, which was in March 2000. In March 2000, we did have a report from Jim August Consultants. We had also some reflections from other consultations with key stakeholders in the area who indicated strong support for the reopening of the facility and the provision of recreational facilities. The feasibility study, as the member knows, has indicated some of the long-term issues around that particular building and the potential cost of refurbishing, the

potential cost of reuse, adaptation, with or without pool, with or without gym, et cetera. But the major consideration, and I know it comes as no surprise to most people, including the member, and that is the long-term operating costs that is the issue.

What has happened since that study is that it has been, I think, distributed quite broadly in the community both amongst individuals and the institutions in the area and community groups. Out of that has come a proposal from groups, including the North End Community Renewal Corporation, who have formed a working group. The working group has had a number of meetings and identified the need for what they are calling, in interim terms, a wellness facility.

They are looking at issues such as recreation, social programming and health, and they are also, of course, through those, attempting to address the social needs in the North End of Winnipeg in a holistic manner. They are looking for community-based and community-supported solutions, and they are looking for ones obviously that are sustainable. There are a number of meetings which have been held, I think a weekend workshop as well, and they are moving towards narrowing the options and getting ready to put those before the community in a larger meeting.

I do not have any dates for that, but what I can say is I think there is a very strong commitment on the part of people in the North End. There is a great desire to see more recreation programs. As the member knows, Neighbourhoods Alive!, one of the department's programs, takes an initiative in many of these areas of community revitalization.

So, although the North End Y process is one that has been continuing for a while, the North End Wellness Project working group, it is something that we certainly see in the broader context of the rebuilding of the inner city of Winnipeg and the development of broadly used and broadly based community wellness and community recreation programs.

I would say that the sense that I am getting, and I have met a couple of times with both the

small group and with a larger group that was meeting around these issues, that there is a great sense of community participation. I think that was there at the time the member was involved. I wanted to advise him that that has continued and, I think, certainly expanded. We are again, I think, recognizing that this is not going to be an overnight solution, but I think what is happening there is a community which felt that doors had been closed to them.

In many ways the North End Y had become symbolic of that, perhaps fairly or unfairly, but, nevertheless, it did have that kind of symbolic attachment. I think the people are beginning to feel that there are opportunities. There are possibilities that there are a number of institutions both within the community and from outside who are prepared to work with this community to make some of the dreams reality, both in the short term and the long term.

We are not there yet, but steps are being taken, being moved along, and I think there is a broad community valuing of this and broad community participation.

I wonder, this is dealing with the Legion case. I have been given question and answer, and I think I need a little time to understand it myself before I simply read it into the record. So I think I will do that and take back, with apologies, my offer to read it in now.

I assume we will be here on Monday, and so I could do it then. If the member would like to continue with other economic questions. Sorry, my fault, I should have read it before I went into that.

Mr. Loewen: That really was all the questions I had on 13-5E. Maybe I suggest that some of the other issues could take a while, so maybe we should leave it at that for today.

Just with regard to Monday, there is a memorial service for Mark Norrie Monday afternoon. So we may talk to House leaders about reorganizing, perhaps if that is okay. *[interjection]* I am not sure. Sometime in the afternoon, I think.

Ms. Friesen: Yes, we will see on Monday where things are.

Mr. Chairperson: What is the will of the committee?

Committee rise. Call in the Speaker.

IN SESSION

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Conrad Santos): The hour being 6 p.m., this House is adjourned and, as previously agreed, stands adjourned until Monday at 1:30 p.m.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, May 24, 2001

CONTENTS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS			
Presenting Petitions		Pan Am Clinic Murray; Doer	2238
Manitoba Hydro Lines Routes Schuler	2233	Private Health Care Clinics Murray; Chomiak	2238
Kenaston Underpass Pitura	2233	Nursing Profession Mitchelson; Chomiak	2239
Loewen	2233	Driedger; Chomiak	2240
Reading and Receiving Petitions		East St. Paul Schuler; Selinger	2243
Manitoba Hydro Lines Routes Schuler	2233	Foot and Mouth Disease Gerrard; Wowchuk	2244
Kenaston Underpass Pitura	2233	Members' Statements	
Loewen	2234	Maples Collegiate Unity Walk Aglugub	2245
Driedger	2234	Legislators Forum Maguire	2245
Tabling of Reports		Golden West Centennial Lodge Centenarians Rondeau	2246
Review and Implementation Committee for the Report of the Manitoba Pediatric Cardiac Surgery Inquest, May 2001 Chomiak	2234	Missing Children's Week Driedger	2246
Introduction of Bills		Full Citizenship: A Manitoba Provincial Strategy on Disability Cerilli	2247
Bill 23—The Highway Traffic Amendment Act Mackintosh for Ashton	2234		
Bill 32—The City of Winnipeg Amendment Act Friesen	2235	ORDERS OF THE DAY	
Bill 34—The Municipal Amendment Act Friesen	2235	Committee of Supply (Concurrent Sections)	
Oral Questions		Health	2248
Health Care System Murray; Doer	2236	Agriculture and Food	2274
		Education, Training and Youth	2289
		Intergovernmental Affairs	2304