



Fifth Session - Thirty-Fifth Legislature

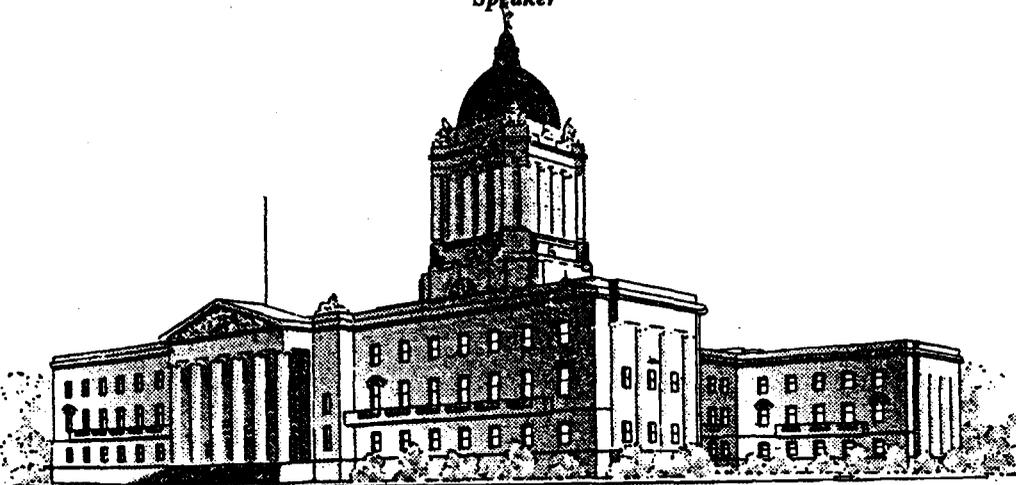
of the

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(Hansard)

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Speaker*



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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Fifth Legislature

Members, Constituencies and Political Affiliation

NAME	CONSTITUENCY	PARTY
ASHTON, Steve	Thompson	NDP
BARRETT, Becky	Wellington	NDP
CARSTAIRS, Sharon	River Heights	Liberal
CERILLI, Marianne	Radisson	NDP
CHOMIAK, Dave	Kildonan	NDP
CUMMINGS, Glen, Hon.	Ste. Rose	PC
DACQUAY, Louise	Seine River	PC
DERKACH, Leonard, Hon.	Roblin-Russell	PC
DEWAR, Gregory	Selkirk	NDP
DOER, Gary	Concordia	NDP
DOWNEY, James, Hon.	Arthur-Virden	PC
DRIEDGER, Albert, Hon.	Steinbach	PC
DUCHARME, Gerry, Hon.	Riel	PC
EDWARDS, Paul	St. James	Liberal
ENNS, Harry, Hon.	Lakeside	PC
ERNST, Jim, Hon.	Charleswood	PC
EVANS, Clif	Interlake	NDP
EVANS, Leonard S.	Brandon East	NDP
FILMON, Gary, Hon.	Tuxedo	PC
FINDLAY, Glen, Hon.	Springfield	PC
FRIESEN, Jean	Wolsley	NDP
GAUDRY, Neil	St. Boniface	Liberal
GILLESHAMMER, Harold, Hon.	Minnedosa	PC
GRAY, Avis	Crescentwood	Liberal
HELWER, Edward R.	Gimli	PC
HICKES, George	Point Douglas	NDP
KOWALSKI, Gary	The Maples	Liberal
LAMOUREUX, Kevin	Inkster	Liberal
LATHLIN, Oscar	The Pas	NDP
LAURENDEAU, Marcel	St. Norbert	PC
MACKINTOSH, Gord	St. Johns	NDP
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	NDP
MANNES, Clayton, Hon.	Morris	PC
MARTINDALE, Doug	Burrows	NDP
McALPINE, Gerry	Sturgeon Creek	PC
McCORMICK, Norma	Osborne	Liberal
McCRAE, James, Hon.	Brandon West	PC
McINTOSH, Linda, Hon.	Assiniboia	PC
MITCHELSON, Bonnie, Hon.	River East	PC
ORCHARD, Donald, Hon.	Pembina	PC
PALLISTER, Brian	Portage la Prairie	PC
PENNER, Jack	Emerson	PC
PLOHMAN, John	Dauphin	NDP
PRAZNIK, Darren, Hon.	Lac du Bonnet	PC
REID, Daryl	Transcona	NDP
REIMER, Jack	Niakwa	PC
RENDER, Shirley	St. Vital	PC
ROBINSON, Eric	Rupertsland	NDP
ROCAN, Denis, Hon.	Gladstone	PC
ROSE, Bob	Turtle Mountain	PC
SANTOS, Conrad	Broadway	NDP
SCHELLENBERG, Harry	Rossmere	NDP
STEFANSON, Eric, Hon.	Kirkfield Park	PC
STORIE, Jerry	Flin Flon	NDP
SVEINSON, Ben	La Verendrye	PC
VODREY, Rosemary, Hon.	Fort Garry	PC
WOWCHUK, Rosann	Swan River	NDP

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, May 4, 1994

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Thompson General Hospital Patient Care

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of John G. Clemons, Elizabeth M. Scott, Isabel Cook and others requesting the Legislative Assembly to request the government of Manitoba to consider reviewing the impact of reductions in patient care at the Thompson General Hospital with a view towards restoring current levels of patient care and, further, to ask the provincial government to implement real health care reform based on full participation of patients, health care providers and the public, respect for the principles of medicare and an understanding of the particular needs of northern Manitoba.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Government Promotion of Gambling

Mr. Speaker: I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member (Mr. Edwards). It complies with the privileges and the practices of this House and complies with the rules. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read?

Some Honourable Members: Yes.

Mr. Speaker: The Clerk will read.

Mr. Clerk (William Remnant): The petition of the undersigned residents of the province of Manitoba humbly sheweth that:

WHEREAS the Manitoba Lotteries Corporation (MLC) is wholly owned by the Province of Manitoba;

WHEREAS MLC spends millions of dollars encouraging Manitobans to gamble;

WHEREAS 90 percent of people gambling at government-owned casinos are Manitobans, not tourists;

WHEREAS there has been a massive increase in gambling in Manitoba;

WHEREAS the cost to society of widespread gambling includes paying for addiction programs, increased welfare payments, increased use of food banks and a reduction of resources available for charities;

WHEREAS a full public debate on the role of government in the gambling industry is long overdue and necessary to give Manitobans an opportunity to assess the full financial and social costs of gambling within the province;

WHEREAS Liberal members of the Legislative Assembly have been unable to gain access to the five-year plan of MLC and other critical statistical information which would assist elected representatives to assess the direction of MLC and the promotion of gambling in the province.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly urge the Minister responsible for the Manitoba Lotteries Corporation (Mr. Ernst) to consider initiating a full public debate on the role of government in owning establishments and promoting gambling in Manitoba.

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. James Downey (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table Supplementary Information for the Department of Industry, Trade and Tourism for the 1994-95 Departmental Expenditure Estimates.

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave to revert to Reading and Receiving Petitions? [agreed]

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS
(continued)

Brandon University Foundation Directors

Mr. Speaker: I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member (Mr. Leonard Evans). It complies with the privileges and the practices of the House and complies with the rules. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read?

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Mr. Speaker: Dispense.

The petition of Brandon University Foundation praying for the passing of an act to increase the number of directors of the foundation to not more than 42 or not less than eight persons of whom three shall be members of the Board of Governors of Brandon University.

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: Prior to Oral Questions, I would like to draw the attention of honourable members to the Speaker's Gallery, where we have with us today from the Technical Youth Education Association of Germany, Mr. Thomas Haensgen, Mr. Ralf Wenzel, Mr. Manfred Bisanz, Dr. Ruth Haensgen and Mrs. Rosmarie Bisanz.

They are under the direction of Mr. Alfons Schoeps, who is the executive director of the Partnership of Parliaments and are accompanied by Mrs. Alexandra Pfeiffer of the German-Canadian Congress and Mr. and Mrs. Rubin Spletzer.

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

Also with us this afternoon, seated in the public gallery we have from the Elmwood High School 20 English language students under the direction of Mrs. Judy Johnson. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Concordia (Mr. Doer).

Also this afternoon, from the Sisler High School we have thirty-five Grade 11 students under the direction of Miss Marilyn Thompson. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux).

On behalf of all honourable members, I would like to welcome you here this afternoon.

* (1335)

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

**Manitoba Telephone System
Faneuil Corporation Agreement**

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Premier.

We have been raising questions before about the Manitoba Telephone System and its public enterprise here in Manitoba which we feel is essential for our future information highway in the province of Manitoba.

During the Premier's Estimates, the Premier indicated that no agreements were signed with Faneuil dealing with the Manitoba Telephone System.

We have received a copy of a memo indicating there is a telemarketing service agreement between the Manitoba Telephone System and Faneuil Limited which was announced in March of 1994.

We understand that this agreement will require money to be paid from the Telephone System to Faneuil to provide telemarketing services which were originally conducted inside the Manitoba Telephone System by Manitoba Telephone System staff.

I would like to ask the Premier: Is there an agreement with Faneuil, with the government and the Telephone System? What impact will that agreement have on the 200 people that potentially will be laid off with the announcement yesterday by the Telephone System?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, this is why I suggested to the member opposite that I was willing to try and be flexible and let him ask questions about all sorts of things, such as the Telephone System and Industry, Trade and Tourism and Lotteries and everything else, but that realistically I was just attempting to be as co-operative as possible in discussing issues with him.

That is a matter that falls directly between the Telephone System and within their mandate and one that I had no involvement in, obviously. So if he wants to have more discussion about it, he should either pose the question to the Minister responsible for the Manitoba Telephone System (Mr. Findlay) or communicate with the Telephone System officials when they appear before a committee of the Legislature as they do during the course of this session.

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, the Premier did say during his Estimates that services within the Telephone System would not be, for the most part, I believe he said, sold off to Faneuil company, or we are not in negotiations with Faneuil Corporation.

This clearly is opposite to that. The contract requires the Telephone System to pay some \$4 million to Faneuil Corporation over three years.

I would like to ask the Premier: Are there any other services that are being negotiated between the province of Manitoba? The Premier is the chair of the Economic Committee of Cabinet. He is dealing directly with many corporations, dealing with issues of jobs and services that we provide.

Are there any other services that could be affected by government negotiations with the company Faneuil in terms of the province of Manitoba?

Mr. Filmon: Mr. Speaker, as I understand it, these are not services within the Telephone System. This is telemarketing.

This telemarketing, by many corporations, is done on the basis of contracting with the various people who are experts in that field. Faneuil, for instance, as a company does those services for all sorts of people, major corporations right across North America, so that is something that is within their expertise. If the Manitoba Telephone System sees some advantage in having them do that for them, then obviously that is a choice that they make.

* (1340)

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, there are many programs within the Manitoba Telephone System that are provided that are very profitable.

The Manitoba Telephone System previously had their own telemarketing division. Previously, they held the rights to cablevision delivery. They hold the rights to Yellow Pages, which is very profitable; 411 is another profitable area of the Manitoba Telephone System. Long distance competition or long distance dialing outside the province used to be a profitable area to subsidize rural and northern rates here in Manitoba.

So I would ask the Premier: What services from our Crown corporation are in discussion and in play with the private corporation Faneuil as part of the government's priority to attract Faneuil to Manitoba?

Mr. Filmon: Mr. Speaker, I correct the member opposite. The Manitoba Telephone System did not own cablevision in this province. They owned the cable. All services attached to the cable, all telebroadcasting and everything else was owned by private sector. Those people used that as a highway upon which they attached value-added services. What happened was that for value, for a value greater than the net book value as estimated by an independent accounting firm, the company sold that cable to those who are adding the services to the cable. That is all that happened.

I would say to the member opposite that my information is that Faneuil Corporation's services are being primarily sold to corporations who need their telemarketing expertise, and that is the essence of discussions that are going on with them. There was talk at one time about the 411 and that is off the table. To my knowledge, it is not part of continuing discussions with them.

Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Children Foster Care Placement

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Mr. Speaker, I think all of us here would agree that fetal alcohol syndrome is a very serious problem in our society and one about which all of us are concerned. Right now, Northwest Area of Winnipeg Child and Family Services has 95 children with fetal alcohol

syndrome in temporary or emergency placements waiting for foster homes.

I would like to ask the Minister of Family Services what her government is doing to improve this situation and to find permanent foster homes for these children since the alternative now is hotels like the Place Louis Riel and motels and four-bed units in emergency placements.

What is the government doing to find permanent foster homes for these children?

Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister of Family Services): Mr. Speaker, the issue of fetal alcohol syndrome is indeed a very serious issue and one that should be of concern to all Manitobans. We have as a government increased our support to Child and Family Services through the child welfare system by some well over \$6 million this year, and we have in increasing amounts been taking more children into care and indeed providing more services, more dollars, in the child welfare system. There is no easy answer to the issue.

I think we have to look at what the cause of fetal alcohol syndrome is and work very aggressively with young girls who might be at risk, to try to encourage no use of alcohol and educate them in understanding that fetal alcohol syndrome is indeed a very serious issue that is going to provide major, major problems and increased costs not only in our child welfare system, but indeed in our health care system.

Foster Families Long-Term Care Per Diems

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the minister why they have cut foster family rates by 50 percent for long-term placements.

If, as the minister says, she is concerned about this problem, why are they making it harder to find placements for children, instead of easier?

Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister of Family Services): Mr. Speaker, I reject totally the supposition by the member opposite that, in fact, we are not going to have foster homes to look after

these children. I indicated in my first answer that we have over \$6 million in the child welfare system, more this year than we had last year. But, obviously, when you see the numbers of dollars that are needed and the increased caseloads coming into our child welfare system, the system we have in place today is not working.

We are working aggressively, and we have worked with the Winnipeg agency around this issue. Our new vision and our new focus for child welfare is for family support, family preservation and family responsibility.

Mr. Speaker, we have a fund of \$2.5 million within our child welfare budget for early intervention, early child development and support for families who want to work with children.

* (1345)

Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Warning Labels

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the minister, since she believes in prevention, if her government is going to proclaim and implement an amendment that was made to The Liquor Control Act in the last session which would have required labels on liquor and wine bottles warning that alcohol consumption during pregnancy causes defects.

Will the government implement what they promised to do in the last session?

Hon. Harold Gilleshammer (Minister charged with the administration of The Liquor Control Act): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to let the member know that we have been working with the federal government and the MLCC board and staff to look at options there. We have recently come out with a poster that will be available in all of the facilities. We are also looking at some of the issues around labelling and hope to have something brought forward in the near future.

Manitoba Telephone System Layoffs

Mr. Paul Edwards (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister responsible for the Manitoba Telephone

System, and I want to table correspondence dated yesterday from Mr. Bill Hales, who is the business manager of the Telecommunications Employees Association of Manitoba to Mr. Denis Sutton, the vice-president of Human Resources at MTS.

That correspondence makes clear two things. Firstly, the TEAM union which represents 1,200 members who work for MTS was still in negotiations with MTS at the time that this announcement of 200 layoffs came up. It also goes on to say that they never did vote and the reason they did not vote was because the Human Resources department had made an error in their money calculations and was redoing that. Meanwhile, without a vote, without continuing negotiations, this decision comes down.

My question for the minister: Given that clearly at least this group of 1,200 employees, as well as others, say that the clear choice that the government laid out yesterday was never put to the employees of MTS, what is the government going to do to ensure that the employees, the members, the people who are going to get hurt by these layoffs do get the opportunity to make an informed decision on the record?

Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister responsible for the administration of The Manitoba Telephone Act): Mr. Speaker, that member has heard from one side of the discussion between two individuals, Mr. Hales and Mr. Sutton. Mr. Sutton tells me that they had met with all three unions starting back on February 14 and laid out options. Two unions voted and the union that the member opposite is talking about, the TEAM union, made an executive decision to turn down the offer from MTS.

The member also makes mention of an error in a figure and MTS tells me they corrected that error the next day and informed the individual involved of the error that they had made.

Mr. Speaker, the story he is putting in front of the public is not necessarily consistent with the story that I am getting from MTS. I would ask him to understand there are two sides in the discussion,

but MTS is of a very clear opinion that all three unions made a response of an answer of no.

* (1350)

Mr. Edwards: Mr. Speaker, there may be two sides; there may be 18 sides. There is only one side of this that counts, and that is the employees who are going to get hurt. Let us be clear that neither Mr. Pedde nor this minister nor Mr. Hales—their jobs are not at risk here. It is the 200 members working for MTS; they are the losers in this. They are saying, through their representatives and individually, that they never got that clear choice. They have said that throughout the MTS structure.

Will this government not put that to the members in those clear terms, because they say they never got the chance to vote.

Mr. Findlay: Mr. Speaker, I want that member to very clearly understand that the government has laid the option in front of MTS to allow those people to all have their jobs, and that is Bill 22, the days off. That option was put in front of the three unions on February 14 and February 21 very clearly.

That member is—I do not know which side of the argument he wants to be on, but it is not on the side of the employees. The employees have a chance to support the Bill 22 option, and I understand that some employees are now wanting another chance to vote. We have said yesterday in this House and the MTS executives say, if they want to change their minds and accommodate the reduction in cost by taking the 10 days off, the door is very much open.

Mr. Edwards: Mr. Speaker, let us be clear that we are on the side of the people who are going to get hurt by this, the 200 employees who are going to be laid off. That is the bottom line.

My question for the minister: Will he immediately advise Mr. Pedde to contact the unions and ensure that there is a vote on this clear issue, because they say they were never guaranteed there would not be layoffs. They were asked to take the 10 days off and they were told it would have an impact on layoffs, but they were never told that there were layoffs or 10 days off. That

question was never put to them. They want a chance to decide.

Will the minister communicate to Mr. Pedde that that clear decision, that clear choice must be put to the members of MTS?

Mr. Findlay: The option of the members to vote was always a very clear option the union could use. Mr. Speaker, two unions used that option; one did not. They all have the option of going to the membership with a vote. We have very clearly said, we want the—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable Leader of the second opposition party has asked his question, and I am sure we want to give a chance to the honourable minister to respond.

Mr. Findlay: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We are very clearly on the side of preserving jobs, as we have done in the last two years in this province, and kept costs under control. I can assure the member that the management of MTS has an open door in terms of the opportunity of accepting that option of days off to save that amount of salary, as it did in 1993.

Mr. Speaker, that member wants to negotiate a decision over at MTS in this House, and I refuse to do that. I allow MTS to manage their corporation responsibly. That member does not want that to happen, and I deplore his position.

Points of Order

Mr. Edwards: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, the minister has impugned that I somehow was incorrect about asking this government—the Finance minister said that he directed the Crown corporation to do the layoffs. This—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member does not have a point of order. That is clearly a dispute over the facts.

Mr. Speaker: Are you up on another point of order? The honourable Minister responsible for—order, please. You are not on the record yet. The honourable Minister responsible for the

Manitoba Telephone System. Now you have the floor, sir.

Mr. Findlay: I want to remind the member that in my answers today I told him that the three unions met with MTS on February 14 and February 21, and I want him to realize that, that the discussions have been ongoing for a long time.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable minister does not have a point of order. Again, it is a dispute over the facts.

Public Housing Rental Increase

Mr. George Hickes (Point Douglas): My question is to the Minister of Housing.

Mr. Speaker, this government continues to attack the poorest of the poor in our society. Yesterday, seniors and families living in public housing were informed that their rents are going to increase substantially, and property tax rebates will be clawed back. I would like to table the letters pertaining to that.

Can the minister tell this House which level of government, the federal Liberals or the provincial Conservatives, argued for this new tax on low-income Manitobans?

* (1355)

Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Housing): I can say that, indeed, the federal government has asked that provinces across the country move their RGI up in order to help cover some of the costs of housing, and provinces across the country are doing that. British Columbia, for example, is at 30 percent. New Brunswick has moved to 30 percent, and Nova Scotia is at 27 percent. Ontario is moving their scales up, as well.

Mr. Speaker, there are several reasons for this happening. As you know, or you may not know, the federal government has also opted out of funding new housing monies for new public housing, therefore it becomes critically important that the existing housing be maintained and repaired in good shape, since there will be no more cost-sharing from the federal government on new housing.

The rent going to 27 percent for tenants will not be for all tenants, of course. The bachelor suites for elderly people or for any person who is living in a bachelor suite remains at 25 percent, and we have hundreds and hundreds of vacant bachelor suites that are available to those who still only want to pay 25 percent of their income on rent.

Mr. Hickes: Mr. Speaker, can the minister table that document she was quoting from?

Mr. Speaker, the minister should know that seniors and others on fixed incomes automatically pay more rent every time there is a small increase in their pensions or their support payments.

Will the minister, in fairness to people on fixed and low incomes, immediately suspend this increase on Manitoba's poorest families?

Mrs. McIntosh: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I should indicate first of all that I do not have a document in front of me to table, so I am not—

An Honourable Member: He does.

Mrs. McIntosh: Oh, well, I am sorry, I do not.

What I do have now though, of course, is a paper that the member has just provided me which is the letter which we have sent out notifying people that the RGI here would begin to be similar to the RGI in other provinces, particularly other NDP provinces such as British Columbia which is not at 27 percent but at 30 percent, where the cost of housing is much higher and the other expenses involved in living are much higher than they are in Manitoba.

I should also indicate that the other NDP provinces that are moving towards 27 percent, 30 percent have costs of living for their people that are much in excess of what we have here as well.

We are trying to move towards harmony across the country at the request of the federal government. We are also trying to maintain our housing stock which in Manitoba is now aging. Our housing stock is about 20 years old and does require maintenance now of a nature that it did not require in earlier years. We must maintain that stock.

As I have indicated, there are hundreds and hundreds of available suites for people at 25 percent still—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Hickes: Mr. Speaker, the property tax credit was very unique across Canada. It was set up under the Schreyer government. Now it is being clawed back.

I would like to ask the minister if she will ask the federal Liberals to stop this nonsense of picking on the seniors who worked so hard to make Canada what it is, and to stop picking on the poorest of the poor. Show some fairness here.

Mrs. McIntosh: Mr. Speaker, that was a two-part question so I would like to be able to answer both parts.

I should indicate that a couple of months ago, Housing ministers from across this nation did indeed go and meet with the federal Liberal Minister of Housing and did indeed ask that the cost-sharing on new housing be put back. The federal minister refused to do that. He did, however, say that any monies that we could save or break out of rents and so on, we would be able to be allowed to use that to repair and improve our existing stock and not have to return it to the federal government or be penalized for it in any way.

In terms of the property tax, Mr. Speaker, people in private sector housing pay property taxes through their rent. For people in public housing, the property tax is independent of the rent that is paid and independent of the property taxes that we, the landlord, being the government in this case—so we have been giving a rebate on that.

Health Care System Deinsured Services

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the minister tabled during the Estimates for the first time the MMA agreement and we are thankful for that.

Mr. Speaker, my question to the minister today is: The MMA sent a letter out to all of their members—and the MMA is the co-chair of this

particular agreement—which says, and I will quote, and I will table this letter: Some services will be deinsured.

Can the minister confirm that, as a result of the new agreement with the MMA, some medical services in this province will be deinsured?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): No, Mr. Speaker, I cannot tell the honourable member about that because the medical services arrangements that are dealt with through the Medical Services Council have yet to be addressed by the Medical Services Council which is set up through this agreement and has membership on it on the part of the medical profession, the government, consumers, health researchers, regulatory people.

It will be those people who assist the government in administering the medical services appropriation, and until that council is up and running and making recommendations, we do not have any in front of us.

There will be a variety of options available to them. The honourable member has raised the issue of laboratory fees and services. I do not know, maybe he has raised the issue of walk-in clinics, and issues like that can also be looked at by the council as they arrive at potential recommendations to make to government.

* (1400)

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, could the minister also explain in this same release to all the members, the quote that the number of medical services that the government purchases on the public's behalf may be expected to decline overall. Can the minister perhaps explain that quote in the letter from the co-chair of that very committee the minister has talked about?

Mr. McCrae: Well, Mr. Speaker, I hope the services delivered to the person who visited the doctor 247 times in one year declines. I can hope for that. That is one of the positive features of the agreement as well. We are going to be able to address issues like abuse and misuse of the health system, because those who need health care

services in Manitoba want that. They do not want to see health dollars wasted.

We are very glad to have the partnership of the medical association in addressing these issues that have been left unaddressed for many, many years because of lack of success on the part of successive governments and MMA leaderships to come to grips and to work together. I am very glad we are able to do that now because Manitobans will be the beneficiaries.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, my final supplementary to the minister is: What is the government plan for deinsurance and the reduction of medical services since, for the first time as a part of the agreement, we see a plan for deinsurance and reduction in the total number of medical services provided by government?

Mr. McCrae: Mr. Speaker, I answered that question the first time the minister rose to ask his question. All of the items—[interjection] Oh, I am sorry. Pardon me. I meant the honourable member. I understand I called him a minister, which is really quite a slip, is it not?

I did answer the honourable member's question the first time he asked it. The Medical Services Council's role will be to look at all of the services provided under our medical services appropriation and to appropriately use the dollars. We are satisfied there are enough dollars there. The medical profession is satisfied there are enough dollars there, but the capped number of physicians practising in Manitoba and appropriately distributed number of physicians throughout the province, which is more equitable than we have seen in the past, I expect to see improvements in health care delivery for Manitobans.

Grain Transportation Hopper Car Shortage

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Mr. Speaker, the whole grain transportation system in Manitoba is being backed up because of shortage of grain cars. It is estimated that farmers will lose close to \$2 million in sales because we cannot deliver grain. Two federal government committees are holding public hearings this week to come up

with a solution to this problem and make recommendations by the end of the week.

My question is to the Minister of Agriculture.

I want to ask if he will be making representation at this committee on behalf of Manitoba producers. Will he be recommending that there is a need for more cars in the system in order to meet the needs of producers and buyers from the Canadian market?

Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to report to the honourable member and to the House, anticipating that very question, I met with the senior vice-president of the CPR two weeks ago. He assured me and indicated to us that they were addressing this admittedly serious problem, that they were in the process of bringing upwards of 3,000 additional cars into the system.

I read, in fact, just yesterday in the reports in one of the farm papers—I do not know whether it was the Western Producer or the Manitoba Co-operator—that the situation is resolving itself.

In any event, I make it my business to be at these meetings. I will certainly make a continued representation about the importance of having rolling stock available to move the farmers' grain.

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Speaker, the minister indicates that the problem is being solved. I am afraid he is not very accurate on that.

Mr. Speaker, because of the slow grain movement, our producers are facing increased costs on farm and at the ports as well. I want to ask the minister whether he will recommend to the committee or to the federal government—whether they will look at having railways take some responsibility in this crisis and whether he will ask them to force the railways to pay penalties that can be enforced under the Western Grain Transportation Act, so that railways will pick up some of the demurrage costs that farmers are now being forced to pick up.

Mr. Enns: Mr. Speaker, the question of demurrage charges is an interesting one coming from that side of the House. Perhaps the biggest single demurrage bill faced by Manitoba and

indeed farmers across Canada are those caused when organized labour in the grain handlers' strike walk out and leave 50 to 60 ships idling in Vancouver harbour while the farmers pick up thousands and thousands of dollars of demurrage charges.

The issue of better utilization of rail cars is one that is very high up on the list of priorities. It was discussed most recently at an Ag ministers conference in Regina with the federal minister, Mr. Goodale, and I am satisfied that with a co-operative effort on the part of the railways we will resolve this issue.

There has been a very serious change in the pattern of grain movement, much of it quite frankly caused by the massive movement of grain into the U.S. market, which has seen our cars, our hopper cars and the CPR and CNR stock in far-distant places where they normally have not been. So these are some of the conditions that prevail.

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Speaker, yesterday it was the rain, today it is the union workers, but this government—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member for Swan River, with your question.

Port of Churchill Grain Exports

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the Minister of Agriculture whether he is lobbying the federal government in any way to have more grain shipped through the Port of Churchill where the turnaround time for hopper cars is not as long. That will relieve much of the pressure that is on the elevators right now and farmers will be able to get rid of more of their grain in this crop year.

Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, I can only reconfirm that this government, from my Premier (Mr. Filmon) to my colleague the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Downey), from present Ministers of Transportation, past Ministers of Transportation—seldom has a government shown such continued determination to maintain and hopefully bring

economic viability to the Port of Churchill, but I will rest on that record, and indeed commit myself to doing that.

University of Manitoba Student Fees

Ms. Avis Gray (Crescentwood): Mr. Speaker, the University of Manitoba has instituted a brand new student service fee. This fee amounts to \$1.75 per credit, which amounts to for, let us say, a student taking a first-year program in Arts about \$55, which is about 2 percent of an increase on top of the 5 percent increase in tuition fees.

My question is to the Minister of Finance: Because of his recent budget, will the Minister of Finance move to meet with the University of Manitoba and to direct them to not allow this extra student fee, which is in fact making a mockery of the 5 percent cap on the tuition fees?

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I believe a very similar question was asked of our Minister of Education (Mr. Manness) just a few days ago, and I will take this question as notice on his behalf.

* (1410)

Ms. Gray: Mr. Speaker, with a supplementary question to the Minister of Finance: Is the Minister of Finance suggesting that in fact he is not aware of what the impact is of his budget when he talks about a 5 percent tuition fee increase?

Can he tell this House, is the student fee increase, the \$1.75 per credit hour, is that in line with his budget in terms of the 5 percent cap? Is it consistent? Surely, he can tell us that.

Mr. Stefanson: Mr. Speaker, again, as the Minister of Education (Mr. Manness) responded to, when this question was asked of him, consistent with last year's practice, we did impose a ceiling of no more than a 5 percent increase in tuition fees. That is consistent with what we are able to do within the realm of our jurisdiction.

I indicated this particular question about that additional student fee, the Minister of Education is dealing with, and as I indicated, I will take that part of the question as notice.

Ms. Gray: Mr. Speaker, with a final supplementary to the Minister of Finance: Will he get his front bench together, in perhaps a cabinet meeting, and discuss this very serious issue and direct the University of Manitoba—because other universities are now looking at this—tell them that they are in fact not keeping in line with the 5 percent tuition increase, and that in fact they should not be charging the \$1.75 per full credit hour? Will he do that?

Mr. Stefanson: It is interesting, the views of the Liberal Party, Mr. Speaker. On the one hand, in a question earlier today, the Leader of the Liberal Party is expressing concern about government direct involvement in an independent Crown agency; on the other hand, a question two minutes later, we now get a member wanting us to directly intervene with an independent board. I wish they could become consistent in terms of what they view a government's role as being, or what they view the roles of independent board and Crown corporations being.

Adult Language Programs Funding

Ms. Becky Barrett (Wellington): Mr. Speaker, last year, when the government cut for a second year in a row the settlement in adult language training funds in the budget, the then-Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship stated that she and her government were still committed to providing services to new Canadians.

In this International Year of the Family, in the latest budget the government has further reduced these programs by almost 8 percent.

I would like to ask the government why they have continued to say one thing and done another when it comes to these vital services for immigrants and refugees to our province.

Hon. Harold Gilleshammer (Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship): Mr. Speaker, I look forward to getting into the Estimates process with the member for Wellington to look at the detail of the budget and of this department.

Major reductions have been put in place by the federal government in the assistance they give to that area. Our support is basically the same. In fact, I am told that we have vacancies in that area that are not being filled.

Ms. Barrett: I wonder if the minister can explain the thought processes that went into their decisions to give the multinational corporation IBM \$50,000 for worker-training programs at the same time that it has allowed to be cut, by almost 8 percent, training for adult settlement and languages to the immigrants and new Canadians in this province.

Mr. Gilleshammer: I have indicated very clearly to the member, and I know that she has a difficult time listening while she is talking, the support that we have given in that area is basically the same. In fact, we have a waiting list and some vacancies there so that we are giving all the support that is required in that area.

Ms. Barrett: I do not appreciate, Mr. Speaker, the personal attacks by the minister.

Is the government able to explain how all Manitobans will, quote, share the pain, as many ministers on the government side have said in this budget and others of the government's difficult decisions, when it has spent almost \$2 million on advertising its lottery programs in the province of Manitoba while, whether it is the federal government cutback or the provincial government cutback, adult language and settlement services have been cut for the people of Manitoba by almost 8 percent?

Mr. Gilleshammer: First of all, I would like to assure the member that it was not a personal comment. I apologize if she took it that way.

I have indicated that we have maintained considerable funding in that area and that we do have spaces that are not being filled. I sense what the member is asking is that we devote more money to that area so that we can have more spaces that do not need to be filled.

We are taking care of the demand that is there now, and we will monitor that very carefully.

Thompson General Hospital Bed Closures

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): Yesterday and today I tabled the first in a series of petitions that were signed by more than 5,000 northern Manitobans in regard to the situation at Thompson General Hospital.

There were 100 hospital beds. That has been cut to 85 by the hospital because of financial pressures. Last August the government announced rural hospital guidelines. They were to further reduce the number of beds in Thompson and many other rural hospitals. In response to the uproar, the minister put that on hold.

I would like to ask the minister: Given the fact that other services have been decentralized in terms of mental health, will the minister indicate now the status of the review of those cuts that would have seen the reduction of 18 hospital beds, would have seen reductions in the emergency ward, the intensive care unit and many of the wards at the Thompson General Hospital?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): I thank the honourable member for the question. It accords me an opportunity to remind the honourable member of the commitment our government has to the Thompson General Hospital and to the people of the North.

I do not think ever before has a government been able to offer the full range of psychiatric services that we are offering to the people of the Thompson area. We are creating 40 new health care jobs and opening 10 acute psychiatric beds. We are bringing a psychiatrist to Thompson. We are bringing obstetric services to the Thompson hospital, and we are also, province-wide, putting into effect a psychiatric enhancement program for general practitioners in Manitoba.

The honourable member asks about staffing guidelines, and that is an important matter. It is not fair, I suggest, Mr. Speaker, that some hospitals get to operate with higher staff-to-patient ratios than other hospitals, all other things being equal. But we do have also to look at the unique circumstances in Thompson and we will do that.

We are not trying to prolong the review of the staffing guidelines because people whose jobs might be affected just simply want to know what that effect is going to be. We are moving as efficiently as we can to complete that review.

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Speaker, well, that is part of the problem. Already many staff have left because of the pending layoffs.

I would like to ask the minister: When will the committee that he established to review the rural hospital guidelines be reporting—the four, I believe, four subcommittees that are looking at specific items—and when will the uncertainty be over for the Thompson General Hospital, the Flin Flon General Hospital, The Pas hospital and many other rural facilities that do not know whether they are going to be cut back significantly under the guidelines that were announced originally last August?

Mr. McCrae: I am glad the honourable member mentioned The Pas hospital because we are going to be opening eight new psychiatric beds at The Pas general hospital and creating 20 new health care jobs in the Norman area and enhancing, again, mental health services and ensuring that those hospitals in those regions provide quality care to the people who need the services there.

The same comments apply that I made, Mr. Speaker, with respect to the Thompson hospital. It is not fair for those communities that have been successfully operating within staffing guidelines not to have had to abide by those rules, always keeping in mind the uniquenesses of the different hospitals and the services provided in the different communities and the different levels of acuity of illness.

Mr. Speaker: Time for Oral Questions has expired.

Committee Changes

Mr. Edward Helwer (Gimli): I move, seconded by the member for St. Vital (Mrs. Render), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts be amended as follows: the member for Kirkfield Park (Mr. Stefanson) for the member for Morris (Mr. Manness); the member for Niakwa

(Mr. Reimer) for the member for Emerson (Mr. Penner); the member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Rose) for the member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Pallister); and the member for La Verendrye (Mr. Sveinson) to fill a vacant spot that we have.

Motion agreed to.

NONPOLITICAL STATEMENT

Churchill Airport

Mr. Speaker: Does the honourable member for Rupertsland have leave to make a nonpolitical statement? [agreed]

Mr. Eric Robinson (Rupertsland): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased today to congratulate the staff of the Churchill airport and the many residents of Churchill for their work and hospitality over the past weekend.

As members may be aware, a Boeing 767 flying from London, England to Los Angeles was forced to make an emergency landing in Churchill when the engine lost power over this past weekend. Fortunately, the plane landed safely and there were no injuries. A replacement plane flew to Churchill on Sunday to take the passengers, in order for them to complete their journey.

Over 200 passengers, along with the crew, were treated extremely well by the town while they were there. In fact, this is a regular occurrence. Almost every year in which trans-Atlantic flights run into problems and trouble they use the Churchill airport for emergency landings due to its location and also its facilities.

The airport at Churchill, with its long ribbon and ability to take any size of plane, is a vital asset of this province and is highly valued by airlines around the world. This most recent case again shows us how important and valuable the airport truly is.

Once again I want to congratulate the people of Churchill for their assistance in this recent incident. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

* (1420)

ORDERS OF THE DAY**House Business**

Hon. Jim Ernst (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, firstly, on a matter of House business, tomorrow at 10 a.m. in Room 255 the Committee on Public Accounts will meet. Next Thursday, May 12, in Room 255 a committee will meet—the appropriate committee to be decided between the Clerk and myself, perhaps to consider the report of A. E. McKenzie Seed Co. Ltd.

That concludes House business.

For today if you would call then, Mr. Speaker, Bill No. 7, Bill No. 8, Bill No. 10, Bill No. 2 and Bill No. 3 in that order. That is 7, 8, 10, 2 and 3.

Following second readings of those bills, and if there is no debate from members opposite, then I will be proposing the motion to resolve into Committee of Supply

Mr. Speaker: I thank the honourable government House leader for that information.

SECOND READINGS**Bill 7—The Crown Lands Amendment Act**

Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Natural Resources): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Enns), that Bill 7, The Crown Lands Amendment Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur les terres domaniales), be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Mr. Driedger: Mr. Speaker, in giving second reading to this short bill, The Crown Lands Amendment Act, I have the usual spreadsheets that I try and make available to the critics of the opposition. I would like to table those for the critics sometime, I guess.

Mr. Speaker: Well, then we will do it right now. I want you to table those documents.

Mr. Driedger: Mr. Speaker, work permits under The Crown Lands Act were introduced in 1983 amendments to the act as a single means of controlling activities on Crown lands. This included lands designated under other resources

acts such as parks, provincial forests or wildlife management areas. Staff who are responsible for issuing and enforcing work permits have identified the need to make the use of work permits more enforceable. Legal counsel has advised that the proposed amendment will accomplish this purpose.

Section 7 of the act is to be amended to state that failure to obtain or failure to comply with conditions of a work permit is an offence. Section 33 of the act is to be amended by increasing the general penalty from \$2,000 to \$10,000. This is consistent with changes in other resource legislation bringing fines for contravening the act to a more reasonable level. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): I move, seconded by the member for Selkirk (Mr. Dewar), that debate be adjourned.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 8—The Fisheries Amendment Act

Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Natural Resources): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Downey), that Bill 8, The Fisheries Amendment Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur la pêche) be now read a second time and referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Mr. Driedger: Mr. Speaker, the spreadsheets for both this bill and the next one, I will present them at the end of my comments. So at that time, I will make that available too.

Mr. Speaker, the provincial Fisheries Act contains no direct authority for Natural Resources officers to stop and search vehicles for the purpose of inspecting species and the quantity of fish being transported, checking fishing equipment, proper Fisheries licensing or for Fisheries violations.

To address this shortcoming, Manitoba is introducing an amendment to The Fisheries Act Chapter F90 which will add authority for inspectors to stop and inspect vehicles to ensure compliance of Fisheries legislation. All existing

enforcement practices have failed to adequately address the illegal sale and transportation of fish to properly control and manage our fisheries resource.

Because of the potential value of the fisheries products being bought, sold and transported, the existing \$500 maximum penalty is outdated and is not an effective deterrent. A maximum fine of \$10,000 is consistent with the potential value of the product and reflects recent significant fine increases in the federal Fisheries legislation for similar offences—example, from \$10,000 to \$100,000 at the federal level—and is also consistent with recent provincial parks legislation. The department considers these amendments crucial to ensuring compliance.

Similar legislation exists under The Wildlife Act, Manitoba, which states that an officer may signal or request any person driving a vehicle to stop, and thereupon the person shall bring the vehicle to a stop and shall not proceed until permitted to do so by the officer.

The parks act, which was approved in the 1993 session of the Legislature, also contains similar provisions, while the wildlife acts of Saskatchewan and Alberta contain similar sections.

The Constitutional Law branch has suggested that in order to properly support the new stop vehicle power we should amend the act to put in place appropriate search provisions. The current act contains only an inspection power which in itself is insufficient to allow search of a vehicle.

I believe there will be strong general support from Manitobans. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): I move, seconded by the member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie), that debate be adjourned.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 10—The Wildlife Amendment Act

Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Natural Resources): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Rural Development (Mr. Derkach), that Bill 10, The Wildlife Amendment Act (Loi

modifiant la Loi sur la conservation de la faune), be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Mr. Driedger: Mr. Speaker, the most important factors affecting the future of wildlife and hunting in Manitoba are public attitudes. In recognition of this, a number of initiatives have been undertaken over the years. Some of these are intended to encourage safe use of firearms, respect for landowner rights and introducing youths to hunting in a safe and ethical manner.

A number of these initiatives have involved a great number of volunteers both within and outside of government from an educational perspective.

Other initiatives have involved the development of legislation to deal with a very small segment of the resource user which refuses to respect the rights of landowners, other hunters, nonconsumptive users and wildlife itself.

The Department of Natural Resources is proposing a number of tough new laws in an effort to curb unsafe hunting practices and trafficking in wild animals or wild animal parks. Laws aimed at curbing unsafe hunting practices are applicable to all hunters. Those who choose to disregard such fundamental laws of safety will pay stiffer penalties including loss of vehicles and other equipment used in the commission of the offence on conviction.

This proposed amendment to The Wildlife Act is necessary to provide for a greater deterrent to those who poach our wildlife or use dangerous or socially unacceptable hunting practices.

* (1430)

In addition to these changes, the proposed amendment will designate wood bison as a protected wild animal. This is being recommended in order to provide protection to a recently introduced free-ranging wood bison herd in Manitoba.

Section 13 of the act is being amended to increase the fine from \$3,000 to up to \$50,000 and imprisonment from three months to one year. The

maximum penalty for dangerous hunting, night hunting and hunting while under the influence of substances is being increased to provide a real and substantive deterrent to such offenders. This is an integral and critical part of a department initiative to curtail poaching and activities commonly associated with such offences that jeopardize public safety. Most other Canadian jurisdictions have recently increased penalties for such offences and have set maximums in this range.

Section 27 of the act is being amended to prohibit the discharge of firearms half an hour after sunset and ending half an hour before sunrise the following day. This is an integral and critical part of a department initiative to curtail poaching and activities commonly associated with such offences that jeopardize public safety. Discharge of firearms either with or without lights at night is always potentially dangerous to humans, livestock and property and is a very common technique used by poachers.

Provision exists to make regulations to vary this time for hunting season or for such other purpose as may deem to be in the public interest. An example of this is the defence of property. Amendment of Section 78 is necessary to provide for the automatic forfeiture or all equipment seized upon conviction for violations involving vehicles being used for nightlighting, for big game animals when vehicle headlights or other lights powered or transported by a vehicle are the source of illumination, and dangerous hunting situations such as shooting at big game from in or on a vehicle when the vehicle has been or is being used to pursue the animal, and to transport any wild animal or parts thereof for trafficking purposes. This also is an integral and critical part of a departmental initiative to curtail poaching and the activities commonly associated with such offences that jeopardize public safety.

Automatic forfeiture of vehicles being used in the commission of serious and dangerous offences by poachers is needed to provide a realistic deterrent consistent with the nature of the offence and the profit associated with these illegal activities. Mandatory forfeiture also creates

greater uniformity in the nature of the penalty being assessed. Forfeiture provisions are scaled on the basis of seriousness, danger to the public or whether injury was incurred or would have likely occurred as a result of the illegal act.

Wood bison are to be added to the Protected Species Division. Mr. Speaker, recently a small herd of wood bison was introduced to the wild for purposes of establishing a free-ranging population in Manitoba. Without any form of protection under The Wildlife Act or any other act, there is an increasing risk and probability that some of these animals are going to be killed.

Listing this species under Division 6 of The Wildlife Act ensures that they will have full protection of the act and also indicates the significance of these animals in Manitoba on the basis of their limited numbers.

Since wood bison are also being raised in captivity, in privately owned herds in Manitoba, the proposed wording clearly distinguishes that wild animal status is not intended to apply to animals from private herds.

This also ensures that administrative and permitting functions under the act, example, possession and export permits, do not apply to wood bison that are kept in captivity and privately owned.

Regulations under the Criminal Code were amended in 1994, resulting in The Wildlife Act defining of a loaded firearm being more lenient and, therefore, in conflict with the Criminal Code, which is paramount. The amendment to the definition of a loaded firearm is mandatory to harmonize it with the federal definition. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

In addition to those remarks, I would like to table the informational spreadsheets for both the last two bills. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: I would like to thank the honourable minister.

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): I move, seconded by the member for Transcona (Mr. Reid), that debate be adjourned.

Motion agreed to.**Bill 2—The Prescription Drugs Cost Assistance Amendment and Pharmaceutical Amendment Act**

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Deputy Premier (Mr. Downey), that Bill 2, The Prescription Drugs Cost Assistance Amendment and Pharmaceutical Amendment Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'aide à l'achat de médicaments sur ordonnance et la Loi sur les pharmacies), be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Mr. McCrae: Mr. Speaker, The Drugs Cost Assistance Amendment and Pharmaceutical Amendment Act relate to the all-parties agreement reached in the 1993 legislative session to develop a Pharmacare card system for Manitobans.

We have spent the past year developing a Drug Program Information Network, and it is called DPIN for short. DPIN consists of a computer network connecting approximately 250 pharmacies to a central data base.

DPIN will record all prescription drugs dispensed in all community pharmacies and some out-patient hospital pharmacies. It will monitor each of these prescriptions against the patient's drug-use history and report any adverse drug interactions, adverse therapeutic events, or fraudulent use.

Another benefit of DPIN is that it will process all Pharmacare claims and provide real time adjudication of Pharmacare reimbursement to patients and pharmacies. Mr. Speaker, that is a fancy way of saying that you are going to get your rebate instantly.

We are in the final series of the pilot project and will soon be able to announce the implementation date. The bill before us will enable the implementation of the Drug Program Information Network.

The objectives of DPIN are the following: to reduce adverse drug interactions and reactions; to

reduce hospitalization as a result of adverse drug events; to promote better communication between pharmacists, prescribers and patients; to help prevent double-doctoring and fraudulent use of drugs—

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): Double, double, oh, double-doctoring, not double-dipping.

Mr. McCrae: The honourable member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) has double-dipping on his mind these days.

Mr. Ashton: I did not try to run federally, Jim.

Mr. McCrae: Another objective of DPIN is to help measure drug and health outcomes.

The honourable member for Thompson says he did not try to seek a federal nomination. I suppose if he had he would have had about the same luck as I did.

Mr. Ashton: I would hope I would have had the same luck you did.

Mr. McCrae: Yes, exactly.

Another objective is to help measure drug and health outcomes, to streamline administrative procedures and to facilitate the implementation of other desirable improvements in drug insurance programs.

Mr. Speaker, this bill will enable us to achieve these objectives for the benefit of all Manitobans. With these amendments, Manitoba residents will be asked to present their personal health identification number, and there is an acronym for that too called PHIN, when filing a prescription. In conjunction with this, these amendments will ensure confidentiality of patient prescription drug information, a very important objective.

Access to this information is restricted to pharmacists and prescribers who require information to ensure an individual is receiving appropriate drug treatments. There are significant professional and financial penalties for improper disclosure.

* (1440)

I would like to reiterate, in conclusion, that these new amendments will enable the implementation of an improved Pharmacare system that will result

in significant benefits to Manitobans. These include financial benefits through instant rebates, health benefits through drug use history review and the benefits to taxpayers by helping to prevent fraud.

These amendments were developed in consultation with the Consumers' Association of Manitoba, the Manitoba Society of Seniors, the Manitoba Association for Rights and Liberties, the College of Physicians and Surgeons, the Manitoba Dental Association and the Manitoba Pharmaceutical Association. These are all very important agencies and organizations with which government should consult when putting together an important program like this.

I am very pleased to note that the concepts for this bill are supported by all these organizations, and all indications are that all the parties in this House are going to support this enabling bill because they, like me, want to see improvements in our Pharmacare system.

Mr. Speaker, with these brief remarks, I recommend this bill to the serious contemplation and support of all honourable members in this House.

Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona): I move, seconded by the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton), that debate be adjourned.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 3—The Cancer Treatment and Research Foundation Amendment Act

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to move, seconded by the honourable Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Driedger), that Bill 3, The Cancer Treatment and Research Foundation Amendment Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur la Fondation de traitement du cancer et de recherche en cancérologie), be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Mr. McCrae: Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased today to introduce Bill 3 for second reading. This bill will amend The Cancer Treatment and

Research Foundation Act to accommodate the present-day needs of the foundation in continuing its mission to provide Manitobans with the high quality of cancer treatment and research that we have enjoyed since the foundation was incorporated in 1962.

The major amendments contained in Bill 3 are the following. First will be the expansion of the membership of the foundation from 18 to 22 members. There is currently a designated member of the foundation representing the Health Sciences Centre. Bill 3 will add designated members representing St. Boniface General Hospital and the University of Manitoba to reflect the close association between the foundation and these institutions.

The bill is designed also to reflect the foundation's provincial mandate for cancer treatment and research. Bill 3 also requires that the Minister of Health appoint 10 persons as members of the foundation and that these 10 persons be appointed each from a separate geographical area of the province. There is a good reason for that; obviously cancer does not know any geographic bounds. There will be seven other persons appointed by the foundation who will be selected for the specific expertise needed. These appointments will be subject to the approval of the Lieutenant-Governor-in-Council.

The bill deals with the election of the chairperson of the foundation by the members of the foundation. Currently, the chairperson is appointed by the Lieutenant-Governor-in-Council. Bill 3 will permit the members of the foundation to elect a chairperson from amongst their own members. As well, the position of vice-chairperson will be created.

There has been a restriction on borrowing for the Manitoba Cancer Treatment and Research Foundation. The current act sets a limit of \$300,000 on borrowing by the foundation. This might have been appropriate in 1962 when the act was proclaimed. The foundation has embarked on a major capital redevelopment to enable it to continue to serve the needs of Manitobans with cancer. The borrowing cap will be removed in

order to facilitate the capital expenditures that will be necessary and to give the foundation the same borrowing powers as other similar statutory organizations.

I should say that I had the privilege yesterday to visit the foundation and to be met by Dr. Brent Schacter, who is the director, and to be met by Mr. Arnold Portugal, the chairman of the board, and to be ushered through the facility and to see all of the activities that go on there, the very important activities. You can measure that importance by the number of my fellow Manitobans who were there to receive treatment or assessment or whatever they were there for.

I was quite impressed by the facility although it was extremely busy, and there is good reason for the foundation to be working on preparations for major capital redevelopment so that the foundation can continue to provide this vital service to Manitobans for many years to come. Any borrowing by the foundation will continue to require the approval of the Lieutenant-Governor-in-Council and to be subject to the capital expenditure review process under The Health Services Insurance Act.

The bill before us deals with the authority to enact by-laws. Bill 3 will give the foundation the power to make by-laws, setting out rules of procedure, medical appointments and qualifications and so forth. All such by-laws will require the approval of the Minister of Health. This is consistent with The Hospitals Act which requires ministerial approval of the by-laws of the hospitals in this province. The other amendments set out in the bill are included to incorporate gender-neutral language into the existing act.

I remember when I was Minister of Justice being responsible for Legislative Counsel, and it is the policy of our government that whenever legislation comes before us for amendment, we try to bring our legislation up to date with respect to gender-neutral language. There was a time when the language built into the statutes of this country and this province were not necessarily—indeed were not gender neutral, and it is time that we

addressed that. We have been addressing that in an ongoing way.

So with all of those comments, Mr. Speaker, and the important initiatives that are contained within this bill, I recommend it to my honourable colleagues at second reading for their consideration and approval. Thank you.

Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Rossmere (Mr. Schellenberg), that debate be adjourned.

Motion agreed to.

House Business

Hon. Jim Ernst (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, on a further matter of House business, the Clerk has advised me that it is of significant and extreme importance that the committee to which the report of A. E. McKenzie Seeds Limited will be referred will be the Committee in Economic Development. I just wanted to confirm that for members of the House.

Mr. Speaker: That is very important, very important. Thank you, government House leader.

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

In the Chamber will be the continuation of the Estimates of Health; in the committee room, Room 255, the Estimates of Rural Development, and upon completion of Rural Development, if it occurs this afternoon, we will start the Estimates of Industry, Trade and Tourism.

Mr. Speaker: I thank the honourable government House leader for that information.

* (1450)

Motion agreed to, and the House resolved itself into a committee to consider of the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty with the honourable member for St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau) in the Chair for the Department of Rural Development; and the honourable member for Seine River (Mrs. Dacquay) in the Chair for the Department of Health.

* (1500)

**COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY
(Concurrent Sections)**

RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Deputy Chairperson (Marcel Laurendeau): Order, please. Good afternoon. Will the Committee of Supply please come to order. This afternoon, this section of the Committee of Supply meeting in Room 255 will resume consideration of the Estimates of the Department of Rural Development.

When the committee last sat, it had been considering item 13.6 (c) on page 137 of the Estimates book, but we had asked for leave of the committee at that time to deal with 13.5 which had already been passed. I would ask the committee, is there leave to continue, or do we want to just move on to 13.6? Move on? Okay, it is 13.6.

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Rural Development): Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I was wondering whether this is the time to respond, because when we closed yesterday's session, the member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie) had made some statements and posed a question, I suppose, that should be responded to, and I would like to know if I can continue with a response to that question.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: It is time. It is the honourable minister's time.

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, members of the committee, I would like to just put on record some of the achievements that have been accomplished by specifically government in northern Manitoba, because instead of dealing with separate departments, I think there have been many departments that have worked very co-operatively for the improved quality of life in northern Manitoba.

With respect to Manitoba Energy and Mines, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I have to tell you that the Marketing branch of that department, in conjunction with the Department of Finance, have developed a new investment tax credit in processing allowances, which was announced in the 1994 budget on April 21.

The Mineral Exploration Incentive Program has been developed, and it is being administered through the Marketing branch. There are a total, I am told, of 31 projects and \$17 million of exploration activities that have been approved under this program, which came into effect in March of 1992. Let us remember that up until this time very little was going on in terms of exploration for minerals in northern Manitoba.

Again, the Department of Energy and Mines, in conjunction with the Department of Finance, have developed the mining tax holiday for new mines and a mining tax exploration incentive in the North. These incentives, which have been put together by government, have led to the opening of a new gold mine in Lynn Lake and companies investigating the reopening of mines at Bissett. We know that activity now is ongoing at Bissett, and we know that there is a lot of interest and activity beginning in Snow Lake.

A lone agreement with Hudson Bay Mining and Smelting Co. is providing financial assistance for the construction of environmental improvements. We have been through that with the plant in Flin Flon, which is in the member's back yard, if you like. That has been ongoing since 1991.

The member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie), when responding to issues that this government has embarked on, makes some very negative comments. However, those comments have been contradicted by even the media itself. I would like to quote the member for Flin Flon when he said about the budget, it is a dubious effort at best.

However, another story in the Reminder and stories in the Winnipeg Free Press and the Winnipeg Sun tell quite a different story than what was told to us by the member for Flin Flon. The headlines, for example, in the Free Press on April 22 indicate that our budget was a budget bonanza for business. The story goes on to read, I quote: "HUDSON'S BAY Mining & Smelting Co. vice-president Dale Powell admits he was worried as he waited for the provincial government to hand down its latest budget.

“So often when you’re facing a new budget, you face it with a certain amount of trepidation,’ Powell said in an telephone interview from Flin Flon. ‘You think in terms of: What are they going to hit us with next?’

“But all his worrying was for naught in the case of Wednesday’s provincial budget, Powell added, because the Filmon government delivered plums instead of bombs as far as the provincial mining industry is concerned.”

So there we go, Mr. Deputy Chairperson. Papers today and people in northern Manitoba are aware of some of the very positive things that have been taking place in northern Manitoba as a result of this government’s action.

The mining tax holiday which we talk about is certainly significant for northern Manitoba and the exploration incentive program that was proclaimed in February of 1992 certainly provide the kind of environment in northern Manitoba that allows for the reopening of business, if you like, in northern Manitoba for northern Manitobans.

Besides all of this, we have worked as a Department of Rural Development with our communities in northern Manitoba to ensure that in fact those communities, when they are impacted with mine closures, can face the world with some confidence. I think the example that I used yesterday of Lynn Lake, where we helped Lynn Lake with a very innovative project in terms of rebuilding their community and tearing down some of the vandalized homes that could not be salvaged, I think, was an example of how true partnerships work for the betterment of a community.

I visited Lynn Lake in the early part of 1994, and I can tell you that the community has taken on a very different look to it than it had when I visited more than a year ago. We had a bit of a reception that was cosponsored by the town and our own department for the people who worked on these projects to show them some recognition for what they had done for their community. I must say, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, that everybody in that community was very pleased with the work that

had been done, and those who worked on the project themselves found the experience to be worthwhile. Many of them, I might add, went on to seek further employment in the mine. As a matter of fact, a couple of the individuals came off shift to join us at the reception and then went to bed because their shifts were 12-hour shifts.

We have worked with those communities, and it does not matter whether it is Lynn Lake, Snow Lake, Leaf Rapids, Thompson, each one of those communities in northern Manitoba has received a lot of attention by staff from my department and, indeed, by myself as minister and by other ministers as well.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Might I ask the committee, since the honourable minister seems to have moved to 13.5, was there leave to continue on 13.5 or are we dealing with 13.6? [agreed]

Mr. Jerry Storie (Flin Flon): Mr. Deputy Chairperson, if the minister had not decided to respond, I have to say that I was sorely provoked into responding to his response in response to my response.

The quote from the Flin Flon Reminder, where I talked about a dubious effort, was in specific reference to the fact that this government announced a number of quote, unquote, mining initiatives which will have zero impact on the provincial budget.

In other words, it ain’t going to cost them a cent. The net impact of all the changes for the 1994-95 year was identified in the budget document itself as zero. In other words, it is not going to cost them anything.

What I had said in my remarks to the Reminder was that this was a pre-election budget. It was a public relations effort and that it certainly was not going to be this government in any event that had to pay the consequences of these kinds of tax incentives. Having said that, I have never said, did not say during that interview nor at any time in the past that the government should not use whatever measures it wants to stimulate the mining industry.

* (1510)

I am not surprised that Dale Powell, who is the vice-president with HBM&S, would say that this is plums. It may in the long run be very attractive for HBM&S and Inco. The bottom line is that there are now some 1,500, once 2,400, steel workers in Flin Flon for whom this budget is not only a sham but a disappointment because many of the issues that are important to them, including the longevity of the community, have not been addressed at all. That is the point.

I was very interested in the minister's response and he talked about his support for Lynn Lake. You know, it is interesting to hear the minister talk about the success of the new mining venture in Lynn Lake. Well, the member may not recall that I had to take up the charge for Cazador resources approximately a year and a half ago, after the government had left the proposal from Cazador sitting on the minister's desk for 11 months.

I got a call from the chief executive officer of Cazador resources, John Chapman, and he said, what is going on? He specifically referenced the incompetence of the then-Deputy Minister of Energy and Mines, talked about the lack of, I guess, business acumen in terms of dealing with a company that wanted to do business in Manitoba. Eleven months from the time they submitted a proposal to the government to get people working in Lynn Lake, I had to ask, and I asked on several occasions, in no uncertain terms, for the government to respond, and finally we get a response to Cazador's proposal, and we finally get some action.

If that is the kind of diligence this minister wants to talk about from himself and his colleagues, then I think it is time for a change. So I do not accept any of this.

An Honourable Member: Call an election.

Mr. Storie: My colleague for St. Boniface says, call an election, and that might not be a bad idea.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I want to put on the record as well that I have asked for approximately 14 times—

An Honourable Member: Careful, Jerry. Oh, you have got a job, I am sorry.

Mr. Storie: Yes, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I have a job, and I will have a job.

An Honourable Member: You are ready for an election, you have got a job.

Mr. Storie: Yes, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, we have that established, and it is a job that I want to do.

The bottom line is I have asked probably half a dozen times in this committee for the minister to tell me what his department has done. He has come back and said, well, we did this in the budget, and the Energy and Mines department has done this and this and this.

The fact is there has been virtually no support from this department at all, or from this minister. There has not even been that much support of rhetoric, unless he was pushed. So I am going to give up my effort to get an answer from the minister about what specifically they have done.

I do have some other questions with respect to the REDI program that I want to raise, and again I am afraid, Mr. Minister, that when I ask those questions, we are going to get the same kind of response we have got in response to these questions. That is more rhetoric, no definitive answers, and we will simply confirm that the government is more interested in talking about rural development than actually doing anything.

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I can understand why the member for Flin Flon is anxious for an election, personally. He already has secured employment so he is anxious to get on with other things.

I do not blame him for abandoning that ship that he is a part of right now. He has certainly looked after his own personal interests, and you know I congratulate him for that. However, I am not so sure that his colleagues are quite as anxious as he is.

An Honourable Member: Well, after the next election, you will not have a job, so that will be different.

Mr. Derkach: Well, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, we shall wait and see.

I would like to table for today, but before I table, I would like to put on record some of the programs that Rural Development has been involved in, in supporting northern communities.

The member makes a comment that it was he who took action on Cazador mines in Lynn Lake, but he makes too much of his own power in terms of government, and perhaps he should consider his own position.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the Mining Community Reserve Fund in Lynn Lake has received a total of \$750,800 from the Department of Rural Development.

Provincial government funding to northern communities under the Local Government Support Services branch—in 1994-95 the Estimate is \$906,125 for the communities of Churchill, Consol, Flin Flon, Gillam, Grand Rapids, Leaf Rapids, Lynn Lake, Mystery Lake, Snow Lake, The Pas, Thompson and for the Northern Affairs communities as well.

Provincial government funding to northern communities under the Local Government Support Services area, again, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the grants in lieu of taxes, amount significantly for northern communities. We have something like \$1,094,705 in total and that is certainly not insignificant.

Under the Transit Grants, Flin Flon will receive \$49,980 in the 1994-95 year. Thompson will receive \$128,207. The mobility disadvantaged grants, again, we have significant contributions there which total \$120,000, I believe. Municipal Support Grants, again, to those same communities. We have a list of communities, a list of grants, and just by way of example the LGD of Churchill, the total is \$180,590; the LGD of Consol is \$2,656; Flin Flon \$291,848; Gillam \$86,209; Grand Rapids \$3,961; Leaf Rapids \$44,874; Lynn Lake \$25,421; Mystery Lake \$19,720; Snow Lake \$18,222; The Pas \$204,318; Thompson \$604,052.

The list goes on. There are police grants that go to northern communities. The VLT support grant that goes to these northern communities, again, is distributed from the Department of Rural

Development. From the LynnGold resources trust account, Lynn Lake has received a total of \$180,000 since our government has been in office. So, therefore, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, this is an indication of the support that this government and this department has given to northern communities.

So let not the member from Flin Flon in any way indicate that there has not been support for northern Manitoba.

Mr. Clif Evans (Interlake): Mr. Deputy Chairperson, if I may refer and stay with this 13.5 (c) and ask whether the Rural Economic Development officers, the positions were put out in a newspaper last year, I believe, last summer for seven [interjection] We can either deal with it now or deal with it at the Minister's Salary.

Mr. Derkach: I can deal with it now.

Mr. Clif Evans: Can the minister tell me the process that his department went through and the rationale of I believe it was seven Rural Economic Development officers to be hired throughout the province. Can he just indicate to us why those seven and what their positions were going to be?

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the member is right. Those were economic development officers that we were hiring for the department. We had advertised I believe it was last fall, if I am not mistaken, or late last summer for these positions.

We had received a number of applications. Those were screened through the normal process. Out of the ones that we wanted to hire I believe there were two successful candidates. One is in process at the present time, and we will probably be going back to competition for the remaining positions that are currently vacant.

Mr. Clif Evans: Any one of the two positions that have already been filled, is one of them at all for the Thompson area?

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the member should know that we offered a position in northern Manitoba to a candidate who had applied, and the candidate withdrew after we had made the offer for that position. So we do not have anybody

for the Thompson one right now. That is going to be one that will be advertised and filled down the road.

* (1520)

Mr. Clif Evans: There are still four out of the seven basically that have not been filled, Thompson being one of them. What others?

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, these positions are for the department as a whole, but we will be locating them in our existing offices around the province. We have the regional district offices that are located throughout the province, and that is where we will want our staff to be working out of. If there are projects that are of a large magnitude, we may require the services of more than one officer to put the package together. In some cases they will be mobile, but by and large their home base will be the local regional offices throughout the province.

Mr. Clif Evans: In seeing the importance through the minister's statement and the way that rural development seems to be going, you would think that these positions could have been filled. Is there a problem with candidates? Is there a problem with the job description that candidates do not fulfill?

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I guess it is fair to say that we went through the competition as you normally would, and out of the number of people who had applied for the positions there were some who were offered jobs. We were looking for specific skill sets for those jobs. These are very important jobs in these communities, and we want to make sure that the people who we are going to hire will have the necessary set of skills to deliver those kinds of programs.

It was, I guess, determined by the hiring process that the three candidates were offered positions. One declined, so therefore that left us with a vacancy. Those will be readvertised and we will be refilling them.

Mr. Clif Evans: With reference back to the Thompson area position, you are saying then there was no offer at all to anybody for the—there was one offer, I am sorry. I want to stand corrected on that. Of course the refusal by the applicant came

in. Who does the interviewing and the hiring in your department?

Mr. Derkach: The process that we followed was one where we did a prescreening of the candidates. There were, I believe, over 300 applicants at the time. Then there was a selection committee struck to deal with further screening. And then there was a final selection committee put together which included the Civil Service Commission and staff from the Department of Rural Development for the final screening.

Mr. Clif Evans: Can the minister tell me, besides the one candidate that the job was offered to, how many applicants were there for the Thompson positions specifically?

Mr. Derkach: The applicants did not state, in most cases, where they wanted to be located. It was through the interview process that the interview committee asked the question as to location that the candidates may choose or whether they would be prepared to move to locations around the province.

Mr. Clif Evans: I do not recall the exact words of my question, but I do not think the minister really answered what I did ask. Were there people from Thompson who applied for these positions, and were these people considered and interviewed prior to the offer to the one candidate from Thompson specifically?

If you are looking for someone for this type of position and, as you say, their positions could be throughout Manitoba, you would think that the department would want to hire someone from within a specific area if there was such a need for an officer in that area?

Mr. Derkach: I do not know how many people there were from Thompson who applied for the position. I could not tell you that because I never did see the list. Therefore, I would not know how many applied from Thompson, but we could certainly find that out.

There were people who had northern experience who had applied for positions as well. As a matter of fact, the person who was offered the position was not from Thompson presently, but had worked

in the northern part of the province and so was familiar with northern Manitoba.

Location is not the only factor that is taken into account in terms of where you come from. There were other factors that were considered in screening the candidates. The criteria were applied equally to all candidates.

Mr. Clif Evans: Mr. Deputy Chair, the minister indicated that there were quite a few hundred total applicants for the seven positions.

Mr. Derkach: I indicated in my previous response that there were over 300 applicants.

Mr. Clif Evans: In the final screening process then and before the interviews as such, how many candidates were you down to for seven positions?

* (1530)

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I am told that in the end the final number, if you like, of people who were interviewed was around 15 or 16. I do not have that specific information here, but it was in that range. I could certainly get that for the member.

Mr. Clif Evans: I would like to also put that on record that I would certainly appreciate that list of the candidates.

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I did not say in my response that I would provide the names of the candidates who were interviewed in the final analysis. I would provide the number of candidates that were interviewed.

Mr. Clif Evans: I guess that is through confidentiality of a person. Okay.

I would just like to say that it has been almost a year to fill these positions—over 300 candidates originally. I wonder what the minister's department is looking for in people to hire seven people, seven officers for a province out of 300 applicants, and you can only fill two of the positions. If it is such an important future position for this province and this department, let us get on with it.

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, as was indicated, there were about 16 people who were interviewed in the final screening or the final

process. Several of them were offered positions. A number of them declined for one reason or another.

Yes, I was probably as disappointed as the member that we could not fill the seven positions from the list that we had. Nevertheless, we are trying to ensure that the people we hire for those positions have the skill set that is required to do a job in that area. Simply just throwing anyone into a position like that would be unfair, I think, to the individual and to the department, especially when the task is that specific.

However, I am confident that there are people out there who have the right skill set, and we will be re-advertising this particular job for filling the remaining four or five positions that we have vacant at this time.

Mr. Clif Evans: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, well, I certainly hope that the criteria for the position are so far out and far fetched that you are going to be hunting for these five people from now until certain parts of the earth freeze over. [interjection] Certain ones that will not melt. Sorry, Reverend.

I would just like to continue by saying that I am certainly hopeful and I will be watching the minister's department with this and getting in touch with his people to see just who is applying and how the process is going. I would like to see these positions filled as quickly as possible.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: We are now dealing with 6.(c) Sewer and Water for \$2,000,000—pass.

6.(d) Canada-Manitoba Partnership Agreement on Municipal Water Infrastructure \$3,520,000.

Mr. Clif Evans: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I just want to make comment on this section that I was very pleased, I believe it was last month, sitting in and being a part of the official announcement of Arborg receiving funds through this program. Now they are able to proceed with some of their infrastructure work and economic development, and I am pleased to see the Speaker here also.

I would just say that I know the community of Arborg is very, very pleased, and, hopefully, that we can with this program, as I think I have mentioned before, that we can perhaps deal with this department or this part of the department.

Ashern is having an enormous amount of trouble with their drinking water; Fisher Branch is, and Riverton. So I would like to put that on record that those three communities I will be contacting to work at contacting your department. I am also informed that Plumas is in dire straits with their water, and I will certainly support that project if possible—but, again, just for the record.

An Honourable Member: I am short of water. You going to support me too?

Mr. Clif Evans: Well, sure, if you are going to drink it. Of course.

But, anyhow, the Riverton area and the Fisher Branch area and the Ashern area are having a tremendous amount of problems with their water, and I would certainly like to encourage this minister and this department to work alongside of those communities if they so wish to approach the government for the provincial share of projects that they may have.

Mr. Bob Rose (Turtle Mountain): Mr. Deputy Chairperson, just a couple of questions on infrastructure—

An Honourable Member: Are you short of water?

Mr. Rose: Well, I have a glassful here, so I am all right for a moment.

Like the member for the Interlake, we in Turtle Mountain certainly appreciated the announcements that were made a few weeks ago with the initial \$20 million or \$19 million, I think it was, of the proposed \$60 million project. Some of the questions that have been asked of me since then, it was quite noticeable that the ones that were approved were relatively small projects in the terms of \$10,000, \$12,000, \$15,000, \$20,000.

Some of the jurisdictions, of course, have got applications in for much larger projects. Having seen the results of the first initial approval, their questions to me were, are our projects too high, have we put in a project that because of its size will not receive approval?

I would ask if there is any basis to that kind of a conclusion, if some of the local jurisdictions

should be looking at something a little less ambitious in order to obtain approval?

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I think the question is related to the federal-provincial infrastructure program that we signed last month with the federal government and the municipalities.

Yes, to answer that question specifically, there are communities that are coming in with very large projects. I will give you the example of Flin Flon. It came in with a project for \$21 million. Now that is a sizable chunk of the infrastructure program, and it is very difficult to try and accommodate a project of that size when the infrastructure program is only \$204 million in total.

There are other communities, as well, who have come in with very large projects. Again, if you try to accommodate all those huge projects under the infrastructure program, very quickly you would have the money eaten up by a few communities. So the committee that has been put together, made up of municipal and the MAUM and UMM group, are looking at how they can regionally distribute the money so that every community in Manitoba will have some benefit from the program.

That is a very difficult task because then it makes it very hard to address those large projects. I think they have instructed the secretariat to go back to communities and to give them some kind of a fair indication of what is realistic in terms of the infrastructure program and see whether or not a community can perhaps look at the priorities that have been submitted and give some indication as to what they would choose as a project that might fit under the program in terms of regional distribution.

So the challenges are out there, but we are allowing the process to continue under the advisory committee, and they are working very hard. They are meeting almost weekly. Certainly, we have allowed them to conduct their duties and to come forward with the projects, and we accept their recommendations.

Mr. Rose: Part of the same announcement—it was the announcement of bringing natural gas to many

communities in Turtle Mountain as well as other constituencies. One of the questions that has been raised with me, and perhaps this is an unfair question for you, but the requirement of 60 percent of both residential and business before Centra will come to the community, and the question has been posed to me: Is that 60 percent of the actual usage, or is it 60 percent of the actual residence? In other words, if there are 100 homes, do 60 of them have to sign up, or is it 60 percent of the total quantity of energy required?

* (1540)

Mr. Derkach: I thank the member for that question. That is one that has come to us on several occasions. The number of sign-ups required is 60 percent of the residential users and 60 percent by volume of the commercial users. So it is a split in terms of arriving at something that will give the green light to the project.

An Honourable Member: Thank you.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Shall the item pass? The item is accordingly passed.

6.(e) Drought Proofing \$299,700.

Mr. Neil Gaudry (St. Boniface): There is a difference of about \$245,000, and it says: "The decrease reflects the completion of projects The decreased funding in this program was re-allocated to the Water Development." Where does this amount show in the Estimates?

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, it is shown in item (b) where last year we had \$400,000; this year that has been increased to \$644,400.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Shall the item pass? The item is accordingly passed.

6.(f) Conservation Districts \$1,897,800—pass.

6.(g) Downtown Revitalization \$333,000.

Mr. Clif Evans: Just a comment on the drop of \$250,000. Can the minister just indicate what effect it had in previous times? Downtown Revitalization, is that for rural communities? What is that? Is that for the city of Winnipeg?

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the Downtown Revitalization program was targeted at

two communities: Thompson and Brandon. It was a five-year agreement. The difference that the member points to is a result of an extension of the agreement by one year.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Shall the item pass? The item is accordingly passed.

Resolution 13.6: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$8,838,900 for Rural Development, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1995.

We will now move on to Lotteries Funded Appropriations, 7. Rural Economic Programs (a) Grow Bonds Program (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$345,400.

Mr. Clif Evans: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, just a few comments on the REDI program. I am sure we are all aware and it has been debated for quite a while now that most of this funding, of course, comes from VLT revenues. As we see this year, the total expenditure for REDI program has gone up.

Just a few comments—and these are comments that I think not only myself but other members get from their communities—the fact that the money basically has come from rural areas, and originally it was supposed to stay in rural areas. But some of the comments when I would mention the REDI program to them were the difficulty to access the program and the criteria that were part and parcel of applying for whether it be for infrastructure program, for a feasibility study, and I am just wondering how the minister is going to deal with this. I would like to know, basically, since the REDI program has been in force, can he tell me how many total staff that the department has in the REDI program—total staff?

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Order, please. At this time we are dealing with the Grow Bonds Program. If the honourable member looks, he will see that (b) is Rural Economic Development, which is the REDI program.

Mr. Clif Evans: It is all basically under 13.7, is it not?

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: No, we are dealing with 13.7 (a), which is Grow Bonds. We are

dealing with one line at a time, and we are dealing with—right now it is Salaries and Employee Benefits on the Grow Bonds. The line the honourable member wants to ask those questions on is in (b) Rural Economic Development Initiatives on the (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits, which is one down. At this time we are dealing with the Grow Bonds side.

Mr. Clif Evans: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, could the minister then provide me with the total number of staff within the Grow Bonds Program?

Mr. Derkach: There are seven staff presently in the Grow Bonds office.

Mr. Clif Evans: The Other Expenditures has dropped a bit. Can the minister explain? It is not a great drop, but the reason for that amount?

Mr. Derkach: As the member knows, the Grow Bonds Program is a new program, and last year was our first year of operations under the Grow Bonds Program. Therefore, our estimates on expenditures were, I guess, something that we had no historical experience on. Therefore, we had to put numbers in which we thought would reflect the actual expenditures that we would incur.

This year when we went throughout the Estimates of Expenditure, we were able to then look at how we could better operate our offices, and in some areas the member will note that there are decreases throughout, whether it is from the salaries right down to other operating expenditures. There is one area perhaps that he sees a significant decrease, and that is in the grants. Those are grants to the round tables. We are estimating that this year we will not have as many applications as we did last year because we now have over a hundred municipalities that are participating in round tables. So we do not feel that there is going to be as much activity in that area as there has been in the past year.

I think what we are trying to do is come up with an estimate here that is realistic, and so that is why we are showing somewhat of a decrease in the bottom line.

Mr. Clif Evans: Could the minister tell us or table, preferably table, the projects to date that the

Grow Bonds issues have been involved in, and can he indicate what future the Grow Bonds issue in the province and areas has?

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, this is a program that I am extremely proud of and one that I could speak on for hours and hours, I guess, because it has been such a positive experience for all of Manitoba. Let me say that when we started the Grow Bonds Program there was a lot of skepticism about it, especially from the ranks of the opposition who did not view that program very positively, and kept coming back to us and saying, well, there is no activity in the program because of the criteria and because you are so slow at adopting the program.

Well, that was not the case at all. I know that the opposition would have probably liked us to move ahead with many, many more projects, but ones that perhaps needed to have some serious review in terms of their ability to meet the criteria that were established under Grow Bonds. We had some growing pains in the beginning, and I have said from the very time that I took over the portfolio that we had to go through a process of growing pains because there was not a program, except the one in Saskatchewan, that we could model our program after. We made some changes to our program so that we as a government would not be buying the businesses, so that we would not be guaranteeing the total amount that would be invested in a business.

There had to be some commitment from the entrepreneur, there had to be some commitment from the community, if you like, to make sure that this was a viable project. Therefore, there were many projects that came forward that did not have a business plan, that did not really give any market information, and all of that kind of situation occurred in the first months of the program. We got over that.

We went out to the communities; we marketed the program aggressively; we held town hall meetings around the province to ensure that municipalities understood the program, that communities understood the program, and that they understood the criteria that were attached to

the program. What we found was that as communities became more and more aware of the program, they came back with applications that were done much more completely. There was less need for a lot of sending back and forth and revising the applications themselves, and we found that, lo and behold, we were able to start approving projects much more quickly.

* (1550)

Something else that happened was that the communities took hold of the program. They understood it well, and then they began to run with it. They would, in many instances, encourage manufacturers, small-business people, businesses in communities who could use Grow Bonds to expand and perhaps develop new businesses. They encouraged this kind of activity, and we have seen a tremendous number of applications come forward.

We today have 11 Grow Bonds that are active in the province. Our most recent was announced yesterday. It was a \$185,000 Grow Bond, and I will pass the news release around, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, if I may, for the members of the committee to look at, because this is an example of a tiny business which started in the home, right in the kitchen, and grew from there to what we have today is a milling and baking company. The Grow Bond that we announced yesterday was for \$185,000, and before we left the meeting yesterday, they sold \$42,000 of Grow Bonds.

That is just an example of how quickly these Grow Bonds are selling. As a matter of fact, I just received word now that as of 2:30 today this Grow Bond has sold \$101,000. It does not match the success that we had with one in Winkler, where we had a Grow Bond for \$240,000, and it sold out in three hours.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I think it does point to the tremendous success of this program. It does show that in fact there is a lot of money in local communities which can be invested in local projects, projects that make sense.

This morning we met with people from the banking, financial institutions, and they told us that

they are very high on Grow Bonds. They think that Grow Bonds is the kind of program that is really going to put rural Manitoba on its feet and allow for businesses to operate very effectively and efficiently in the rural part of our province.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, to date, we have issued Grow Bonds in the amount of \$4,519,600. The total investment, as a result of the Grow Bonds, has come to over \$14 million, almost \$15 million, and the job creation as a result of this is up to 257 new jobs in rural Manitoba.

We have currently under review 11 projects, projects that I am sure will be coming forward for approval in the next little while. I am sorry, I am wrong. There are 12 active files in the due diligence process, and, once again, that amounts to \$8.7 million of Grow Bonds activity.

Manitoba is really starting to take up the issue of Grow Bonds, and I am sure that in the next little while we will see this program expanded considerably.

Mr. Clif Evans: The minister also added the fact there are 257 new jobs. These jobs, are they short term in expansion of a business, or are they long term? Are they permanent? Do we know that for sure and exactly where they are?

Mr. Derkach: I thank the member for that question because jobs are certainly an important aspect in rural Manitoba, especially in small communities.

In a small community, two or three jobs mean as much to that community as 100 or 500 jobs in a city like Brandon or Winnipeg, and so the impact is very significant in small communities.

The jobs that I am speaking about, the 257 jobs, are all permanent jobs. They are long-term jobs, and they are jobs that did not exist in those communities before, whether we talk about a corporation like Rimer-Alco in Morden, which just created 16 new jobs; or somebody like the Keystone Seed Coaters in Rivers, which will be creating six additional new jobs; or Sterling Press in Selkirk, which has created 18-plus new jobs—I understand that they are over the 18 jobs already; the tire recycling corporation in Winkler at 25 jobs.

Woodstone Foods, for example, in Portage said to us that they would be creating 20 new jobs, but I understand they have surpassed that 20 already. So there are more than 257 jobs that have been created in rural Manitoba.

Our statistics are simply those that have been based on the applications that have come forward.

Mr. Clif Evans: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the minister indicated that there were 12 new applications for Grow Bonds. Can the minister tell me whether the dehyd operation in Arborg is part of these new applications for Grow Bonds?

Mr. Derkach: Yes, as a matter of fact, we have been working with the community of Arborg now for some time. Arborg has a very active community. They are doing some very innovative things, and they have applied not only for a dehyd plant, but as the member knows, they have applied for more than one project, and the dehyd plant is one of those projects that is being considered. Arborg is certainly setting the pace for many other communities in rural Manitoba in terms of their interest and activity in attracting industry to their community.

As a matter of fact, I could say to the member that he knows of the former cheese plant in Arborg being closed for—it never did operate from the time it opened, and today we see some very positive results in terms of getting that facility back in operation and seeing a company move into it that will potentially employ a good number of people in that area.

Mr. Clif Evans: Can the minister indicate the amount of the Grow Bond for the dehyd plant, or is that still being negotiated?

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I do not think it would be fair to speculate on what the end result of that Grow Bond might be because the application is still in a fairly preliminary stage, and as the application moves through the process, that number may shift up and down somewhat. So I would be hesitant to indicate specifically on the amount that that Grow Bond is for at this time.

Mr. Clif Evans: Would the operation then of the dehyd plant or the facility having a go-ahead and

being built and into production—how much effect does the dehyd plant have on the area receiving the natural gas that they had so diligently worked for the last five years? What further criteria must be met by the dehyd operation, by the community, to be able to extend the natural gas line to the area?

* (1600)

Mr. Derkach: As the member knows, under the criteria that were established for extension of natural gas services to rural communities, Arborg did not qualify. This was a criteria that was established through the Public Utilities Board and Centra Gas, and Arborg, although they were close, did not come up to meet the criteria. If in fact the dehyd plant were to make a commitment to the community to locate there, I would be very confident that Arborg would then qualify under the criteria that have been established.

The community has been in touch with Centra Gas. They have also been in touch with our department, and we have had some very open communication with Mr. Gislason, with the mayor, Mr. Kindzierski, of the community, and they understand where the process is at.

(Mr. Bob Rose, Acting Deputy Chairperson, in the Chair)

They are not negative about it. They are certainly working very hard to get some commitment from the dehyd plant, which would certainly put them over the top in terms of making it viable for them to have natural gas into their community.

Mr. Clif Evans: Along with the criteria that has been put out, the 60 percent of the area residents, commercial and residential, along with the \$300 deposit, along with the commitment by the dehyd plant and its partners to operate and build there, then the minister is saying that once that comes into play that his department and this government will totally commit themselves to expanding the natural gas to the area?

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, the member knows that I would personally like to see natural gas extended to every community in rural Manitoba if that were possible. There is no

community that we would prevent from getting natural gas if they met the criteria because I think that is the key. If you can meet the criteria, then I do not think it is a question of not getting the gas. I think you would see me out there leading the charge to ensure that that community did receive the service.

Mr. Clif Evans: I just wish I would have received those types of comments about five years ago, even though the minister was not there then, but from his government who sat—and I say sat—on their hands with this project. This is not only coming from myself, this is coming from all the proponents in that area, all the mayors and the reeves and all the people that were working at this right from the beginning, five years ago. You know, finally after all the hard work and the lobbying and that, they are getting some response, but five years and the comments out there were, at least why did you not say one way or the other what we needed to do.

I questioned the minister last year in Estimates. He indicated to me, and it is on record, that he wanted to see a survey done [interjection] That is right, perhaps. When I questioned the people in my area, they knew nothing about it, about a survey and request of a survey. There is also a letter on record to the minister indicating that. But I am pleased, and I want to see the potential from this government and from the Department of Rural Development that the criteria is met and the dehyd operation satisfactorily proceeds, that in fact the area does get its natural gas.

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, the reality is that, you know, Arborg did not have, they still do not have, a dehyd plant today. They did not have one five years ago, and I would venture to say that five years ago they were further from meeting the criteria to have natural gas extended to their community than they are today. I stand by what I said. The surveys had to be done. The feasibility had to be conducted in order to get to this stage, and they were told that. The mayor knew that very well. As a matter of fact the mayor and I have been working together very

co-operatively since I came into this department, and also the community as a whole.

I need to also remind the member that back in 1981 the government of the day did study the issue for two years, and what was the result? There was not a positive result of any kind. So I have to tell the member that this is the government that has moved ahead with the extension of natural gas services to rural Manitoba. This is the government that is working actively with the communities like Arborg and others to make sure that rural Manitoba is going to have every possible opportunity for economic activity and economic viability and indeed will be able to attract back to their communities some of our youth and sustain those communities for a long time.

The Acting Deputy Chairperson (Mr. Rose): 7.(a) Grow Bonds Program (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$345,400.

Mr. Gaudry: You were having problems with the one in Teulon where the interest was delayed in being paid. Has that finally been resolved and now—

Mr. Derkach: Yes, Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, every time we issue a Grow Bond in rural Manitoba, what we do is we set aside some money for the event that a Grow Bond goes bad or the project goes bad on us or fails or for some reason we have to turn back the money to the investors. To date, we are going along quite well. There has not been a case of a bankruptcy or one that has failed to date, but down the road I am sure that that is a very, very good possibility knowing how businesses run, not only in Manitoba but throughout Canada and North America.

In Teulon, the situation was not one where there was a problem with the company going bankrupt. It needed to be restructured. It has been restructured. More money has been put in from the private entrepreneur, the proponents or the new owners. There was a delay in the interest payments that were being made. Our staff got on that immediately, the Grow Bond staff, and that was corrected and the payments were made then. My understanding is that the payments are up to date at

this time, but there was a bit of a flutter there for a little while where there was some uncertainty. That has corrected itself, and my understanding is that the project is up and running successfully.

Mr. Gaudry: On one point you mention that there was going to be 500 jobs created in rural Manitoba in one of your press releases here last November. Now you are up to 257. When do you think—well, you say 257, we have not seen the statistics. When do you think you are going to reach that 500 jobs in rural Manitoba?

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, I think my comments were in relation to not only Grow Bonds but REDI as well, and we have surpassed that, I might add. We have 257 jobs that have been created in the Grow Bond area. Besides that, in REDI we have more than 500 jobs already. Besides the 500 jobs we have also in addition to that, through Partners with Youth and the Green Team programs we have generated 1,300 part-time positions for young people in Manitoba, and we are anticipating an additional 1,000 positions in '94-95. So there has been a lot of activity and some good job creation as a result of both the Grow Bonds Program and the REDI program, and I am hoping we can double that in the next year through Grow Bonds and REDI. That is a hope. That is certainly something we will strive towards.

* (1610)

Mr. Gaudry: The member for Interlake (Mr. Cliff Evans) just talked about McDonald jobs. I did not know what he was talking about, but I know several times in the House the government has talked about the NDP green signs that they had years back when they were in government. I was wondering, are they using any of these signs at this time?

Mr. Derkach: No, we do not use any of those signs. You know, a student who needs to make some money for university or for tuition or whatever it might be also needs some meaningful employment, and the jobs that were created under the program with the green signs were in that day and age seen as appropriate by the government of the day. We have a different view of that. We want

our jobs to be meaningful ones, ones that leave some lasting benefit to the community or to the area in which the students work.

The Green Team, as an example, is one where we embark on projects where there is going to be a lasting benefit to an area or a community, and that is why we have extended the Green Team to the home town. The home town component has been added to the Green Team because now communities, like municipalities and towns and villages, can hire students on a cost-share basis to improve the quality of their infrastructure in their communities, to make their communities more attractive for tourism and for people who visit those communities.

I think the lasting benefit for our parks has been one where we today can drive through our parks and be very proud of them. I very much enjoy going to a park and seeing students work and seeing our REDI Green Team at work in our parks. I compared that to a program in Saskatchewan where they also have students working in their parks, and I would have to say that tourists who come through our parks and see these students in their REDI Green Team T-shirts and hats certainly recognize that this is a program for youth and employment.

Everyone that you talk to supports youth employment, especially employment in the summer when the students are outdoors and doing a little bit of physical work, doing some hosting in our parks, getting together with the public. It is a learning experience for them, but it is also something that is of benefit to us as a province in promoting our province, our parks in our province, and also our home town communities.

(Mr. Deputy Chairperson in the Chair)

Mr. Gaudry: Yes, you mention that you have the 1,300 jobs, and those 1,300 will be just part-time jobs for the students for this year. You are saying that you have surpassed the 500 in the REDI and your 257. How many of those jobs are full-time jobs that will last for a number of years—
[interjection]

Mr. Derkach: That is a good question, and the member for the Interlake says Tory time jobs—

Point of Order

Mr. Clif Evans: I did not say Tory jobs, I said jobs at least until retirement.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: The honourable member does not have a point of order. It is a dispute over the facts.

Mr. Derkach: I acknowledge the member's correction of that, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, but I would like to say that these are full-time jobs. They are permanent jobs. When you look at corporations like Rimer-Alco, they are in Manitoba for the long term. When you look at the tire-recycling corporation in Winkler, those are not temporary positions. That is an industry that we need in Manitoba to recycle the mountains of tires that need to be recycled throughout our province.

Woodstone Foods, as an example, has been working in Manitoba not for one or two years; they have been here since, I believe, 1975 and have created some very innovative products from peas especially. I think we will see them around for a long time. So those are permanent jobs that require a fairly high level of skill, and that is the kind of jobs that we want in Manitoba.

Now, they say a job is a job is a job.

An Honourable Member: A Tory is a Tory is a Tory.

Mr. Derkach: No comment to that.

We want to ensure that whatever jobs we create in Manitoba, they are going to be for the long term, and whether it is under REDI or whether it is under Grow Bonds, we are going to make every effort to ensure that those jobs are created for the long term, that they are going to be lasting and that they are going to provide local people from these communities with every opportunity to work and live in those rural communities.

Mr. Clif Evans: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I have lost my thought on that previous comment.

With these programs, the Hometown program component that was added to The Green Team, has the department and the government made all the communities that are able to—

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: The honourable member is moving into REDI. Is the committee ready to pass the Grow Bonds issue line?

An Honourable Member: Sure.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Line (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$345,400—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$476,500—pass.

We will now move into (b) Rural Economic Development Initiatives (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$173,000—

Mr. Clif Evans: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I will leave the other question for later, that I was going to start on Grow Bonds. Can the minister indicate how many employees he has within the REDI program besides the seven in the Grow Bonds? How many people do we employ in that department?

Mr. Derkach: Three full-time staff in the REDI program.

Mr. Clif Evans: Three full-time in the REDI program—you are talking program, besides the bonds program, of upwards of \$11 million. Is the minister indicating that three full-time people are taking care of an \$11-million slice of the pie—pretty worked staff.

Mr. Derkach: Yes, there are only three permanent staff in the REDI program. I am very proud of them. They also utilize the Communities Economic Development officers who are in rural Manitoba at the present time, are planners in rural Manitoba and have also been very active in this whole area in providing information to our REDI office.

It has been a very co-operative program, where we do not simply rely on the three staff in the office. Indeed our total department is one that works in areas which perhaps might be deemed to be REDI, but in the local offices around the province, you will find oftentimes that the planners will be taking information that they can pass on to

the REDI office. I think that is what we need more of. That allows us to keep our staff at a fairly minimum level and deliver the money to the programs that the money was supposed to be delivered to.

Mr. Clif Evans: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the REDI program—and I guess we can broadly discuss anything under the REDI, even though we are on Salaries and Employee Benefits.

Can the minister just help me with this one and his department staff? Last year the R.M. of Siglunes received upwards of \$47,000 for a weigh scale in their community of Ashern. Can the minister or his staff table for me or provide me with an updated application list of any applications for any part of the REDI program from the Interlake constituency? I am aware of some. I am not aware of them all. Would that be possible?

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I would have to tell the member that we would be happy to provide him with a list of those projects that have been approved or are being announced. In terms of information on projects that are still in the process, that would be very difficult because there has to be some confidentiality between the proponent of a project and the officers who are working on it. Therefore, that would not be appropriate for us to publish or to sort of distribute that information to anyone, for that matter, because I think there has to be some confidentiality in some of these cases when a proponent may not want to publicize that they are in fact applying for consideration under the REDI program or the Grow Bonds Program.

Mr. Clif Evans: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, can the minister then supply us with a list, through the program, of applications that have been approved and the amounts of funding that have gone through that? Can he provide us with that?

* (1620)

Mr. Derkach: Just a clarification, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, does the member want it just for his area or does he want it for the province?

Mr. Clif Evans: Both.

Mr. Derkach: Could I ask the member if he would be satisfied if I provided him with the list of

approved projects for the province? Then he can pick out the ones that are in his constituency, because I am not sure. I might miss one if I try to go through his constituency.

Mr. Clif Evans: Oh, okay.

Mr. Derkach: Thank you.

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Just on that list, can the minister tell us, can he indicate today where the majority of the applications come from or if there is a breakdown available? I guess we could get that from the list when he presents it to the member for the Interlake, but whether we could get an indication where the most interest for the program is.

What I am looking for is whether or not there might be a pattern, if there is interest in the North, for example, or in the Interlake area, or which part of the province has shown the greatest interest and what percentage of the applications are approved or rejected, not necessarily by area, but I guess I am trying to find out whether there are a lot of applications that have come in that are not approved.

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the member asked a question that is fairly difficult to answer in terms of specifics. In a general sense, I would have to say that our applications have been fairly broadly spread throughout the province. If you were to dot the province with projects that have been approved, it seems to me that we have a fairly good distribution throughout the province. There have been a good number that have come from the North as well.

I guess one area that we are finding that probably has a bit of deficiency in terms of the number of projects that come forward and are approved and accepted is the southwest part of the province, and certainly we need to spend a little more time with some of those communities.

The communities throughout the province are fairly active and fairly knowledgeable about the program, and just to prove that, we have now over 385 applications that have been received throughout Manitoba. Of those, 114 projects have been approved or are presently being approved,

recommended for approval. Over 40 projects are under review at the present time by the office. Right now we have 60 projects that are being developed by applicants after that first concept approval stage. That shows you that there is a fairly high level of activity out there with regard to the REDI program itself.

The criteria that are followed are followed the same for all projects. Another service that we are providing now is that if an applicant comes forward and his or her application does not quite fit but the project is one that is a good one and makes some sense and shows promise, staff will certainly work with the proponent to develop the project in a way in which it does meet criteria and then can be proceeded with. I have to say in the same breath though that there are projects which just do not meet the criteria and no matter how you reshape them they just cannot fit. We try to be fairly up front with proponents so that they do not waste a lot of time in developing a project if it simply is not going to fit.

Ms. Wowchuk: The minister prejudged my next question and that was follow-up on projects, if there are supports there for applicants who put an application in but do not quite meet criteria, but whether there are supports there for them to develop that application so it is acceptable. I appreciate that that is happening.

I want to ask if this is the place to ask a question about Green Team.

An Honourable Member: Yes.

Ms. Wowchuk: The minister indicated that the program has been expanded to a home town component of it. My colleague from the Interlake (Mr. Clif Evans) started to ask the question on this, because I have not been aware of the home town component part of the program. I wonder whether that information has been made available to municipalities, when that was made available and when the application date is for communities to apply for it. Because if a program is there and communities are not going to be aware of it, I would be disappointed if the information is not provided to the municipalities and towns.

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, we had a news conference, if you like, or an announcement of the Green Team for this particular year just at the back of the Legislature here last week. I am sorry that the member was not aware of it. We also sent out a press release on that particular event and on the new home town component. It was carried by the media, more so in rural Manitoba than in the city. I would have to say that we have distributed the information to the municipalities and communities, and we would like to make sure that every community knows about it.

I think this is a very exciting part of the program. It is one that we heard about at the UMM meetings as well, and the member for Swan River knows about that because she did join me at some of those meetings where communities wanted to also access the Green Team for their communities. We tried to respond in a positive way.

The applications are available at the student employment offices throughout the province. We have also sent applications, I believe, to the municipal offices. I am informed that they were mailed last Friday so they should be in the hands of the administrators now, and applications are being accepted at this present time. I should tell the member that the Hometown component is for high school students, I guess—not necessarily high school students because they are from the ages of 16 to 24 and it is an eight-week program from the beginning of July until the end of August.

The Green Team program is a bit different because it runs from the May long weekend right through the summer until the end of August, and so therefore university students would probably be eligible for that program because they are out of class at that time.

* (1630)

So if there is a need for information in the member's area, I would be only too happy to provide her with that information so she could take it back.

I failed to introduce somebody who has come to the table here, and it is Mr. Peter Mah who is the manager of the REDI program. He informs us that

they have received their first Hometown application today.

Just to add—this information is coming to me a little at a time. The Green Team program, I am told, is going to be advertised in the Saturday Free Press so that students from around the province can certainly get that information. The more information we can get out there, the better it is for all of us because we can get these students applying for these programs.

Mr. Storie: I am not sure whether my colleague asked this question, but I understand that the REDI projects that have been approved are going to be tabled with this committee or provided to the critic. Would the minister also undertake to provide a list of the number of jobs that were created along with each project?

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, that would all be available and we can provide that in the same document.

Mr. Storie: I do not want to digress too much on to topics that have already been covered, but I did want to talk for a minute about the Grow Bonds. The minister had suggested in his [interjection] No, I have not asked a question yet. I am allowed to comment all I want.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the minister referenced the criticism of the Grow Bonds, or skepticism. I want to tell the minister, when the previous minister announced the creation of Grow Bonds, I believe that our side and certainly I welcomed the initiative. The minister may recall that when the Grow Bonds Program was initially announced that it did not have the RRSP component to it. That was a subsequent change which I think made the program much more attractive.

The minister acknowledged, I think, that this was a slow-developing program and I am pleased to see that it has met with success, and we predicted that it would. This was not a new initiative in terms of a Canadian scene. Grow Bonds or a facsimile thereof have been in place in Saskatchewan for some time and were proving to be somewhat successful. It can be and it is a good program, and no one on this side has attempted to

say otherwise. There were some administrative problems with the program, I think, getting off the ground. It has taken a long time to be at the point where the government now could announce them on a more frequent basis.

The REDI program, however, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, has suffered some, I think, particular growing pains. About a year and a half ago, I met with the Brandon Chamber of Commerce who shared with me a presentation they had made to cabinet which called the REDI program the worst disaster they had ever seen. I am paraphrasing. But we are particularly critical. I am quoting the Brandon Chamber of Commerce [interjection] Well, you do not have to. All he has to do is pull out the brief that was presented to them.

I met with Tom Wilson, who was the executive director of the Economic Development Board or commission in Brandon, who was as well critical of the REDI program—not of the program. I should not say the program. I think everyone acknowledged that it had some potential, but for whatever reason the administrative process was very slow and the approvals particularly were very slow. I have some first-hand experience with the process. I have a constituent in Leaf Rapids who was developing a product that had received support from the Western Diversification initiative, from the—

An Honourable Member: National Research Council.

Mr. Storie: Well, not the National—well, IRDA or whatever it was called, and had had support from the local Communities Futures group. I phoned the minister personally on this issue. I spoke to a number of people in the department and, needless to say, was frustrated, as was the private entrepreneur who was involved in this project, to the extreme.

I think both the individual who was the proponent of the project and his investors were not so much disappointed with the ultimate result, the conclusion that they were not going to get support from the REDI program, as they were in the delays. They simply would have liked an answer in

a timely fashion, and one of the shortcomings has been the length of time it has taken to come to a decision in the program.

So I would like to ask the minister the specific question, what steps has he taken? What has changed in the administration of the program to allow it to proceed in an orderly way?

Mr. Derkach: Well, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, first of all, in response to the member's last comment, the program has always proceeded in an orderly way—

An Honourable Member: Timely way.

Mr. Derkach: —and in a timely way as well. However, again, this program is not unlike the Grow Bonds Program in that I do not think you are going to find another program that is similar to REDI anywhere in the country, except now Ontario has started to copy our program to some extent, and that is fine, but we did again go through some growing pains initially with the REDI program only because communities did not understand the program.

As a matter of fact, the member speaks about Brandon's response to the REDI program, and their response was basically one of not being familiar with the process and not understanding the process. As a matter of fact, I recall very vividly the mayor of the city wanting to know why their REDI project was not accepted when we had not even received an application, and his response was, yes, well, you knew about it. There is a difference between somebody telling you about a project and then having the application in our hands and being able to consider it.

Once Brandon figured out that we were serious about a process that had to be followed, they have applied and have received the response in a very timely way. If you were to talk to anybody in Brandon, whether it is the mayor or the manager of their community Economic Development Board, you would find that they are very pleased with the response of the REDI program to their applications, because it is timely and staff work very hard to make sure that the responses are quick.

With respect to the project that the member refers to in Leaf Rapids, I like the project. I think it has a lot of potential. It is very innovative. I visited with the proponent. I have looked at his model. I think it is one that is certainly exciting, not only for him but for the industry. However, again, there are certain criteria that have been established under the REDI program in terms of eligibility. We have been discussing this particular project for a long time. It has gone back and forth. The proponent has had to do certain things, which have taken him a long time. At no point did we ever say that, no, this project is not going to fly.

Again, as I indicated to the member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk), we have allowed staff to work very diligently with the proponents to make sure we can do everything we can in our power to help a proponent along, to make sure that his project qualifies.

I think we are getting closer. I think that project certainly has life to it, and staff right now at this time are working to make sure that the proponent has his share of money in place or his equity in place and that we do not break the rules of the game, if you like, and exceed the limits we have under the legislation in terms of allowing the money to flow.

Mr. Storie: Well, I certainly am prepared to acknowledge that things may have changed. I referenced the Brandon Chamber of Commerce's remarks were some time ago, and I was wondering specifically if there had been any change. The minister seems to imply there have been no changes in the program, and if that is the case, then perhaps the delay that my constituent experienced is still the order of the day. I think, for most of the business community, 11 months or a year or a year and a half to move something along when other approvals are in place and the project is ready to proceed from their perspective is simply too long, and something has to be done to streamline it.

* (1640)

It is not as if this was a significant drain on the REDI funds. I believe the application was for something like \$48,000. I just want to point out

that this is an area where the province is losing its strength. This is an area of manufacturing. I know that the minister has a list there, and he is preparing to table it, I gather. We are anxious to see it, but I know that a lot of those things on that list are feasibility studies. There are a lot of projects that would not have the impact overall on the economy like a project like this in manufacturing, 25 manufacturing jobs, might have. It was a significant project that may have been able to be brought to fruition with a little bit of investment at a timely stage in the process.

I mean, obviously, I am pleased there are still discussions, but I can tell you that notwithstanding the minister's suggestion that things are moving along and staff are discussing it, this is one very unhappy entrepreneur who feels that he has been frustrated by this process, and I am simply looking for a way to speed this up.

If really our goal is to promote economic development, timeliness is everything, and certainly it was for these people, so let us see if we can improve that. That is my comment.

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the member should know that—you know, he makes reference to the feasibility studies program, and he compares that to a project proposal or an approval of support under the manufacturing component, if you like.

You cannot compare the two. The community out there has asked us that if you are applying for a feasibility study, then you do not have the elaborate amount of work done, because that is really what the feasibility study is all about. So those should be able to be approved very quickly, and we try to make sure that those are approved quickly.

Under the support program, however, you get into that whole question of the amount of equity that is being put in by the proponent. You get into the whole question about how much government money, both federal and provincial, there is in a project, and it is at that time that you run into some snags.

The project the member is referencing is certainly not typical of how we proceed with approvals in the department. This is one that has taken an extraordinary length of time to complete, but we are working with the proponent. I think there has been some frustration on both sides, on his side and on ours, in terms of trying to get this project put together.

As I say, I am supportive of the project in concept, but we cannot approve it unless the guidelines are met, both from an equity point of view and also from a government stacking point of view, as well, so we do not surpass sort of a project whereby government is putting the bulk of the money into it. As I say, I think the project has potential, and I am hoping that in the next short while we will be able to conclude it.

Mr. Clif Evans: I would like to ask the minister, in dealing with this whole REDI program and rural development, can the minister tell us whether there has been any sort of a contract or project made with AT&T in the telecommunications area, or a study, any sort of contact with AT&T?

Mr. Derkach: We have an agreement, if you like, a partnership agreement with AT&T Canada for a project which looks at the potential for interactive services and electronic highway services that might be undertaken in rural Manitoba. The agreement is one where AT&T Canada have come to the table with significant dollars, and I would like to be able to give you the exact amount, if you would just give me a moment, please.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, this is a project which involves our Department of Rural Development and the Department of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship. It is one to which AT&T Canada brings \$190,500 to the table to the project, and Rural Development and Culture, Heritage and Citizenship come to the table with \$195,000. This project has been ongoing now for, I believe, about six months. We will be looking at the results of that project in the next little while. I think it is the end of April or the beginning of this month that we will have the final results of this project that we have embarked on.

Mr. Clif Evans: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the minister indicates it is a partnership agreement with AT&T Canada. How was the partnership agreement—how did it come about? Was it tendered out to work along with Rural Development? Did the authorization come from cabinet or Order-in-Council? Basically the start of it, I do not recall seeing anything to that effect.

Mr. Derkach: What happens in projects of this nature, the Department of Rural Development, along with communities, is looking at ways in which we can use technology to better the delivery of services to rural Manitoba. To that extent we work with a variety of companies, and between the department staff, Economic Development Board, people in the industry, we have looked at a project whereby we can deliver not only a specific kind of program but services to rural Manitoba, between communities and also to our urban communities through an electronic highway, if you like, by integrating services so that the costs can be decreased in the delivery of services.

If you look at the models that we have presently in the province, whether it is the FYDE program or distance delivery of education services that we are presently embarked on, whether it is at the school division level or in conjunction with the Department of Education.

One of the very expensive areas is the transmission, and because it is a single service, there is nobody else to share some of the cost of the infrastructure, if you like. What we have to do is try and get multiple users on the system. This is a project which is looking at the possibility of a pilot where we can perhaps deliver, not only one service, but many services through the electronic highway, if you like, and have a number of users who can share the cost and thereby reduce the cost to any single user. So the goal of the project is to establish our province, Manitoba, as a leader in the application of telecommunications technology as a means of providing information and services to all Manitobans and, more specifically, rural Manitobans in this particular project.

It is a fairly broad and holistic initiative, if you like, that is going to facilitate the applications for

such services as Distance Education, perhaps services in the health care area, perhaps Library Services, and that is where Culture, Heritage and Citizenship come in, through the Library Services area and other government programs. It also brings the possibility of businesses accessing the telecommunications highway, services such as banking services, for example, that can access the electronic highway as well.

* (1650)

Now this is a fairly new approach and one that certainly you will not find in too many places in Canada, where you have this kind of an integrated approach. I think it is one that makes sense and one that we are working with not only AT&T Canada; in this partnership, we also have the Manitoba Telephone System who certainly are working in co-operation with this project.

Mr. Clif Evans: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, who are the principals in this project? Are we dealing with something that we are going to end up getting a consultant's report, or who from the minister's office—is somebody working directly with AT&T Canada on this, and who are the principals with AT&T?

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, we have individuals from AT&T Canada who are involved in the project. I do not know their names. We also have staff from my department. We have staff from Manitoba Telephone System. We have staff from Education. We have staff from I, T and T. We have staff from Culture, Heritage and Citizenship. We have staff from the Economic Development Board, and I think there is somebody from Health as well.

Pardon me, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, there are also staff from Justice as well and Government Services who sit on a committee who are looking at how we can implement a program like this in rural Manitoba. Besides this, we also have people from the Economic Innovation and Technology Council.

So this is a fairly broad group that is looking at how we can better deliver services, how we can

co-ordinate service delivery to many of our communities in rural Manitoba.

Mr. Clif Evans: Can the minister provide us with the terms of reference?

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the objective of this project, and I will read it into the record, is No. 1, to conduct a situational analysis of current government and private telecommunications initiatives and analyze the ability to integrate these into an overall project; and secondly, to conduct a needs assessment of existing end-user needs for telecommunications network services and to propose a high-level design of network alternatives, identifying requirements for enhanced services and reviewing current communication and information technology systems and network solutions and assessing impacts on existing networks, and to identify the order of magnitude of network and systems costs and benefits.

Mr. Clif Evans: The minister indicated that \$195,000 came from the REDI program, REDI monies—from where? Where is the \$195,000 coming from?

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the \$195,000 that is coming from government is split equally between the Department of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship and the Department of Rural Development.

Mr. Clif Evans: This project, I guess, did it go through the same system, as if someone else wanting do the same sort of thing came to the minister through the REDI program and said, you know, I would like to do this or I can do this with \$200,000 I have in my pocket, and I would like \$200,000 from the government. Was the process the same? What was the process of getting this all together?

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the process was looking at partnerships where departments can come together with a company or an outside entity that can provide the kind of expertise that is required to deliver those services. That is why you have sitting around the table people from various departments, from the

Manitoba Telephone System, from AT&T Canada, because this is where the expertise is in this kind of project.

You do not find that just out on the street. I mean you have to make sure that you know what you want and then work with the companies who can offer you that kind of expertise.

Mr. Clif Evans: The minister then is saying the process was taken the same way. Let us say, if I had the same expertise as you claim AT&T has over and above MTS and other department areas, you have a partnership here of just about the whole government. So you are saying that individuals from all these other government departments would not have or be able to co-ordinate this study, as such, and that it is required to have AT&T Canada to come into play with this. Would we not be able to handle this locally basically or through Government Services, if you are providing money?

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, no. The whole idea of this whole proposal is to try and co-ordinate the efforts of various government departments who would normally be doing things on their own in terms of trying to provide better services to their clients around Manitoba.

Our goal here is to co-ordinate and integrate these services so that they can be delivered in a more effective and efficient way. That is why we have the partnership approach, if you like, between ourselves, other departments and the Manitoba Telephone System and AT&T Canada.

The member asked whether or not the same procedure is followed with other companies—of course. I mean, we certainly do not turn a blind eye to somebody who has a good idea and wants to better the services in our province. It is not any different, for example, than the natural gas expansion.

Mr. Clif Evans: Then you have some sort of operating board, as such. You have all these partners in place, who chairs the committee as such or who chairs the study or who is in charge of the project?

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the Department of Rural Development is taking a lead role in this. However, for example, in Distance Education itself, the Department of Education and Training is certainly the lead on that particular project, because they have the expertise in the whole area of Distance Education. In terms of this integrated approach, this is one that originated in Rural Development and one that we are co-ordinating on behalf of government.

Mr. Cliff Evans: The minister has indicated that this study should be available this month. The end of this month, soon?

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, it is an internal report to government that will be done. Again, this is an analysis of what, perhaps, we can embark on. It is not something that we are going to be going out and embarking on for the entire province.

First of all, we want to take a look at what can be done.

Mr. Cliff Evans: Well, I certainly hope that once it comes out and once it is internal, as he says, we would certainly like to see what has resulted or what is going to result out of something like this. I mean, you are talking \$400,000. Let us hope there is something coming out of it.

* (1700)

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: The hour being five o'clock, time for private members' hour.

Committee rise.

HEALTH

Madam Chairperson (Louise Dacquay): Order, please. Will the Committee of Supply please come to order.

This section of the Committee of Supply will be dealing with the Estimates for the Department of Health. We are on page 81 of the Estimates manual, 1.(b) Executive Support (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits.

Would the minister's staff please enter the Chamber.

* (1500)

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): Madam Chairperson, the staff will enter the Chamber when they arrive. We can proceed, if the honourable member wishes, to the extent that I can proceed without staff. They will be along shortly.

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Perhaps while we are waiting for staff to arrive, the minister tabled a number of documents yesterday at the end of the last session, and I am wondering if perhaps they could be distributed while we are awaiting their arrival.

Mr. McCrae: Yesterday I did not actually table documents, I made them available to my colleagues.

Mr. Chomiak: Madam Chairperson, perhaps the minister could just deal with the chart that the minister distributed yesterday. In any event, I will ask my general question while things are prepared, and I am sure that it will all fall into place as we go along.

Within the chart, underneath the role of the Deputy Minister of Health is the Advisory Committee on Mental Health Reform, and I am wondering if this advisory committee is the committee referred to when the announcement on mental health reform was first announced May 17 of last year. The announcement spoke about the setting up of a committee. Is this the one and same committee? I presume it is, but I just want to confirm that in fact that is the committee, because the mandate of the committee was at the announcement of mental health reform. The mandate of the committee was given to advise the minister on all aspects of mental health reform as the process proceeded.

Mr. McCrae: Subject to subsequent correction, I believe that is correct. We have been able to set up, I believe it is eight Regional Mental Health Councils who have helped us in the implementation of the general plan set out in spring of '92. We have worked with those mental health advisory councils during the process of the intervening time.

For example, it is with the advice and support of the Norman Regional Mental Health Council, for

example, that we arrived at the conclusion that the appropriate thing to do would be to provide a range of services in the Norman Region, that means in The Pas and Flin Flon, services that never existed before. In The Pas we will be opening I believe it is eight acute hospital beds—and the attendant staff to go with them. In The Pas-Flin Flon, Norman Region, we will be hiring a total of 20 new health care staff people to deliver community services by way of mobile crisis stabilization services, counselling services, referral services.

We are also working with organizations like the Canadian Mental Health Association, the Anxiety Disorders Association of Manitoba Inc., the Schizophrenia Society Inc. Manitoba, and the Society for Depression and Manic Depression Inc. in provision of self-help services delivered by consumers. That is an important feature of our mental health advisory committees that there are consumers involved in those committees in provision of advice.

I guess as a relative newcomer to the whole health care field, one of the things I learned early on is that governments of the past and care providers of the past, through no fault of their own, those people in the past were not set up to take in the advice of the consuming public. That is a very important feature of reform, especially in mental health, because that is what we are talking about right now, but in the whole health care field.

It is a feature that governments and providers at different rates of speed are accepting. It is very important that we listen to consumers and we act on advice given to us by consumers. It is not good enough just to listen to them and then leave everything the way it was, because that has proven to be an inefficient use of the health care dollar and human resource.

In addition to the Norman Region, I was able to visit the city of Thompson to meet with nursing professionals, the hospital board and administration there and members of the staff to discuss the needs—and also to attend a town hall meeting, kindly assisted in organization by the honourable member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton). We had a very frank, open, educational and

interesting discussion amongst the people in that community about their needs, their aspirations for the future, not only of their facility but also for the future of health care in the North.

On another occasion I was able to visit Thompson to announce the government's intention to open 10 new acute care psychiatric beds at the Thompson General Hospital and the new attendant staff to go along with that development. That is something that Thompson has not had in the past. In fact, I announced a full range of mental health services for Thompson and the northern regions and the Thompson region. That includes crisis stabilization services, mobile crisis stabilization services, referral services and counselling services in the community.

For years people in the North have been required, if they needed certain of these mental health services, to make their way somehow to the city of Winnipeg or to be housed in the facilities at Selkirk or Brandon. That is not right, and that is not fair. Ultimately, I am glad that government in partnership, in this case, with that region's mental health advisory council, made up of the same kinds of people as I referred to earlier, are embarking on these improvements to health care.

You see reform is all about improvement, and that is what is happening in that region. That is why I was so glad earlier today when the honourable member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) asked me questions about the Thompson General Hospital. It is true that there are things like staffing guidelines and funding guidelines that are an ongoing concern of trying to run acute care centres, but as our reliance on acute care, even in Thompson, is decreased, there is nobody who can make a credible case for continuing to have a capacity in our hospitals that is not being used. If capacity is there but not being used, we are then paying people to look after people who are not there. That does not make sense, and that is not a good way to spend the health care dollar or human resource.

It is sometimes a difficult road to travel. There are those who do not want to help, but there is a vast majority out there who do. I am very pleased

to know that there are so many people in the communities of Manitoba who are willing to give of their volunteer time and effort to improve our health care system in partnership with the government and with health care providers. It is really a double-edged sort of experience. It is difficult on the one side dealing with people whose intentions are not good and on the other side dealing with the vast majority of people whose intentions are indeed good and want only to preserve a sustainable health care system for generations to come.

In consultation and in working very closely with the Interlake mental health advisory committee and with the Eastman mental health advisory committee, we have been able to devise plans for the future there that include the creation of 28 new health care jobs, the opening up of new services like crisis stabilization, mobile crisis stabilization, referral services, consultation services and counselling services.

* (1510)

I am very, very pleased, as a former Justice minister, Madam Chairperson, to be able to announce the intention to create, I believe it is an 18-bed forensic care unit at Selkirk Mental Health Centre. That is one link in the continuum of services that has not been available for what we used to call L.G.-in-Council people. Those were people who were found not criminally responsible for their actions or found to be not fit to stand trial for accusations of criminal conduct. We have not had appropriate facilities in the past; we are going to in the future.

As a Health minister and as a former Justice minister, I am very happy with that development because with the new psych health facilities at the Health Sciences Centre, which deals with immediate assessment needs and acute needs, to the longer-term forensic unit at Selkirk, to the community-based group home situations and other situations that are being made available in communities, we are establishing that whole continuum.

All of this has been happening with the input of members of the community, care providers, and care receivers as well as departmental people.

Now, that is a bit of an overview, and maybe a little bit lengthy, but it was meant to try to fill in honourable members as to what is going on.

Oh, I forgot to mention the \$19.1-million plan for Westman, which deals with the downsizing and eventual closing of acute long-term mental health services at Brandon Mental Health Centre in favour of community-based services. We are doing this in co-operation, again, with the Westman Mental Health Council, in co-operation with the staff, in co-operation with the union at the Brandon Mental Health Centre. It is being done in a phased way and in a way that protects the interests of patients. It protects the interests of the public; it protects the interests of the workers, all of which is important to Manitobans.

Mr. Chomiak: Madam Chairperson, the minister did give an overview. I am not sure if it answered my specific question, but I certainly concur with the minister on the need for consultation and co-operation. The member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns) reminded me of that prior to the commencement of this exercise, how we should all be shoulder to shoulder behind the wheel, working together co-operatively.

Mr. McCrae: Nose to nose; belly to belly.

Mr. Chomiak: Correct. The minister adequately expresses it, and in fact I, too, am surprised that there are people whose intentions may not be in that regard. I wished we could narrow it down and find those individuals, if there are any, whose intentions are not positive, in order to build a better health care system for all of us in Manitoba and would certainly assist the minister in any way in trying to identify and re-educate and perhaps change the mind of those who are not—[interjection]

I am sure the member for Portage (Mr. Pallister) is one of those who is positively behind us all in our efforts to deal with this. Maybe he will help me find those that the minister refers to whose intentions are not of the same thought process of

working together to develop our health care system.

Madam Chairperson, my next question was to be fairly detailed respecting a matter that was raised by the member for Crescentwood (Ms. Gray), when we last met, dealing with the Seven Regions Health Centre and perhaps I will commence.

I appreciate that the minister was still awaiting the arrival of staff. Because of the nature of commencement today, the minister may want to defer some of these answers—but the minister has a copy of a letter dated April 25 from the Seven Regions Health Centre, which was referred to in last session. The members of the Seven Regions Health Centre indicate that in their last meeting with Mr. Frank DeCock, there was a strong emphasis from the Department of Health placed on consultation.

They feel that perhaps the process of consultation may not have worked, certainly in the past. Now I appreciate the minister indicated when we last met that there is a new process of consultation in effect, but I want to deal with some of the specific issues raised by these individuals from Seven Regions Health Centre because I think it illustrates some of the difficulties that have occurred in the past and could point to helping to ameliorate some of the proposed difficulties which may occur in the future.

I know that the minister has met with MHO, and there have been some guidelines with respect to the application of Bill 22, but the point was made by the Seven Regions Health Centre that, quote, the application of Bill 22 to our personal care home will drop our staffing levels below Manitoba Health minimum guidelines. As stated above, our ability to fully replace these staff members will be very difficult if not impossible.

I guess the question has to be asked as to how this kind of directive could go out in light of the ramifications as expressed by the Seven Regions district.

Mr. McCrae: The Bill 22 issue was the subject of a letter sent out from the department to the personal care homes and community health centres

and to the acute care facilities throughout the province.

As I have acknowledged, the letter itself was the subject of some need for clarification, I think is a fair way to put it. Although I think one of the letters sent out maybe appears otherwise, it had never been my intention to force Bill 22 on hospital boards and administrations. It had been my intention to ask the hospital, and I say hospital and the others too, PCHs and community health centres, to make proposals that would bring them to the same conclusion in terms of finances, in terms of money, which amounts to about 2 percent, I understand.

So the reason for my meeting with the MHO officials was to make clear the intentions of the government and to allay any concerns people had that the government was insisting on the use of Bill 22 when what we really want is to achieve that result.

Now many of them say, well, we can achieve the result but do not intrude on our autonomy by telling us exactly how. They recognize the government has the right to say, well no, we are not going to accept this or that proposal because of the potential impact on patient care. My bottom line is indeed patient care, and I will not accept any proposals, either with or without the use of Bill 22, that would have a negative impact on patient care.

There is a sense in some people's minds, although not all the facilities, that reduced dollars means reduced service. You see, that would be correct if there were no waste or if every single facility was operating to the maximum possible efficiency. By being against Bill 22, or by being against achieving the intent of Bill 22 without asking questions leaves one with the impression that you are just against things and you are not really in favour of delivering health care efficiently.

As I think I have said both previously in Estimates and certainly elsewhere, there is a recognition on my part that personal care homes operate differently from hospitals. They operate almost 100 percent capacity all the time, and most

of them are not overstaffed. So you cannot really say, well you know, fire a bunch of nurses or something like that to save some money, because that will not work. That will not work in a personal care home, and I understand that. And it will not work in some hospitals.

The honourable member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) raised today the issue of the Thompson General Hospital and his view about that hospital. It just happens that some hospitals are operating below the staffing guideline and providing very high-quality, safe care for people in our hospitals, and other hospitals are not.

Now I want to know the reasons for that. I want to know why hospital A operates with so many staff per patient day while hospital B has more staff per patient day. If it has to do with the shape of the building, because it is not the most efficient building in the world, let us look at that. If it has to do with population health trends in a community that says that the people in community A have a higher level of acuity of illness and therefore require longer stays and more frequent stays in hospital, that is a very, very valid point.

If it is simply a labour issue that some hospitals have more staff than they have needed and have been allowed to go ahead with that, that needs to be addressed. It needs to be addressed as fairly as we can address it with full compassion and sensitivity to the staff of that hospital who, through no fault of their own, are facing potential layoff or redeployment or retraining or whatever it happens to be. That is why we needed to have in place some kind of a labour adjustment strategy to assist employees who might be affected in that way.

Bill 22, as I have said before, the application of it is an option, one of the options they might look at in making proposals to the government as to how they might bring their budgets down by a couple of percentage points

* (1520)

Some will have more difficulty than others, and I have acknowledged that and did so at the meeting at MHO. I believe at the conclusion of the meeting

there was a far clearer understanding of the situation.

I am preparing a follow-up, or a subsequent letter, to put on paper with more clarity what was discussed with the board chairs and administrators present at the MHO meeting last week.

The honourable member was asking some questions about advice given to the government with respect to the mental health reform plan, and the assistant deputy minister of Health responsible for Mental Health Services in Manitoba, the very distinguished Reg Toews, has just entered the room and will be able to assist me in answering if the honourable member wants to put his first question again or, if he feels my longer answer did the job, then we can carry on with the topic that he is on.

Mr. Chomiak: I appreciate the arrival of Mr. Toews. I actually asked that first question in order to allow time for staff to arrive because I was not really intending to ask a good deal of questions. I hope I have not inconvenienced anyone.

If I could return to the issue of Bill 22, the minister's comments are well taken. What I do not understand is—it appears to have happened frequently in the past, and what I do not understand in this whole process is, when the issue was brought to light, first off, I mean clearly it was not anticipated. The minister said that the letter originally sent by Mr. DeCock did not seem to suggest what the facilities concluded. I read the letter and I thought the facilities concluded correctly what they were concerned about.

Notwithstanding the fact that the letter may have been inaccurately or not properly written, why would Mr. DeCock not have been instructed to immediately write a clarifying letter to all facilities in order to prevent or forestall all the concerns that were raised that the minister has pointed out today?

Administratively, it seems to me it would have made sense to write a clarifying letter immediately to the personal care homes, to the acute care facilities and to community health centres

clarifying specifically what the minister said today.

I appreciate, the minister said after the meeting with MHO he is preparing a letter, but letters are still coming in to us on this issue. That has been part of the problem, I think, in the past with respect to the whole process.

There is no question communication in a large bureaucracy, in a large government, is difficult, but as crucial an issue as that, I do not understand why a letter was not written immediately to the various facilities clarifying the issue.

Mr. McCrae: The honourable member does recognize that you mentioned one bureaucracy; we are talking about lots of bureaucracies in the health system.

As soon as I was made aware of the problem—and I underline the misunderstanding was not the fault of any of the facilities; if there is any fault here, I will accept it myself—I moved immediately to attempt to make sure that I had a chance to talk with the MHO people, because MHO has a communications network that is in place. I thought maybe I could make use of that since MHO had offered that some months ago, that when there is need for communication to happen, get in touch with MHO, and they can help. They do help, and I appreciate it very much. They provided the space for us to have the meeting last Thursday.

I can accept if the honourable member is being critical about this. I can accept that. I moved as quickly as I could to communicate with the facilities, and that was the system I chose. Perhaps I could have done something more quickly through, I do not know, some mass fax or some mass letter writing, but the face-to-face, eyeball-to-eyeball approach is the one that I used. When I walked into that room, I could see there was some concern. When I left the room, I felt we had addressed the issues and that those who were not there would be contacted perhaps immediately by MHO but certainly almost immediately by us as the follow-up letter is going out almost immediately.

Mr. Chomiak: I thank the minister for that response. I appreciate the fact the minister said he would take responsibility for the issue. I was really not attempting to assess blame; it was basically the administrative process. I can appreciate the minister chose one course of action which was to meet with the organizations representative of those. I was trying to isolate something that I think has been a problem in the past, and it probably will be less of a problem if movement is made on those kinds of issues in that regard.

Certainly, the letter from the Seven Regions Health districts goes on to talk about the difficulties occurring in approach to rural health in both January and April of '93, and the minister has already indicated that new processes are in place that are going to attempt to address those problems.

A further issue is raised, and I wonder if the minister might provide an explanation. I will quote again from the letter which the minister has: Another major concern is that our '93-94 budget was not received until March 1, 1994, eleven months into the fiscal year.

Of course, it is not the only facility that has expressed that concern. I am wondering, what was the difficulty with respect to the facilities receiving the budgets, because I had met with the facilities on many occasions, and they were awaiting budgets well into the fiscal year?

Mr. McCrae: Madam Chairperson, I have heard hospital boards and administrations talk about that, too. I have also heard some of them say that our performance is improving in that particular area, but you have to understand that first you start out with setting out budget targets. It is an ongoing process throughout the year, and it is later in the year that basically we are talking about a reconciliation of the performance of the facility and adjustments dealing with budget items that very much should fall within the approved budget of a facility or a nonapproved part of the budget.

Annual budgeting for facilities is an ongoing thing, and I think it begins early in the year with targets set out and discussions beginning and

working through the year to achieve the best care that you can get for patients. I keep coming back to that because what we are here to deliver is the best care that we can. That is what the boards are here to deliver, too. The boards are interested in not running deficits, they do not want to do that, and that is why they say give us the best budget information you can give us as early as you can give it so that we do not have to run into deficit situations.

It is an ongoing improvement process, and I have heard some comment at many of the meetings I have been at that they have seen some improvement, but they would like to see even more.

Mr. Chomiak: Madam Chairperson, in that regard, can the minister indicate if the three-year budgeting proposal for hospitals is still in place, that is, the 3 percent reduction for '93-94, 4 percent for '94-95 and 3 percent for '95-96?

* (1530)

Mr. McCrae: Madam Chairperson, that is part of the process that I was just describing. I woke up this morning to listen to the radio talking about people having all kinds of reactions to a business plan that dates back to 1991. Here we are in 1994 assuming that the things in that business plan are fait accompli, almost as if absolutely nothing had happened in the meantime.

It is true that hospitals should plan. It is true the government departments should plan, and when we talk about targets for this year, next year, the following year, over three years or five years or whatever it is, it is with a view to trying to stimulate that planning process. As long as I give the honourable member the assurance that the care of people in the institutions that we are talking about is the bottom line and that we are going to insist on that, then the honourable member ought not to be too terribly concerned, because we are going to ensure that standards are kept at safe levels. We do that with the help of regulatory and standard-setting agencies such as the MARN and such as the College of Physicians and Surgeons and organizations like that.

So I am thinking of a local example that comes to mind, a couple of examples—Seven Oaks was one, Brandon General was another—that were raised in this House. I believe Seven Oaks was one of them but certainly Brandon General. The honourable member for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans) was raising this “multiyear budgeting” exercise as if it were some harbinger of gloom and doom for the next few years about Brandon General Hospital.

Well, you see, that approach is not consistent, to raise it that way, because we have already committed ourselves to the first phase of some over \$70-million redevelopment of that major regional hospital in Manitoba. You can raise things, but if you raise them in a certain perspective, and you do not tell the whole story, you run the risk of alarming people. The honourable member for Brandon East, for example, said things like, well, people are not going to want to come to Brandon General Hospital because of this 10 percent, I think it was, over three years that we were going to take out of the budget of the Brandon General Hospital.

Well, excuse me, where are they going to go if they do not go to Brandon General Hospital and the services provided there are outside the services provided in some of the smaller communities in Westman? Where are they going to go if they do not go to Brandon General Hospital? That is where they are going to be going, so I was very upset with the honourable member for Brandon East for discouraging Manitobans who live in Westman from going to Brandon General Hospital for their care.

That hospital, for the last 30 years since the building of the new building, has done nothing but expand in terms of the variety and range of services provided, nothing but expand, to the extent that we need to redevelop. You walk through the halls and it is crowded with fancy diagnostic equipment and people all over the place like the hospital was not designed for 30 years ago. I mean, we have twice as many nurses operating in Manitoba today as we had 20 years ago, and we

have physicians far outpacing the growth of the population in Manitoba.

So a 30-year-old hospital is going to be congested, it is going to be filled with new machinery that technology has brought to us to help with our health care issues, and so people tend to take things out of context and just run with them.

There are people, these mysterious people the honourable member refers to, who help in that process of confusing the public and misinforming them. The honourable member will have to search his soul and make a decision about who it is that is making all this trouble, because I look at the whole health reform discussion, and I look at the various jurisdictions in Canada, and at first blush one could tend to be confused if one did not tell the whole story about what is happening.

All you have to do is look in the newspaper today, I think it is, to see that in Liberal Prince Edward Island the government there is under tremendous pressure. In Liberal Nova Scotia the government there is under tremendous pressure from vested interest groups out there, represented mostly by New Democrats and maybe in some cases by Conservatives, but opposition nonetheless to the government of the day.

But, you know, rather than this narrow, parochial view that some of us fall victim to, let us look at what is going on in this country. Let us look at what is happening in Ontario, the so-called richest province, or in B.C., another so-called well-to-do province, or Alberta or even Saskatchewan, a province right next door to us where they are attempting to come to grips with their problems too. I think they started a little later than we did in Manitoba. So they have to come to grips faster than we do, and that has resulted in some measures being taken.

I raise these things not to be critical of Saskatchewan, of the government of Prince Edward Island or Newfoundland or B.C. or Alberta or anywhere else, but to talk about the health care that we need to have in the future. If we do not fix the one we have, we will not have one.

The honourable member may know that Saskatchewan too is looking at wellness models of health care delivery, but in arriving at their wellness model in Saskatchewan we are told that there was no consultation with the Saskatchewan Medical Association. In Saskatchewan, rather than the drawn-out process of regionalization that the member for Crescentwood (Ms. Gray) and I were talking about the other day, of taking two or three years to arrive at the models for delivery, in Saskatchewan, with the stroke of a pen they forced local communities into health districts. From 400 health districts down to 33 with the stroke of a pen in Saskatchewan—with a stroke of the pen, no consultation.

Replacing former health boards with new boards, and get this, appointed by the minister, new boards in Saskatchewan appointed by the minister—that is not a Conservative government, by the way, in Saskatchewan.

An Honourable Member: No?

Mr. McCrae: No. That was before. This is now, and now they have an NDP government.

Like I said, I am not being critical of Mr. Devine's government, because I am not talking about that government. I am talking about the present government, and I am not being critical of it either. I am stating some facts so that we can have some kind of a background by which to view the whole health system that we are trying to work with here in Manitoba and improve. They amalgamated rural facilities and closed rural hospitals, closed 52 rural hospitals in Saskatchewan.

I have met with nurses here in Manitoba, and I raised this and mentioned to them that, you know, we are trying to do this in a phased stage, kinder, gentler sort of way of reforming the health system. I said, we could do it the way they did it in Saskatchewan with 52 hospitals shut down, and the nurses in Manitoba said to me, oh, but those hospitals they did not need. I said, tell that to the nurses who worked in those hospitals, and tell that to the patients who were taken care of in those hospitals.

I tend to think sometimes some people say, I am all for reform, but go and reform somebody else. Do not bother trying to reform me or make reforms in my neighbourhood. But the fact is, in our neighbourhoods there will not be a health care system in the future if we do not change it. So we need support in changing it. We do not need people out there spreading inaccurate information.

In Saskatchewan, they imposed user fees. They tripled the prescription drug plan deductible from \$125 a year to \$380 per year, and then later they basically eliminated it altogether. Do you know what the deductible in Saskatchewan is right now?—\$1,700 a year in Saskatchewan is the deductible on their Pharmacare program.

*(1540)

An Honourable Member: What is it here?

Mr. McCrae: One hundred and twenty-nine dollars for seniors, and two hundred and something for those under the age of 65—nowhere close to the \$1,700 that the deductible is in the province of Saskatchewan. That is just right next door. And in Ontario they do not have Pharmacare for people under the age of 65. They do not have it at all. And in the provinces to the east of there, they do not have it all for people under the age of 65. What do they have? What kind of government do they have in Ontario? Well, everybody knows what kind of government they have in Ontario.

In Saskatchewan they removed insulin and medical supplies for diabetics from the drug plan. They froze all capital expenditures for health care—froze them—in Saskatchewan. They cut funding to hospitals. They eliminated Level 1 and 2 funding for seniors in special care homes. They increased resident income charges for seniors in special care homes.

Here we are. The honourable government House leader asked me what they are here, and I just want to be accurate. As of January 1, 1994, there was a 10 percent increase in deductibles for seniors in Manitoba to \$129. The co-payment remained at 70 percent. For families where all persons are under 65, the deductible was increased by 10 percent to

\$227.60. But what is it in Saskatchewan?—\$1,700 in Saskatchewan.

In Saskatchewan they removed coverage for oxygen users from the Saskatchewan aid to independent living program and forced oxygen patients to foot the bill. In Saskatchewan they removed support services for rural hospitals, no more consulting dieticians, no more consulting pharmacists, no more social workers, no more biomedical engineering technicians. Well, I guess they did not need that in a lot of places anyway, because they shut down 52 hospitals in rural Saskatchewan, where some of my relatives live.

Even though I dwell on what is happening in Saskatchewan, I do not raise this to be critical. I raise this to expose the hypocrisy of some people in our society who, through the use of scare tactics, try to let on to the people in Manitoba that somehow health care reform is the beginning of the end and doomsday is just around the corner and the sky is falling and even Chicken Little is going to get hurt. That is just not on.

What we are doing in Manitoba is with the active participation of over 13,000 fellow Manitobans involved in delivering care in the health system and receiving care in the health system.

In Saskatchewan, they increased the auxiliary fees to hearing aids through the Saskatchewan hearing aid plan from \$80 dollars to what, maybe if it was 10 percent that would be up to \$88, right? No, from \$80 to \$230, resulting in the average hearing aid costs to hearing aid patients by between \$400 and \$550 each.

They eliminated coverage for reversal of tubal ligations, for vasectomies, for penile prostheses, for electrolysis, and for anesthesia used in uninsured dental procedures, they eliminated funding. They did not cut funding; they eliminated funding to the Regina Victorian Order of Nurses. In Saskatchewan, they eliminated funding to the Victorian Order of Nurses in Regina—eliminated the funding to the Victorian of Nurses. They did not cut it; they eliminated it. That was in

Saskatchewan, and the government there is a New Democratic government.

They forced a wing at the Wascana Rehabilitation Centre to close, thirty beds accommodating 800 children across the province with severe handicaps—forced a wing of the Wascana Rehabilitation Centre to close.

Again, I repeat, I do not say these things to be critical but to point out the comparison of what happens when you wait a little longer to begin a reform process when budgets make it so impossible. Last year, we had our own problems with budgets, and nobody is saying we did not. I am not. But the measures we had to take were far less serious than the kind I am talking about in Saskatchewan, which is not the worst in Canada, and we did not have to take measures like these.

They closed Myers House, and when in opposition, the New Democrats in Saskatchewan petitioned and promised to fully fund that addiction centre, but they closed it. They closed the entire Souris Valley regional health centre, a 400-bed facility in Weyburn. Which 400-bed facility did we shut down in Manitoba? They cut back alcohol and drug addiction services, including converting half the White Spruce youth treatment centre near Yorkton to a detention centre for young offenders.

Last July in Saskatchewan, they deinsured the removal of warts, they deinsured the removal of other benign small lesions, they deinsured the removal of port wine stains on skin for those over the age of 17, and they deinsured the treatment of varicose veins for the sake of appearance; and get this, while we are announcing a province-wide breast screening program, they reduced their breast cancer screening program in Saskatchewan. They eliminated most out-of-province coverage. That is one province.

When I get further information, I will share it with the honourable member, because I know he needs to know this information. I know that when the honourable member talks about the various things that he talks about, but he does not remember. He talked yesterday about the wages of

the Deputy Minister of Health here in Manitoba. He forgets to mention that the salary of the Deputy Minister of Health in Saskatchewan is \$113,496; that was last year. NDP Saskatchewan Deputy Minister of Health \$113,496.

The former deputy minister in British Columbia for 1992-93, \$105,800 plus \$9,000 in travel for \$114,000. Of course, in Ontario, I guess it was last fall, Deputy Minister Decter left office there after two years and one month—and that is important, I will come back to the two years and one month part—the salary there for Mr. Decter was \$140,000, and in the 22 months that he was there he ran up \$102,400 in expenses for a total of \$242,546 over those 22 months, and each year of it, or part thereof, was at the rate of \$140,000 a year.

The honourable member refers to the salary of the Deputy Minister of Health in Manitoba as a symbol, not for any other reason but as a symbol because there have been some layoffs and bed closures in Manitoba. Let us talk about some layoffs in Ontario where the deputy minister there was earning \$140,000.

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): I will come back in 20 minutes when you are prepared to talk about Manitoba.

Mr. McCrae: The honourable member for Wolseley does not want to hear about Michael Decter or about what is going on in the world. This global thinker who occupies the front bench of the New Democratic Party here in Manitoba does not want to hear what is going on globally or in this country of ours, and so she leaves the Chamber in anger or whatever. Maybe it is in frustration because she does not want to hear about the abuses of New Democratic governments in this country.

Madam Chairperson: Order, please. I would just like to remind the honourable minister that there is to be no reference to anyone being present or otherwise present in the Chamber.

Mr. McCrae: You are right, Madam Chairperson, I am sorry, I apologize to the honourable member and I apologize to the House for breaking the rules. I did not mean to break the rules.

It is important when we are talking about hypocrisy to understand just what it is that the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) is proposing. He is proposing that 40 percent of the civil service of this province not receive their merit increases. He is proposing—[interjection]

Point of Order

Mr. Chomiak: We are just proposing that the merit increase not be for one single position, Madam Chairperson—one position.

Madam Chairperson: The honourable member for Kildonan does not have a point of order. It is a dispute over the facts.

* * *

Mr. McCrae: I hear what the honourable member said, but if he is a fair man, as he claims to be, how can he single out one person in the civil service and say, oh, this rule is fine for everybody else, but there is this one person in the civil service who should be treated differently? [interjection] No, no, the logical extension of this argument made by a fair-minded person is that 40 percent of the members of the civil service should have their wages rolled back; 40 percent of the teachers in this province should have their wages rolled back; 40 percent of the university professors who have levels of classification should have their merit increases rolled back; 40 percent of the nurses in this province who are working under union contracts should have their wages rolled back.

* (1550)

Well, I am going to tell the nurses and the others in this province that it is the position of the New Democrats that 40 percent of the publicly paid salaries in this province should be rolled back, because if the honourable member is a fair man, which he claims to be, he would not single out one individual. Why is it one individual and not some other individual? Why is it not Reg Toews, the assistant deputy minister for Mental Health? Why is it not the honourable member himself to be rolled back—[interjection]

Well, I will. The honourable member says I should answer that. And the answer is, a

fair-minded person would not recommend such a thing. If a fair-minded person was recommending it, to recommend it for one you have to recommend it for all, and that is the position of the New Democratic Party as of today, that 40 percent of all publicly paid people in this province ought not to receive their merit increases. I wonder what his union boss friends are going to say about that. What will their position be? [interjection] Now the honourable member says the whole government should resign. I really do not know what the relevance of that one is, Madam Chairperson.

I think the member gets sensitive when I remind him that it took \$36,800 to move Mr. Decter from Montreal to Toronto when we are told by two moving companies that the cost of a move like that one from Montreal to Toronto should be \$3,000.

Point of Order

Mr. Chomiak: Madam Chairperson, the minister has been out of control now for over half an hour, dealing with a completely unrelated, irrelevant issue. The question was, the rollbacks to hospitals, 10 percent over the next three years in this jurisdiction of 3 percent, 4 percent, 3 percent. The minister has not answered the question. He is completely off topic, completely irrelevant, and not on the point.

Madam Chairperson, I ask you to call the minister to order, in order to answer the question as posed, and not go off on a tirade preparing himself for Peter Warren's show tomorrow.

Madam Chairperson: Order, please. The honourable member for Kildonan does not have a point of order, but I would remind all honourable members that indeed the questions and the responses are supposed to be relevant to the item being discussed.

* * *

Madam Chairperson: The honourable Minister of Health, to finish his response.

Mr. McCrae: Madam Chairperson, when we are talking about funding available to facilities, we have to look at how to make funding available. I am sure it is hard in Ontario for facilities to

manage when so much of their funding is going to look after the interests of one individual.

Now, I said that the move from Montreal that was paid to Mr. Decter was \$36,800, and we are told by two moving companies it could be done for three grand. As I understand the rules, you have to be in that employment for two years in order to claim that \$36,800, and as I said, Mr. Decter was in his employment for two years and one month.

During the 22 months that he was there, the meals for Mr. Decter were \$11,000; the hotels for Mr. Decter were \$5,570; flights, \$5,000; taxis, \$2,700; miscellaneous, \$1,900; leased car, \$10,000; housing differential—I guess the \$37,000 move from Montreal to Toronto resulted in a housing differential of \$28,000. There are additional moving expenses beyond the \$36,800 of \$802. Do not ask me what that \$802 must have been for; it is only made available to us courtesy of the Liberal Party in Ontario, but that takes the moving expenses to well over \$37,000 for what Mayflower tells us can be done for three.

Anyway, at the end of 22 months, we have the nearly two years at \$140,000 a year plus the \$102,410 in expenses for this individual, and the honourable member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) says this is not relevant. This is all right because, you know, the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer) says, and I will get the quote for next time we get together, he will be happy to debate Ontario policy any old time.

Well, let us debate Ontario policy. Why, tens of thousands—

An Honourable Member: That is because you are afraid to debate Manitoba policy.

Mr. McCrae: I am here for the duration. The honourable member says I am afraid to debate Manitoba policy. I am here for the duration. I am not afraid. I have been to 45 communities, some of them multiple times.

The honourable member just finished telling me I am practising up for Peter Warren's show tomorrow. Well, I have been waiting for an opportunity to be on Peter Warren's show, because

lately there are a few things that have been said on that program that need some straightening out.

It is no thanks to the honourable member for Kildonan, who often, along with his friend Mr. Tim Sale from the NDP group, a defeated NDP candidate, defeated by the honourable member for Crescentwood, who sits in her place here as the Health critic for the Liberal Party and quite capably able to do so—because of the misinformation spread by the honourable member for Kildonan and his friend Tim Sale, I have to go on Peter Warren's show to set the record straight and put the truth on the record.

It is not good enough to say, no, my policy on rollbacks has only to do with one person in the civil service and I only do it for symbolic reasons. Those are the words of an extremely narrow and unfair individual.

Mr. Chomiak: Madam Chairperson, I am glad the minister has finally sat down after his almost 40-minute tirade. I am quite surprised that the minister was unable or unwilling to debate or to answer the question that we posed to him. He spent 40 minutes talking about other jurisdictions.

As I said in my Speech from the Throne, that kind of tactic is the refuge of those unable to defend or unwilling to defend their own policies. I think it is a display that is characteristic of this government. Now the present minister has fallen in the same trap of blame, blame, blame. No responsibility is taken by this minister.

The question was about the three-year rollback. The question was asked about the Seven Regions Health Centre. The question has been asked by dozens, perhaps hundreds of facilities, throughout the province, and the minister is unable or unwilling to answer the question. The minister wasted 40 minutes of committee time on a tirade, Madam Chairperson, talking about other jurisdictions. That was totally irrelevant to this debate.

The minister ought to spend more time like the member for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans) who at least had a press conference to force the minister to announce a capital expansion at

Brandon General Hospital, because the member for Brandon East was concerned and called a press conference well before the minister even made his announcement. When the minister heard about the press conference he then rallied and said, oh, we better do something about it to take care of the reasons. So the minister ought not to put words into the mouth of the member for Brandon East.

Madam Chairperson, if the minister wants to debate Saskatchewan and Ontario, that is fine. If the minister wants to insult individuals who are not here to defend themselves, that is fine. If the minister wants to talk about individuals outside of this Chamber, that is fine. If the minister wants to claim that people like Mr. Sale or myself pass mistruths, that is fine.

* (1600)

We heard the same kind of diatribe from the former minister, and we know what happened with the former minister, because for years the member for Pembina (Mr. Orchard) gave the same kind of responses to legitimate questions from this side of the House, and we found out in the five by-elections where that kind of tactic ended up. So that is fine. If the minister wants to continue in that role, that is fine.

I had thought that perhaps we could open a discourse. I had thought that perhaps we could discuss issues, but it is quite apparent that the minister is not prepared to do that, and we will have to accept that. We will have to accept the fact that the minister is not prepared to answer questions or is unable to answer questions.

I again pose the question to the minister. Maybe he can try again. I asked about the 10 percent rollback. The minister said that it is irrelevant, it does not matter, and then went into his 40-minute lecture about Saskatchewan and Alberta. Is there not in place directives to the hospital about a 10 percent rollback over three years? The minister can embellish or he could explain to me that this is not in stone or that this should not be followed, but are they not given or have they not been given budgetary instructions or directions to deal with a 10 percent rollback over three years?

Mr. McCrae: In the ongoing planning of facilities operations in the future and as part of our relationship with them, yes, the honourable member can read as well as I can read that the Department of Health has asked for proposals as to how to deal with the shrinking availability of money for hospital operations in the future and also to work within the framework of reform, which the honourable member says he agrees with, then turns around and says something else. So there is no secret. The honourable member has the letter in his hand. I do not think this is much different from the way they did things before we came along in terms of budgeting for hospitals.

In fact, before we came along it was a little different altogether. They forced the closure of 42 beds without any thought or foresight about what to do, and this is Manitoba. It is not Saskatchewan or anywhere else. The honourable member for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans) sat around that cabinet table and said, let us tell Brandon General Hospital to shut down 42 beds and forget about increasing the support in the community or anything else, no planning, no nothing, and they had the gall to call that health care reform. Give me a break, Madam Chairperson.

The honourable member says I have not answered the question. I have been doing nothing but answering the questions, and the honourable member also talks about not trying to answer questions. What does he think I have been doing in those 45 communities for the last seven months in Manitoba, meeting people in town halls, meeting with nursing groups and professional groups and caregiver groups and meeting with individuals and hospital boards and administrations.

I mean, the honourable member would lead people to believe that I have to listen to him all the time. I do have to listen to him sometimes, and I respect him for what he has to do, but I am sure glad I do not have his job because I do not like being so negative all the time and trying to scare people with things that are not true. You pick up a rumour off the bottom of a shoe and take it as if it is factual and spread it around all over Manitoba and scare people. Well, that is not my approach.

We will go out and talk to them face to face and discuss the issues, and when I do that, people understand that health departments and governments right across this country have challenges to face. So do facilities have challenges to face, and so we ask for proposals, but what the honourable member does not share with anybody is that I state repeatedly and often that I will not accept proposals that result in the care of patients being diminished or that patients will be put in danger. The honourable member does not appreciate my comments about a friend of his in Ontario, but I do not appreciate his comments about a deputy minister in Manitoba. His suggestion amounts to clear, baldfaced discrimination against one person—discrimination.

Mr. Chomiak: Madam Chairperson, the minister made reference to the fact that I was referring to a letter dealing with the 3-4-3. I was not referring to a letter. Will the minister table that letter that has been provided to facilities indicating that the 3-4-3 is to be applied?

Mr. McCrae: In the ordinary course of business we write letters to people, and the honourable member seems to have a facility to obtain a lot of letters. I will take his question under advisement. Sometimes he has copied the letter officially and sometimes it just sort of magically finds its way to his office, and there is nothing new about that. As for the letter the honourable member refers to, just have him talk to his colleague the member for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans) who I think has a copy.

Mr. Chomiak: Was the same letter sent to all facilities or were there different letters sent to different facilities?

Mr. McCrae: I will take the question under advisement and respond next time we meet, if that is all right.

Mr. Chomiak: Madam Chairperson, the minister can advise if it is not appropriate at this point to ask this question, but the Misericordia Hospital made a presentation on Emergency Task Force on January 21, '93, concerning the role of Misericordia

Hospital. The reason I am asking this question at this point is because we talked about the Emergency Task Force, we talked generally about hospitals, and I am wondering if the minister has replied to that proposal, that is the overall proposal of the Misericordia Hospital, that called for a major review of the replacement of fee-for-service medical care and diagnostics with salaried staff, the elimination of administrative structure, community outreach program, et cetera, including the expanded role of the registered nurse, et cetera. Has the minister replied, or can he advise what the status is of that particular proposal?

Mr. McCrae: Madam Chairperson, the member said the proposal came out in January of '93, and I am sure that some kind of response was made by way at least of acknowledgement if nothing else. I can endeavour to check. However, emergency services and all the various services delivered in Winnipeg ought to be the subject of sort of group planning. We have got some very important players in the group in Winnipeg, the two teaching hospitals, the community hospitals, the long-term care hospitals as well. When it comes to planning for the delivery of the various kinds of services, I know we need to take account of the stated missions of the various hospitals but also to integrate the services that we have in such a way that we can receive maximum benefit for the effort and the dollars spent.

Misericordia Hospital has a long history in Winnipeg. I have enjoyed the pleasure of visiting there several times now, as a Minister of Health, enjoyed being there when they officially opened up their Ophthalmology Centre of Excellence.

I do not have any Hansard quotations with me today. I do not know what the honourable member or his predecessor, the former member for St. Johns, Judy Wasylcia-Leis, I do not know what kinds of things they said about the ophthalmology consolidation. We will find out though. I am sure that they would have been very positive about it and very, very supportive.

I just want to confirm that, because I want to give the honourable member and his party credit for those things that they do well and do right

because sometimes they do, just like all of us, try to do the right thing from time to time.

* (1610)

On the question of the ophthalmological consolidation at Misericordia Hospital, there were a number of hospitals involved in the discussions. Some of them discontinued the service in order that the consolidation could take place. We have actually saved money, and we have also increased the number of patients who can be assisted at this centre of excellence. We have shortened the waiting list and basically all aspects of that have been an improvement.

In the future, the role of Misericordia Hospital will be taken into account as we look at all the services to be delivered in the city of Winnipeg.

Mr. Chomiak: I would recommend that the minister or the department review this proposal. It is a very interesting proposal with respect to the provision of services, and I think it bears some scrutiny and review.

I have, of course, numerous questions but I will cede the floor to my colleague for Crescentwood, who has spent some time in here listening to the minister's previous responses, and then I would like to come back to some specific prepared questions on the IHN proposal as well as the questions about nurse practitioners.

Ms. Avis Gray (Crescentwood): I wanted to ask the minister some further questions about the concerns that have been expressed by the Manitoba Medical Association. I am not sure they are expressing concerns, but they seem to be saying that because of the terms of the MMA agreement that it is very clear to them that in Years 3, 4 and 5 that some services will be deinsured. I wanted to get clarification from the minister because he responded to the MLA for Kildonan earlier today in Question Period, if he could respond to that.

Mr. McCrae: I will try, Madam Chairperson. The honourable member for Crescentwood, I think, was listening when I talked about some deinsured services in Saskatchewan, and over the years there have been deinsured services here too. I think we

deinsured tattoo removal, for example, and our colleague from Kildonan was very concerned about that. I think he referred to that as the thin edge of the wedge of the insurance, that once you do it, you can really easily do it some more. There were a few other things sort of in that variety of deinsurance that happened.

That is one option that is available to be looked at, and it always has been. The point is, I think we are better protected by having the Medical Services Council reviewing any issues related to deinsurance than if it was just left to the government, because clearly there are some people who are just naturally suspicious of governments that maybe they will not always do the right thing, so we have the assistance of the Medical Services Council when it comes to deinsurance issues.

I am not going to pretend that deinsurance is just going to go away and never have to be addressed again, because that is not reasonable, I suggest. Over the years of medicare, which started out to be an insurance of doctor and certain hospital services, even certain doctor services, that is how it started. Our health system grew from that, and the government supported it. The health system grew very much from that, and it grew to a point where the people of this country cannot afford to continue to see that spiralling increase.

Federal transfers beginning in, I think, 1987 began to decline. It has been estimated though that within a few years the rate of federal participation in our health care plan is going to be zero. Now that is a problem. That is a challenge that all Canadian provinces who have to run the health care system, it is a challenge they all have to face. I think it is nice that we have three parties in this House committed to the preservation of our health system with the resources that we can make available to it. Within the context of the priority given to it by this government, whereby the percent of the budget spent on health has risen in the last five or six years from about 31 percent up near 34 percent, that says where we are at in terms of commitment.

But deinsurance issues, as well as changes in service, as well as issues like, well, physician

resource, all those things, will be there for the Medical Services Council to review and make recommendations on. Somehow we have to live within that global cap. The profession has to live within that global cap. We all do, and we have to deliver services. We just know that with some of the other things we are doing—we talked about the PURC committee, we talked about the health network that is coming.

Certainly the Pharmacare card is almost here, and that is going to spread out some day and be a total health information system. That is going to save a lot of dollars that we have not been saving in the past, and we can use those dollars to help keep our health system going.

Ms. Gray: Madam Chairperson, with this Medical Services Committee, I think that it is three individuals who are basically not from government side or not from the physician side that are appointed by the government. Can the minister indicate, is this the committee that he said there would be appointments to very soon, that there would be an announcement as to who would be on that? The minister is confirming that, yes, that is the case.

My concerns about this committee is that is this the only committee that is going to be looking at deinsurance?

Mr. McCrae: That is a hard question to answer, Madam Chairperson. I expect that lots of people will be looking at deinsurance and being for certain kinds of deinsurance and against certain kinds of deinsurance, but the body that will be making recommendations to the government will be that council, the Medical Services Council.

There are many, many other committees and interest groups and lobby and advocacy groups out there who will have their things to say, too. I am already, in response to some of my mail, encouraging people to make their views known to that Medical Services committee just as soon as it has a mailing address, so that that committee will be able to take the input from the public and distill it as they work through the issues and make recommendations to government. So it does not

preclude other people from having an opinion, but this body will be very important because it will be more or less that last agency or body or entity that makes a recommendation to government before government has to respond to the Medical Services Council.

Ms. Gray: My concern about this particular committee in making recommendations to the government on deinsurance is that by and large other than departmental staff it represents one group of health professionals and that is the physicians. Although they are an integral part of the health care system, they do come with a very particular perspective, I believe. I would hate to see recommendations going to the government and decisions made on deinsurance that do not involve a much wider group of individuals who are involved in the health care system and other professionals, other professionals who are involved with, let us say, aboriginal health, who are involved with health particularly as it affects lower-income people, people in the inner city, individuals who are involved in health care outside of the city of Winnipeg.

So my concerns around looking at deinsurance are that there is no question that physicians here in Manitoba do have a particular perspective on health care, and oftentimes we have seen where there has been a clashing of ideas of those professionals with other professional groups. I think we need to move away from a medical model here in Manitoba, and I think we need to have a broader idea, broader philosophy, in terms of what exactly core health care services are. What we now see as core health services today in the 1990s is a lot different than what it was 20 years ago. It is like the issue of child care. There are still a number of people in our society who believe that child care is a luxury, whereas there are many more of a growing group of people who feel that in fact it is a type of service that should be available to Canadians or to Manitobans. So I have real concerns about this committee being the committee that is going to be looking at recommendations to the government on deinsurance.

Two questions: With the three individuals who are appointed to that committee, is there some way of allowing—or I guess I would ask the minister, who will these individuals represent? Will they be individual consumers in the community, or will they be there to represent other health care professionals or other organizations? Can the minister perhaps answer that?

*(1620)

Mr. McCrae: I would like to tell the honourable member that the very concerns she is raising are ones that I have raised throughout this process too. I do not think it is right that the medical profession should have all the say, nor in a thing like this, where we are telling through this agreement the profession, well, you have only so many dollars. So it is good to be able to have some kind of a forum where the two sides can work things out, and that is why it is important too that there be mechanisms to allow for a decision to be made, because you can have a gridlock on issues too.

We wanted to make sure that decisions are tempered by research and by data, which is why we need the services of organizations like the Centre for Health Policy and Evaluation standards. We need the input of an organization like the College of Physicians and Surgeons, plain old-fashioned consumer input. That is why we need the views of the people we are going to appoint. We want them to have an understanding of the needs and concerns of senior citizens. We want them to have an understanding of what it is like to be a disabled person in society, or what it is like to have chronic health issues to be dealt with, and that is why it is important to have tie-breaking mechanisms.

But I want to underline for the honourable member that ultimately the recommendations this council makes before they are acted on have to be agreed to by the government, and that is what is in the agreement. Up until now, the government has just been able to make decisions at will, so to speak, about what is insurable and what is not, as long as it was within the confines of the Canada Health Act. It still has to be in the confines of the

Canada Health Act, and now we have this added benefit, I suggest, of the Medical Services Council.

How are we going to deal with the problem of a shrinking pie for the medical profession without chaos, without ongoing warfare with the physicians of Manitoba? That was not the right way to deliver health services for Manitobans. I share the concerns the member has; I always have.

Deinsurance is something that is going to continue to be a concern; however, let us not pretend that these problems and challenges do not exist, and that we can just find some money, because, as I say, federal transfers are declining. It is not the honourable member's fault, but that is what has been happening for years, and it is not going to stop immediately because we have a new government, I do not expect. So I am not critical of that government because I know how much money we have been borrowing over the last—I think I know—number of years, and it is too much, and we cannot sustain that system of government. We have to get back to an even keel. That is why I support what the Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson) in Manitoba is doing, leading the way about balanced budgets. That has to happen. It is not a choice that we have any more. It has to happen.

The honourable member for Crescentwood (Ms. Gray), I believe, is on track on most of these items, but her concerns are the same as mine, and they are exactly the same questions I asked as we went through the negotiating process. Are we going to set up this council so that the physicians have too much power? Now that is what Tim Sale says. Well, the honourable member for Crescentwood was the victor in that particular contest. I am quite willing to take criticism from the member for Crescentwood as opposed to the person she defeated to get here. She speaks for the people, and Tim Sale speaks for Tim Sale.

I share those concerns, and yet I say that we have a far better chance to achieve fair-handed or even-handed and safe medical care and affordable and all of those things that are mentioned in the Canada Health Act through the auspices of a Medical Services Council like this. There is a level

of co-operation here that has not always existed. I am glad it is going to exist.

I just wonder if I have answered both parts of the member's question.

Ms. Gray: Madam Chairperson, in the agreement, and I cannot quite recall the members who are chosen by the Manitoba Medical Association, is that up to them totally as to what their membership is?

Mr. McCrae: Yes. The Manitoba Medical Association chooses its co-chair for the council and its three members, and that is their decision to make.

Ms. Gray: Madam Chairperson, one of the concerns I have, and I had the opportunity to meet with the Manitoba Medical Association just as an information meeting or meet with their executive early in April, and it was just after this agreement was signed, so I did not have the opportunity to go through the agreement. I was certainly very impressed by the executive and the concerns that they raised about health care, although it was interesting to note, of the group of seven people around the table on the executive, none of them were women physicians.

I would have a concern that in this committee as well, I really believe that there are a number of groups that bring different perspectives to health care—aboriginal peoples. I think women are another group. I would have a concern as well that a committee such as this, with all due respect to the executive of the MMA, perhaps would not have that perspective of women and health care issues depending on who all the representatives are. I am wondering if there is a way that the minister could ensure that perhaps there is a real representation on that committee for large groups in our society who might be affected by deinsurance that might not be recognized by other groups in our society.

Mr. McCrae: When the honourable member knows the make-up, she will make her own judgment, but I think the answer is a very clear yes. I personally recognize the importance of health care, and if I may say so, perhaps the women of Manitoba understand that even more acutely than

men. That being said, I hope the honourable member will be pleased with the make-up. I have no control over the appointments made by MMA, by the college, by the centre, but I have control over about six of the appointments, and there may be seven. I hope the honourable member will see that her concern has been addressed when she knows the make-up.

Ms. Gray: Can the minister tell us, with the committee that was formed, not through this agreement, but I think of the committee that was formed mostly of pharmacists who were looking at deinsuring a number of drugs in this province, I am wondering if you can give us an update on how that is going. Are there any lessons to be learned from that particular committee in terms of the kind of activities that this Medical Services committee would be reviewing?

Mr. McCrae: May I ask the honourable member for clarification? Is she talking about the formulary committee that is made up of pharmacists and physicians or PURC, the Patient Utilization Review Committee?

Ms. Gray: The formulary committee.

Mr. McCrae: The formulary committee. The honourable member says the formulary one.

That committee, as much as I know of its make-up, and as much as I know of its function, is that it reviews medically and scientifically the various new drugs that come available on the market, both the patent medicines and the generic ones, and reviews which ones are safe and proper and effective. I do not know if they look at the cost-effective part, but they look at the effective part for Manitobans and make recommendations to government about which drugs ought to be on the formulary for use in the Pharmacare program or for use outside the Pharmacare program.

Sometimes we get things out of context. Again, I raise this, I think this last go-around we deinsured two drugs, and that was the big news—forgot that we insured 66 new ones—I guess it is always a question of emphasis. But I am not sure whether the question is leading as to the relationship between the formulary committee and the Medical

Services Council. I would need a little more time to prepare a more detailed response to the member for that one.

* (1630)

Ms. Gray: Madam Chairperson, we still receive letters now and then of individuals who have been on certain medications where they have been delisted, these drugs, and they seem to have a lot of difficulties even with the physicians during the process, who are allowed to write a letter and appeal. There seems to be sometimes a nonawareness of the benefit of some of these drugs, and it probably also stems from differences in practices from physician to physician.

With that kind of committee, I suppose my concern is, how do we ensure that we are not going to have people falling through the gaps if we actually look at deinsuring of some services. For a majority of people it would be fine, no one would be needing that. But for a small segment of the population, it is a major concern and, in fact, is a hardship healthwise.

Mr. McCrae: We do learn of the occasional cases whereby a drug has been delisted and a doctor has prescribed it. I do not know all the reasons for that, but sometimes maybe the physician has not been informed or, if he or she has been informed, has forgotten that a drug has been delisted. I do not know all the reasons why delisted drugs from time to time get prescribed when the reason for their delisting usually has to do with the view taken that their effectiveness is not up to the standard that once was or that other prescription drugs have come along that have outperformed them or that there are generic drugs that do as good or better a job.

There are all of these possibilities. Sometimes the physician should—well, I do not know to what extent the physician knows or does not know what is exactly on the market. I expect through the Drug Products Information Network, though, that pharmacists and prescribers will have more of an information sharing relationship than they have had in the past and that some of the kinds of things, and there are not that many, but there are some, the

member refers to might be avoided in the future through the DPIN program.

If it meets the honourable members' approval, I have something else I could say that would take maybe five minutes in response to some previous questions. The honourable member has asked me about the Interlake Health Network, the honourable member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak), and I will just read into the record a briefing note I have received. I met not long ago with the Interlake people and we are following up with them too on some follow-up on that meeting.

But I will say this, the Interlake Health Network was established by the hospitals and nonprofit nursing homes in Interlake Region in 1992. The IHN submitted a rural health reform proposal for the provision of health services in Interlake Region which was reviewed by the Northern Rural Health Advisory Council. While there were many positive ideas in that proposal, it was not recommended for approval due to the need for broader representation on the IHN as well as the lack of a tangible plan for the health delivery system in the region.

The IHN was formally dissolved in February of this year, and the membership joined with other health stakeholders in the region to form the Interlake Health Association. The inaugural meeting of the Interlake Health Association took place on April 9, 1994, and out of their discussion a steering committee was formed. I have had an opportunity to review the minutes of that meeting. I must say that I am impressed with the range of participants involved and the co-operation which is evident in their deliberations.

Not only are the facilities, both acute care and long-term care, involved but also Community Health and Family Services, agencies such as community therapy services, the Interlake Mental Health Council, First Nations, the Manitoba Metis Federation, physicians, health care consumer and ambulance services with provision for the inclusion on an ad hoc basis of other members to deal with specific issues as they arise. The spirit of the Interlake Health Association can be summed up in a sentence from the minutes of April 9, 1994,

and I quote: No one will be excluded as all members are on equal footing.

With that kind of attitude, Madam Chairperson, I am confident that the Interlake Health Association will be successful, in co-operation with the Ministry of Health, in developing and implementing a renewed health delivery system in the Interlake.

What I perceive here is that good progress is being made. I really resented one day when I looked at the Gimli newspaper that I had shot down a proposal there, and that was not really the thing at all. I was interested in making sure that lots of people were involved and that no one was left out. I am given some comfort in the wake of recent events.

Honourable members also asked me about the interdepartmental steering committee for the review of seniors care facilities. They want to know a little bit about the terms of reference for the work that is going to be done. The Ministers of Health, Family Services and Seniors have jointly established this committee to review existing policies, standards and regulations with respect to seniors residential care in Manitoba. As part of our government's commitment to strengthen our health care system, we have set up this committee to examine existing services, programs and facilities to ensure that they meet the needs of Manitoba now and in the future.

The terms of reference for the committee include the following. First, identify opportunities to better co-ordinate the continuum of services provided to seniors including home care, residential care and personal care home services. This would include consideration of assessment and panelling. This review will consider the need to balance the expectations of Manitobans with an appropriate level of intervention of government departments in these matters.

Second, review existing legislation, policies and regulations with respect to personal care homes and infirm aged facilities. Standards, licensing, compliance, levels of care, current practices, safety

and reporting mechanisms will be included in this review.

Thirdly, identify possible measures to better apprise Manitobans about care, service levels and facilities so that they can make more informed decisions.

Fourth, identify opportunities to enhance community involvement in the provision of care to seniors as residents in facilities in homes. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Mr. Chomiak: Madam Chairperson, is there any time frame given? Perhaps I missed it, but is there any time frame given for the delivery of the report of that particular committee?

Mr. McCrae: Before I answer, I would prefer to check to make sure my answer is accurate. I will ask my staff to maybe make note of that.

Mr. Chomiak: Can the minister also inform us as to the methodology and the approach that the committee is going to be taking? I am not sure if I missed it, and I apologize if I did. Who specifically make up the committee?

Mr. McCrae: Madam Chairperson, the head of the Seniors Directorate will chair this task force. I can make the honourable member aware of the names of Health and Social and Family Services representatives on this task force.

* (1640)

The task force, in carrying out these terms of reference, will be—in fact, I am getting some mail from people now. I will be diverting it to this task force for their attention. This task force will be asked by me to ensure that regulatory and standard setting organizations are involved in the review. Those who have asked to be heard have been given positive indications from us that they will indeed be heard.

Mr. Chomiak: Madam Chairperson, I appreciate the minister's comments. The only additional factor I wish to add is that all things are generally better done quickly, but given the nature of this particular issue, I would hope that there is some expediency attached to this particular project,

given the coroner's report and the television documentary that was done in this area.

I know the minister can certainly get the co-operation of members on this side of the House, and I am sure including the members of the Liberal Party as well as our party, in expediting this matter as quickly as possible given the significance and given the fact of the desire of Manitobans to deal with this issue as quickly as possible including regulations, if necessary.

Mr. McCrae: The honourable member's observations are something with which I wholeheartedly agree. I do not want there to be any delay in addressing issues which may be important in terms of guaranteeing the safety of senior citizens and others in personal care homes in Manitoba.

I have to add though that I believe it was today or very recently the Manitoba Association of Registered Nurses, I believe it was, made the point that by and large our personal care homes are of a high quality and services rendered are of high quality. The honourable member for Crescentwood raised the point a little bit when she referred to a report put out by the Manitoba Centre for Health Policy and Evaluation, which, as part of the report, made it clear that Manitoba personal care homes, by and large, are very, very safe and good places to be.

We do not want again, because I have seen letters and mail—in fact, that is why I referenced the MARN, a reference to the CBC coverage of this matter, gently criticizing the CBC for the slant that it put on the issue, because in their view, the MARN's view, that does not tell a whole story. Certainly, we should be very mindful of any cases that show a lapse in care standards or anything like that.

We certainly have to be mindful of changing levels of care and adjust policies and staffing and all of the rest of it, to make sure we look after it. But, on the other hand, let us also view this in a balanced way, because I think the MHO were also concerned that the public might get the impression

that personal care homes are not safe places to be, and that is just not true.

These incidents were reported by the CBC, and nobody is denying that they happened, and nobody is saying that steps should not be taken to take every step possible to ensure those kinds of things do not happen anymore. But similarly, to other things that are going on in Manitoba, we have high, high standards; we insist on meeting those standards. We have regulations in place to make sure the standards are met, and it is time for a review. I agree with the honourable member that no time should be wasted on this, because we want to remove any doubts about levels of safety and care, but it has to be done well, as well.

Ms. Gray: Madam Chairperson, just as a comment follow-up to the minister's announcement of this committee that will be reviewing personal care home standards in particular, when one looked at the CBC documentary, it was interesting that all of the cases that were referred to all dealt with individuals who had Alzheimer's.

When one looks at perhaps the staffing ratios or the different level of acuity, the higher level of acuity of individuals who are now in personal care homes versus the kind of individuals who are in personal care homes 10 to 15 years ago, I think it is probably high time that we look at those levels. I would hope as well that the committee will have an opportunity to actually go out to personal care homes and meet with some of the staff.

One of the comments that came back to me through some directors of nursing and other staff in personal care homes was that oftentimes their perception was that they were not really talked to a lot when the Department of Health staff came out to do inspections, and that a lot of reports were read and that kind of thing, but not a lot of one-to-one interviews were held. Whether that is true or not, or if that is commonplace, or if that is an isolated incident, I do not know, but I would hope that the review—we will obviously need some staff within the department or individuals who are going to be able to assist and to look into this. I agree with the minister, obviously, we do

have a high quality of personal care homes here in this province, but if there are areas that we are falling down on or not doing as good a job as we could, then we need to correct that.

As well, in this centre for Health Care and Policy, in their documentation when they talked about some changes and recommendations to the minister in regard to personal care homes, it was also interesting that there appeared to be some differences in the nonprof homes and the prof homes; and so I would hope that the review committee would possibly look at that as well to see if there are differences.

We do not want to alarm Manitobans into thinking that personal care homes are not safe places, but there certainly are concerns being expressed by staff, which is why I am glad as well the minister is prepared to look at Bill 22, because that is certainly going to be a real imposition on a lot of personal care homes which would have to bring in replacement staff anyway. Oftentimes replacement staff cannot provide, by virtue of that type of work in the short term, that consistency of care and do not know the clients as well as regular staff.

Again, we look forward to that review being completed as quickly as possible, but the most important thing is that it is a review that is done thoroughly and comprehensively.

Mr. McCrae: Madam Chairperson, I thank the honourable member for her comments about this particular review. I take to heart what she said about staff input, and I will be encouraging, if not directing, the task force to make sure they do indeed hear the views of people working in these facilities, perhaps also the families of some of the residents who live there.

We do have to remember these are residences, and they are not jails; and even though we are dealing more and more with people who have Alzheimer's disease and cognitive problems, these are still homes. We want to make them pleasant experiences for people too, and all of that within the context of a safe and secure setting. It is quite a balance to strike, but we are asking our personal

care homes to strike that balance, because these are indeed homes.

Just on that same point about seeking input, it reminds me of a comment made by the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) about a monologue disguised as a dialogue. I say to you, the member for Crescentwood (Ms. Gray), that if that is all that we were doing, I would not have gone to so much trouble. I, personally, would not have gone to so much trouble, if I was going to have a monologue disguised as a dialogue, to go to 45 communities, some of them on a repeated basis, to hear and to listen and to share with the department the things that I have been hearing, to put into place review mechanisms to review staffing guidelines.

I mean, if it was all for electoral purposes too, as was suggested by some people last fall, I would have done the layoffs last fall, because it is going to be a little while yet before we face the public. I mean if everything has some sinister political motive behind it, we would have been better to get those kinds of things out of the way last fall. But the point of it is, we are going ahead with a meaningful review of staffing guidelines.

Yes, we have to move along, because we cannot be forever about that. Neither can we be forever about a review of safety standards and so on in personal care.

* (1650)

If you are not sincere in what you are doing, you do not visit 45 communities, is my point, and have town halls and face the music everywhere you go and take some of the abuse that some, a very small number of people, in Manitoba, dish out. Most people have some criticism, some concerns, but it is always an honest sort of approach in the case of most people.

The honourable member referred to the issue of proprietary versus nonproprietary. I think that if she reviews the—we have to get a new name for the centre, do we not? It is a little hard to pronounce: the Centre for Health Policy and Evaluation. It does not even lend itself to an interesting acronym or anything,

In any event, that same report I think makes the point that the proprietary personal care homes also house a higher level of care people. I think that is also made in that report. I ask the member to review that before she makes any final judgments about proprietary and nonproprietary.

I know that colleagues in the New Democratic Party have their minds made up regardless. Proprietary homes could be the safest places of all and they would be against it. We know where they stand on these philosophical issues.

My issue and the member for Crescentwood's issue seems to be appropriate care. Before she makes judgments about proprietary, though, I ask her to consider the levels of care required in the proprietary homes. I am told that as an average, the people in them are requiring higher levels of care, and so there might be more likelihood of incident, but we do not want any incidents in either kind of place. I wanted to assure the member that I heard what she said and I am very mindful of all the things that she has pointed out.

Mr. Chomiak: I look forward to discussion about the issues of proprietary and nonproprietary when we get down to that item, that line item in the Estimates.

My question to the minister is: I note that the minister today has announced a limited approval of CT scans in several facilities, and I have a multifaceted question to the minister as the clock draws nigh, and I wonder, does this take effect immediately? Do we have any idea when the Seven Oaks matter will be considered? When does the minister expect the five-year report to be announced? The question is: When does the minister anticipate the committee that is doing the five-year report to make its recommendations?

Madam Deputy Speaker: The honourable member for Kildonan, for clarification.

Mr. Chomiak: I am just quoting from the press release that says, "These hospitals understand that this approval is on an interim and limited basis pending receipt of final recommendations which will be contained in the committee's five-year report, added McCrae. The five-year plan will also

address CT scanners and services in rural and northern areas of Manitoba."

Mr. McCrae: It refers to the Imaging Committee's report. Yes, I apologize to the member.

What we have here are several hospitals either having or proposing to have CT scanners on their premises, and previously they were obtained without the department's go-ahead with respect to the operating costs for those things.

As somebody who understands a little bit about this, it costs money to buy this expensive diagnostic technology. Communities in Manitoba are wonderful places, because our fellow Manitobans are really good at supporting volunteer efforts, writing cheques for community assets like scanners and equipment like that. That is how we got into this difficulty. Hospitals either had purchased or were going to purchase scanners, and we had to figure out, well, what are we going to do now. Some hospitals were operating their scanners without approval, and I guess there was some penalty involved in that, and that was the subject of some comment and discussion.

We are asking the hospitals that have them to use them under protocols to be set, using them for the present time in emergency patients so that there can be some kind of handle on what is happening with imaging in the city.

I said to the people at Concordia and others last fall that I would look very carefully at their needs through the use of the imaging committee and that maybe there was a way we could work this out so that these machines could be made use of and it could be done in a rational way. That could only be done with co-operation from other hospitals who have them and are authorized to use them. There was a cost involved of transporting patients hospital to hospital, and it was agreed that cost could be diverted to the use of the new scanners, and that is part of the arrangement.

I think we need to all work together and use the services of professional committees like the Imaging Committee. They have their longer range duties to perform with respect to the whole of the

province of Manitoba, and I would like to be guided by that kind of advice we get. The honourable member and I really are not qualified to make the kinds of medical decisions or even recommendations that we rely on those with whom we consult to give us. So we need to listen to them.

I said to one individual, when I was asked about what I was going to do about this: I will see what the committee has to say because they are well positioned to make some judgments about this as a result of their expertise and their experience. One person said, oh, I hope not. The reason that person would say that, may I suggest, would be because they had plans to move ahead but working outside the advice of the committee.

I think we need to acknowledge the efforts of the people who do help us on these committees and listen to what they have to say. So we appear to have some part of a resolution to this problem that developed, and I think, working co-operatively, we can continue to provide good care.

That is what the main issue is here, that we provide good, accurate, safe diagnostic care through technology like the CT scanner. So we look forward to good health outcomes, which would be the result of effective diagnostic work. So I just go around looking for partners all the time. I have been to all of these hospitals, in some cases more than once, to meet with boards and administrations and staff, people who are in those hospitals, and I look forward to a positive relationship when it comes to the issue of imaging and diagnostic services like the kind you can get from people who operate CT scanners.

Mr. Chomiak: I take it from that, the minister cannot give me a definitive idea when Seven Oaks might hear back, but my next question is the—I suppose it is conceivable that some of these CTs that are now operating, given the report of the five-year committee, could conceivably be nonoperational subject to the report of the committee. I am not trying to raise spectres. I am just inquiring since I have just reviewed the release.

Mr. McCrae: I think, on these kinds of specifics, I would prefer if we could discuss it at the appropriate line in the Estimates. I am not being difficult. I just feel more comfortable. I think the staff that would be there at that time would be able to help advise me too, so if the member does not mind, I am quite happy to answer the questions but at the appropriate time.

Mr. Chomiak: I wonder if the minister, when we next meet, could table a list of the names of the individuals who occupy, and I am going from memory, the staff positions under this particular appropriation, the individuals and their function.

Mr. McCrae: Is the honourable member talking about the line that we are officially at and wants to know who is who in that appropriation? Is this the Executive Support? Which line are we on?

Madam Chairperson: We are on line 1.(b).

Mr. McCrae: We are actually getting to the point here after a couple of days. I am not sure what he is asking, but I will tell him, besides the minister, what kind of staff we have in my office and in the deputy minister's office as well as a first item if the honourable member will remember to remind me. Thanks.

Madam Deputy Speaker: The honourable member for Kildonan, with one quick comment.

Mr. Chomiak: Thank you, Madam Chairperson; thank you, Mr. Minister. I look forward to receipt of that information when we next meet.

* (1700)

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order, please. The hour being 5 p.m. and time for private members' hour, committee rise.

Call in the Speaker.

IN SESSION

Committee Report

Mrs. Louise Dacquay (Chairperson of Committees): The Committee of Supply has adopted a certain resolution, directs me to report the same and asks leave to sit again.

I move, seconded by the honourable member for La Verendrye (Mr. Sveinsson), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Mr. Speaker: The hour being 5 p.m., time for Private Members' Business.

PROPOSED RESOLUTIONS

Res. 3—International Year of the Family

Mrs. Louise Dacquay (Seine River): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable member for Sturgeon Creek (Mr. McAlpine), that

WHEREAS the family within its many diverse shapes and forms is the basic building block of our society; and

WHEREAS the well-being of our families strengthens the foundation of our communities and our province; and

WHEREAS the work within families of caring, nurturing, guiding and promoting tolerance and acceptance remains its most important function, particularly on behalf of its young and dependent members; and

WHEREAS the United Nations has declared 1994 as the International Year of the Family; and

WHEREAS Family Year-94 is Manitoba's own special observance of this important year.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that all members of this Legislature recognize the many innovative and thoughtful involvements of Manitobans on behalf of Family Year-94 and continue in their own efforts to encourage further awareness of the importance of family.

Motion presented.

Mrs. Dacquay: It is my pleasure today to move the resolution on International Year of the Family. The Premier's Volunteer Council has spent many endless hours in working with communities and organizations throughout the province to sincerely create awareness and encourage communities to become involved in drawing attention once again to the very important role of families in Manitoba.

As we all know, families come in many diverse sizes and shapes. Our first families, particularly within the aboriginal community, extended beyond the parental unit. Aunts, uncles, elders and neighbours all shared in the work of caregiving. Our early settlers of Manitoba often left behind their own extended families. Smaller circles of family members eventually grew to a large clan within farming communities.

The toll of two world wars led to a rise in the number of single-parent families. Over time some remarriages occurred. The '50s and the '60s saw a tendency toward nuclear-family units. The growth in nonfarm employment saw younger members starting their own families in urban centres. While under one roof there were fewer family members, strong bonds remained with relatives near at hand.

The past two decades were marked by incredible changes in our world. Air travel made overseas seem like next door. Moving away often took us across a continent. Women returning to the workplace generated new levels of family income upwards and downwards and altered the balance of work done within the home. Communication from around the globe flowed into our lives suggesting an infinite variety of opinions and information to choose from.

Challenging economic times spawned a return to family and home-based business. The changing world facing families generated challenges to the whole notion of family. The principles and values of families were called into question as family structures responded and shifted with our transformation in the electronic age. Yet, through all of these changes, family still remains the building block of our society. The strength of our families forms the foundation of our communities. Our capacity to grow and thrive flows from the well-being of our families.

Families perform the most important function in our society. Their work in caring, nurturing, guiding, promoting tolerance and acceptance is the template that is carried into all areas of living. The example set within the family forms the basis for attitudes and outlooks transmitted far beyond its borders. It is our first and our most enduring view

of the world. The United Nations declaring 1994 the International Year of the Family is very timely. It is an opportunity for each of us to examine the importance of family in our own lives, to reaffirm our commitment to what we look to our families to provide.

Manitobans have felt the challenge of change. Our province has kept pace with modern advances and is the leader in many areas of human progress. In our own transition, we have felt the need to explore our own commitment to family. Manitobans, their communities and their organizations have been asked to participate in International Year of the Family. We have been invited to express how important we think families are. We have been encouraged to reflect on our commitment to families in whatever way is best.

The response of Manitobans has been overwhelming. In every corner of our province, citizens, families, communities, media outlets, organizations, corporations and governments have found many innovative and thoughtful ways to express their commitment to family. Two common thoughts have emerged; one, through the challenges and changes inherent in life today, the most essential ingredient to the well-being of our families is the time we devote to them.

We have many good services and supports to help ease the fray of hectic schedules. Yet, our families and especially our younger members look to us for unconditional acceptance, love and guidance that we can best provide. There is a growing awareness that we must find time to spend with our families through a greater sharing of responsibilities within the home and in the workplace.

* (1710)

Secondly, a very strong sense of the community of families has also emerged. Manitobans have always recognized the importance of lending a hand to those in need. We are leading donators and volunteers, supporting thousands of endeavours to support and strengthen families. We set high standards for the care of Manitobans and contribute tremendous energy to meeting those

standards. We participate in sharing a safe and a secure province for us all, and we do this simply because of our kinship with our fellow Manitobans. We are reaffirming the importance of caring for each other.

The federal government has established the Canada Committee for IYF and the federal IYF co-ordinating office to help national participants support the year.

Family Year-94 is Manitoba's own recognition of this very special year. Over 700 community organizers have registered thousands of innovative and thoughtful involvements to celebrate Family Year-94. These types of involvements range anywhere from family gatherings to a national conference on independent living and the family. Many corporate sponsors, including the media, have contributed goods, services and resources to assist in Family Year-94 recognition.

All of my colleagues on all sides of the Legislature have been invited to participate as Family Year-94 ambassadors to help build awareness, encourage community involvement and assist in drawing attention to the important values and importance of our everyday families. I know many, many of the members of the Legislature have been very involved in participating in Family Year events, both within their constituencies and, on a larger scale, on behalf of many Manitobans and on behalf of our province. I sincerely appreciate the support and the involvement of the colleagues on both sides of the House.

The theme for Family Year-94 in Manitoba is "Families, the Heart of Manitoba." I think that is a very meaningful theme for all of Manitobans.

This Family Year-94 is to me one of the most important initiatives that I have been involved in, and I really sincerely appreciate having had the opportunity to work on such a very exciting and a very energetic volunteer council.

This is an initiative that crosses all party lines, and I would sincerely hope that all members on both sides of the House would see fit to support this resolution. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise and speak on the resolution of the member for Seine River (Mrs. Dacquay).

I would like to commend her for an excellent resolution. Quite often, we are accustomed to resolutions that we consider to be self-serving and that pat the government on the back and which we then feel it necessary to amend, but today we have no amendment for this resolution because it does not need to be amended; it stands on its own as a resolution that we support.

The member for Seine River began in a very logical way, saying that families were the basic building block of our society. I believe this is true. We belong to wider communities and to other organizations, but certainly families are the primary unit of our society in which all of us begin.

The member acknowledged that families come in many diverse shapes and forms. This is a good thing to acknowledge because frequently, when we hear people talking about families, and in particular when one hears the right wing, particularly in the United States, talking about family values, there seems to be an assumption or an implication that they are thinking of nuclear families. But as the member for Seine River (Mrs. Dacquay) pointed out, in aboriginal culture, for example, their tradition is that of considering their extended family to be part of their family.

We have labels for different kinds of families, for good or for bad. In addition to extended families, we also have blended families and single-parent families, and now we also have gay and lesbian couples who have foster children and adopted children in some jurisdictions. I think we should concentrate on the idea that all of them are families rather than putting labels on different kinds of families.

All of us begin as children in a family and then leave our immediate family and leave home, but this original family, or family of origin, is the family and the foundation on which our future life is built, and it is the learnings and the experience in that family of origin that we use in our life

experience in any new family that we form or become part of.

The resolution says that the well-being of our family strengthens the foundation of our communities and our province. I think that is an important recognition because, if we have strong families, then I think we do have strong communities and a strong province.

We know that the converse is also true, that when there are difficulties and problems in families, these problems are then reflected in our communities and in our society and in our province. This puts a burden on all of us, since we share responsibility for one another in our society to help those families either because they are in need or because there is a difficulty or a problem.

The resolution says that it is the work of families to care and nurture and guide and promote tolerance and acceptance. This is a very important function of our families. It is an unpaid function, although Statistics Canada recently did put, I guess, a guesstimate or dollar value on the value of unpaid work, mainly by women, in families.

I am sorry I did not have time to look up that figure, but I believe, from the news stories, it was in the billions of dollars. I think that is an important thing to measure in our families, because it illustrates and shows how important this unpaid work is if we can put a price tag on it.

I know in the past there have been campaigns, one of which was called, wages for housework, where people were campaigning to get compensated for this. I do not know how that would happen, but at least it is the first step in recognizing the importance of the unpaid work, primarily that of women, in our families.

Another implication of that is that there needs to be a lot more equality in terms of the caring and nurturing and housework done in family units, particularly a lot more equality in sharing by men in family units. Those of us who have sons are trying to raise them differently than even my generation, but it is not easy. Even though we are trying to say we want you to have values which are not sexist and which are not violent, they do not

always incorporate the values that we want them to have. I can testify to this having a 16-year-old son and a 13-year-old daughter.

* (1720)

It is always of interest to me to observe the young adults in my youth group who are in Grades 10, 11 and 12. By the time they are 14 or 15 years old, there are huge differences really in the socialization of boys and girls by the time they reach Grade 10. It is quite sad to see, because the girls are much more mature and much more responsible. I believe even their social conscience is more developed than the boys at that age. I am trying to do my bit to, say, bring the boys up to the girls' level, but it is not easy.

I think probably peer pressure and the values that surround all of us in our society, but which maybe are of more influence on young people, are responsible for that even when parents try to limit the amount of television. For example, in our family we put a limit on of half an hour a day of television for each of our youngsters.

An Honourable Member: It works?

Mr. Martindale: My colleague from Thompson (Mr. Ashton) says does it work? Well, they probably spend a lot more time because of that at the YMCA and in other activities instead of in front of the television, and I think that has been very beneficial. In fact, our son, Nathan, was awarded the Volunteer of the Year Award by the YM-YW of Winnipeg this year. I think they have learned a lot of leadership skills at the YMCA that they certainly would not have learned sitting in front of a television.

I just wish that kind of opportunity were available to everyone. Unfortunately, it is very expensive to belong to the YMCA, although they do subsidize many, many children. For example, the North YMCA has a deficit every year of about, I think, \$285,000. The reason for that is that most of that is going to subsidize low-income families, which is good. Unfortunately, not everyone is able to take advantage of that.

The resolution refers to the United Nations and some of the literature which the International Year

of the Family office has sent us has the objectives of the United Nations year. One of them is to increase awareness of family issues among governments, as well as in the private sector. The International Year of the Family would serve to highlight the importance of families, attain a better understanding of their functions and problems, promote knowledge of the economic, social and demographic processes affecting families and their members and focus attention upon the rights and responsibilities of all family members. That is just one of a list from A to F of objectives. I think it is appropriate that the member should include that line in her resolution because there are implications for governments, as the objectives from the United Nations points out.

One of the implications is that we need to look at the health and well-being of all families, and we know that there is a very serious problem of child poverty in many families. For example, 60 percent of single-parent families have an income below the poverty line.

For a change, we had some very good news for many of those families on the front page of the paper today, wherein a successful challenge to the income tax laws of Canada means that women who are receiving maintenance payments would be able to keep that income and not have to pay tax on it. That could make a substantial difference in the income of some families, particularly single-parent families. It is an injustice which has been there for many years, and it has been removed.

We hope that the federal government does not appeal the decision. If they do, we hope that Manitoba will intervene on behalf of the individual, rather than on behalf of the federal government, but I think all of us here would hope that judgment will stand the way it is, because, as the media stories have pointed out, it is going to have a very positive impact on a large number of families who will be able to keep all of that maintenance money.

Unfortunately, another unfairness in our society is that if those individuals are on social assistance, they can get the maintenance payments, but it is

deducted dollar for dollar from their income. In spite of that, the income security system forces them to go after the partner who is delinquent in making the payments even though there is no benefit to them from going after those maintenance payments. Of course, if that were to change, if they were allowed to keep that income, that would be a substantial benefit, particularly for single parents on social assistance.

The member from Seine River (Mrs. Dacquay) talks about aboriginal people and extended families, and what she said was true. Unfortunately, her government's policy is, I believe, exploiting extended families and relatives by reducing the foster family rates, which have been cut 50 percent for families. I think this is using the family and their emotional ties to children in order to save money for the government and for taxpayers. That does not seem to be fair, given that the costs of raising a child are the same whether it is a family member or a nonfamily member.

Another example of unfairness of this government is that \$300,000 was taken out of the child care budget. So though on the one hand, we have some very good parts of this resolution, regrettably, this government has attacked families in a number of areas in their budget, and we deplore that.

The resolution says that there will be many innovative and thoughtful involvements of Manitobans on behalf of Family Year-94, and that is true. I am sure that all members here will be trying to attend as many events as possible in their constituencies, and I will certainly be trying to do the same.

I regret that there are only three organizations that registered with the International Year of the Family office from Burrows constituency. I am sure that other constituencies have many more, but I appreciate the fact that that office alerted me to the three organizations. Of course, I wrote to them and said if you are having any events, please let me know.

Recently I got an invitation from the King Edward Community School parent council. They have set up a committee to have a Family Fun Fair on May 6, so I am looking forward to taking in all their events. They are planning a barbecue, a free stage, rainbow auction, plant sale, games, music, having the Fire Department there, which is next door to the school grounds, and finger painting.

I am sure that this is typical of many events sponsored by community groups in our constituencies, which all of us will be trying to take in as many of as possible.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, this is a good resolution. I am happy to be able to take part in this debate. I am sure that other members are looking forward to putting their remarks on the record. Thank you.

Ms. Norma McCormick (Osborne): Mr. Speaker, I too want to commend the preamble of the resolution but to take some serious exception to the resolution statement itself. I feel that this resolution is very typical of an approach which finds the words profoundly inconsistent with action.

There is a tragic lack of understanding of the real needs and experiences of Manitoba families and a misjudgment of those kinds of things that would truly make a difference in this Year of the Family.

This is the year in which we saw reduced access by low-income families to daycare services. A capping of the number of subsidy eligible daycare spaces at 9,600 occurs when economic conditions are putting many families at greater need for subsidized care.

Home Care cutbacks which eliminated house cleaning, laundry and meal preparation support to many seniors has had the effect of putting this care on to the adult children of seniors, often at the expense of time spent with their own families.

The level of income support to 16- and 17-year-olds who require intervention and care has been decreased. These children and their parents have very little access to other kinds of services, and there is an increasing number of children who are showing up in the youth justice system.

The member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale) has indicated that this is the government which reduced the foster family rate to keep children in extended families. A child does not cost less because he is cared for in the home of a relative. Many children benefit from extended family placement, and it increases the likelihood that children can be returned to their family of origin, and yet an action which cuts, by 52 percent, the foster family rate for extended family care works against this outcome. This is the government which silenced the voices of those who advocate for these children, including the foster parents' association, so who is left to challenge the government to act with wisdom and humanity?

* (1730)

What troubles me most is a public relations exercise which occurs at a time when Manitoba's child poverty rate is the highest in Canada, and the efforts of the child-serving community in all areas are being eroded.

We have asked for the budget for the Year of the Family initiative and have not had firm indication. Understanding that in fact the budget exceeded \$240,000, we went out to the community and said, how would you spend this money in the Year of the Family? What came back were many thoughtful and creative suggestions from a number of agencies and organizations who serve children and families which would qualify as things that would really make a difference. I listed some of them when I responded to the Speech from the Throne.

There were ideas for providing training and work experience for single parents, to mount a television campaign ensuring that all children are born into families who had planned for them. Young people could go to university on this kind of money. Money could pay tuition for many single parents who could be supported by welfare to attend university. The money could be spent on remedial education programs for young mothers. It could be spent on parenting programs for young mothers who are in high-risk categories. It could provide a family support program for families with child welfare concerns. It could be spent on

modifying the school curriculum to broaden our concept of family beyond our typical sort of stereotypic view of a double parent, multikid family.

The money could be spent to develop family resource centres offering tangible supports to families, or promoting or creating initiatives which would strengthen the family unit.

The monies could provide conflict resolution education and training for parents in conjunction with schools who are presently operating conflict management and peer mediation programs. It would make very good sense to extend this concept into the family. It could be spent on creating alternatives to dealing with youth violence and crime.

The money could be spent on family support services, such as counselling for abuse victims, anger management programs, addiction counselling. It could be spent on youth employment and training. It could be spent on money to fund family-focused events throughout the province, or to fund family help crisis lines, such as that proposed for the rural stress lines.

It could provide useful summer programs for needy children, particularly in those areas where recreational opportunities are limited. The money could provide a fund for community-based projects creating a positive awareness for family values, or even corporate communication strategies.

We could think about the conditions under which some of our children live. A Winnipeg study of families living in rental housing within the inner city found that poor housing conditions lead to higher rates of family mobility. The significant consequence of this for many children is adverse school performance. Poor kids have a higher incidence of illiteracy, poor attendance records, school failures, poor recreational skills and fewer recreational opportunities to develop these skills.

Our school divisions who are contemplating doing more with less can be expected to be reducing their noneducational activities as a priority for expenditure. This means that we can

expect school-based nutrition and recreation programs to be sacrificed, but this is occurring at a time when more demands and not fewer are being placed on our educational system.

Mr. Speaker, I have learned of a very tragic situation in the constituency of Ste. Rose, in which the school had to open a school lunch program following the arrival of 10 or 12 VLTs in a neighbouring community because the resources of the family were going to feed the machines and not the kids. The community is now contemplating who will feed these children after the school year is out. The community grocery store has experienced a 20 percent downturn in sales coincidentally with the machines' arrival.

We have to care about this. We must feel badly as we preside over the death of family life in rural Manitoba. How much money is being sucked out of the economies of these small Manitoba towns?

An Honourable Member: Millions.

Ms. McCormick: What has that got to do with it? Do you know? Do you care? We will be forced to consider the consequence of this deterioration. I estimate that the full effect will show up in between three to five years. Then we will truly know the effects on children who will lose out. Hungry children cannot learn. Children with poor relationship skills, with no opportunity to develop recreational skills and opportunity to participate in other, more socially acceptable ways to occupy their time are going to be kids.

Kids are going to do what kids are going to do when there is nothing else to do. Then you will be seeing increased demand to get tough on violence, vandalism, substance abuse and crime, but whose fault will it be? Certainly not the fault of the children.

As a parent of three teenagers, I am really angry about the way in which this government has exploited them to heighten public fear with respect to personal and community security. Your rhetoric influences the way that people look at our young people, including my own children.

This government has tried to deflect attention away from its own social policy failures and onto

our youngsters, most of whom are law-abiding, peaceful, helpful members of our community. Why are you determined to scapegoat our kids for your social policy failures? This is not fair. Your get-tough solutions are a cruel hypocrisy.

Hungry or improperly nourished children and children born of substance-abusing parents are neurologically impaired, often inattentive, hyperactive or born with birth defects. There is an abundant evidence to create an enduring link between prenatal disadvantage in children and the prevalence of physical and mental illness, developmental disorders, accidental and premature death. Inadequate nutrition in the mother, compounded by alcohol and drug ingestion, impairs her child's cognitive development, thereby affecting the child's ability to learn.

What do you do with the evidence that children in poor families are disadvantaged before birth? We hear daily from the Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Mitchelson) of prevention strategies, but no specific plan for who is going to do what. I spoke in my response to the throne speech of the demise of the Healthy Parent, Healthy Child project, which was one of the most creative and worthwhile ideas ever launched in this city. It began and ended in the 1980s, allowed to die for want of ongoing support.

Mr. Speaker, in Manitoba, 72,000 children live in poverty. More than one in five Manitoba children are poor. For Winnipeg children, the rate is one in four. Child poverty rates are even higher on reserves. Manitoba has the highest child poverty rate of all Canadian provinces, as well as the largest teenage pregnancy rate, the highest single-parent family rate and the highest rate of child welfare apprehensions. These challenges must be addressed in the Year of the Family.

We learned in the throne speech of initiatives to improve the maintenance enforcement system. This is critically important, especially with today's release of the federal Court of Appeal decision. The women of Canada are rejoicing today, and I am extremely pleased that the women in our federal caucus have called upon the Minister of Finance to amend the income tax law to enshrine

this important principle in law, but it is very clear that in order for this ruling to truly benefit single parents and their children, we must ensure that the support to which they are entitled actually reaches them. There are now over 11,000 active files in our maintenance enforcement system and over \$27 million is owed to parents and children.

What measures will this government be taking in the Year of the Family to ensure that these promised improvements will result in improved collection and processing of maintenance payments? What can we expect by way of action and not words?

* (1740)

In conclusion, I would like to move an amendment to the resolution. I move, seconded by the member for River Heights (Mrs. Carstairs), that

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that this Legislative Assembly urge this government to give special consideration to low income, single parent and foster families in this Year of the Family.

Mr. Speaker: The amendment as moved by the honourable member for Osborne (Ms. McCormick), I regret to inform the member that it is out of order.

Beauchesne's 616: "Motions purporting to give the Government a direct order to do a thing which requires the expenditure of money are out of order." Therefore, the honourable member's amendment is out of order.

Anybody wish to speak to it?

Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise and add a few comments on this resolution as well, which is brought forward for the member for Seine River (Mrs. Dacquay).

The resolution deals with the International Year of the Family. Of course, I am sure it is important to all members in this House, as it should be for all Manitobans.

I listened closely to the comments of the member for Seine River, where she made reference to families being the building blocks of our society. I find that is a sentiment that I share

with the member for Seine River. Families are indeed important to our communities. If it was not for the families and the family unit, Mr. Speaker, our communities would not be what they are today.

We have seen problems within some of our families within our own communities. I am sure we have all dealt with problems, constituents that have brought these problems to us from time to time. I will get into my comments in a few moments dealing with some of the those specific issues.

I listened to the comments from the member for Seine River when she referred to time with families. I think that is very, very important, especially for those of us that have young children or even grandchildren, where we spend quality time. There may be some in this Chamber that have grandchildren. Of course, it is important to spend quality time with the children and grandchildren.

The unfortunate part for many of us that are in this Chamber—and I do not want to speak on behalf of all of my colleagues in this Chamber, but I know that the demands on our time as MLAs, and I am sure as cabinet ministers as well, makes it very difficult to spend that time with our families. That is one of the things I find so difficult about this job, is that I have a significant reduction in the time that I am able to spend with my own children.

I hope, for the limited amount of time that I do have and I am able to spend with my children, that it will be quality time and will give them the guidance they need to allow them to grow up to be responsible and caring adults, at least I hope, and that is my ambition for my children for the future.

I listened to the comments by members of the Liberal Party here since this session has started, wherein they made reference to the pins and T-shirts scenario. That is what the Liberal Party seems to refer to as being the most significant component of the International Year of the Family. While I, too, was sent some of that literature, I looked at that and saw that there may be some people who were interested in that, and for those

who were interested in it, that is for their own use and their own reference. I personally did not find any problem with that.

I think the International Year of the Family is a significant event, and I think we should recognize the International Year of the Family within the province of Manitoba. Families are indeed the heart of Manitoba.

I just looked at a document that came to my attention today from Statistics Canada where it made reference to the various communities throughout the province and the family units, the family income, the family conditions, types of jobs they hold and the effects unemployment is having on some of them by reference to the unemployment levels.

I find it interesting to note that within my own community of Transcona we have some 670 single-parent families within my community. I know the member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale) made reference to blended families during his comments. Of course, that seems to be something that is growing within our society as single-parent families come together and form two-parent families again and the children are brought together in that new family.

I just spent the better part of my afternoon dealing with a young woman in my own community who is a single parent and has had significant problems with maintenance enforcement. If we are going to recognize the International Year of the Family, I think it is important that we take whatever steps we can to ensure that there are adequate financial resources available. I know I have had the opportunity to talk with some of the members opposite in my years here and some of the concerns that they have had about maintenance enforcement.

This one young woman in my own community has been waiting since January without any source of income because maintenance enforcement is unable to secure the funds that were apparently set aside or called for by the courts of this province and yet have not been forthcoming from the spouse who has been delinquent in the payment of those

payments. This individual finds it difficult to support her two children. She has no other source of income. She is currently unemployed. I think we have to make sure that the maintenance enforcement has the necessary resources to make sure that the payments are made and we can sustain the single-parent families within our province.

I think also, Mr. Speaker, we should recognize the significant contribution that the volunteers in our communities make to the quality of life within our communities in that they donate their time to sustain the activities, whether it be recreational activities or other activities within our communities to improve the quality of life, to give our young people the opportunity to have recreational opportunities and to gain some skills and interaction, social interaction, with other people.

* (1750)

I would like to say that maybe we should be recognizing—I know the government has sent information from time to time about recognizing selected volunteers, but I think we need to have some recognition of the volunteers and the contribution they make to the quality of family life in our province, not just select certain individuals but make sure we have opportunities to recognize the volunteers in our communities.

I know that I have had calls from one particular school in my community, the Westview Ukrainian Immersion Elementary School, wherein they were looking to take part in the International Year of the Family activities this coming June. They were somewhat taken aback that they had to pay an \$80, I believe it was, deposit fee for the use of the banner for Family Year-94.

Now this community school, from what they have told me, did not have the \$80 that they could put forward, even for the deposit. They were doing all of this work on behalf of the International Year of the Family to try and bring families together within the community for the children who attended that particular school, but also from the

Ukrainian heritage, peoples within my community, to have them come together as a family unit.

So they could not take part in utilizing the banner because they did not have that \$80 deposit that was necessary. I just wish that there had been some other way for the government to allow the banners or make banners available, so if we want to display this for the International Year of the Family, that this group and other groups could have had that opportunity without that fee being attached to it.

I know that one of the churches in my community, St. Michael's Church, will be holding a tea in honour of the International Year of the Family. That tea, I believe, will be taking place next weekend. There will be—[interjection] Pardon me? I will be attending the tea as I have on every other occasion over the last four years.

I find it very, very important to go out and to join socially with the people of my community. I find it gives me a great deal of opportunity to hear about their families and also some of their concerns and to share some thoughts and ideas in a social way. I hope that other members of the Chamber take the same opportunities for their own communities, as well.

One of the things I saw, since this is International Year of the Family, I did have the opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to attend and to meet with those who are operating a youth drop-in centre within my own community. Now, this youth drop-in centre is called The Power Station, and I believe it is run by the Gateway Christian Community Church.

This allows young people within my own community and surrounding communities to drop in to share social time and activities within this facility. The unfortunate part, from the discussion I have had with the people who run this Power Station, is that a lot of the young people who drop in to The Power Station are children who come from single-parent families or abusive situations in their home life. There does not seem to be the resources necessary to assist these young people with the problems they have. I know I have taken

the opportunity to refer some of these cases through The Power Station administration to Child and Family Services, to allow them to gain, hopefully, the support necessary to assist these young people.

Personally, I think the recreational activities by way of television have a significant influence on the way our young people are developing; the ideas that they see and the things that they see on television are contributing to the problems that the young people are working into. I know my colleague the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) last year brought in a resolution dealing with television violence. I think that it is important, and I hope that there will be some action taken to change the things that our young people see on television.

I know in my own home and our own personal circumstances in my own family, I notice that when my young children—and I have young children—watch even violent cartoon programs on TV, after that program is finished, they act out the violent acts. Now I am talking about physically violent acts. Sometimes this Chamber is—

An Honourable Member: You are feigning indignation every time we give you a question.

Mr. Reid: That is true. As the member for Concordia (Mr. Doer) says, sometimes the government does feign indignation in this House.

I hope that some steps can be taken either through the CRTC or through some other means that will allow some changes to take place within the programming that our young children see; that we can, in some way, reduce or eliminate some of the violent programs our young people see.

I hope that other families within my community will take advantage of the International Year of the Family and get together to share some of the activities. The International Year of the Family is very important. Family units are very important to each and every one of our communities, and I hope that we will have the opportunity to share in some of those activities with the people of my community and other communities in this province. Thank you for the opportunity.

Mr. Gerry McAlpine (Sturgeon Creek): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to stand in the House today and to speak on this and put a few short remarks on the record.

The reason I wanted to put some remarks on the record was that I was certainly disturbed by what the honourable member for Osborne (Ms. McCormick) had to say in terms of what the government's contribution is to a family. I feel that I have some authority, coming from a family of 16 children, when we talk about family. The government had really little or no help in terms of the raising of my brothers and sisters. I can see that.

Mr. Speaker, when the Liberals put information on the record to the effect that they can put more money into this system and strengthen the family, I think that they are going to have a long wait in terms of strengthening the families in this province and in this country.

Mr. Speaker, it is my wish, and I move, seconded by the honourable member for Emerson (Mr. Penner), that the question on this resolution be now put.

Motion presented.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Second Opposition House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I would like to comment on the motion. What the member for Sturgeon Creek is trying to do is limit debate. Closure—and that is when you move a motion that the question now be put, what you are saying is you can no longer speak on this particular resolution. Now what you want is you want to see a vote.

There are many other individuals that would like possibly to put their words of wisdom on this particular resolution, as the member for Osborne (Ms. McCormick) did. The Liberal caucus has a lot of concern with the way in which this government is treating the families of this province.

This government, by moving a motion of closure—and that is what this is, a motion of closure—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hour being 6 p.m., this House is now adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. tomorrow (Thursday).

