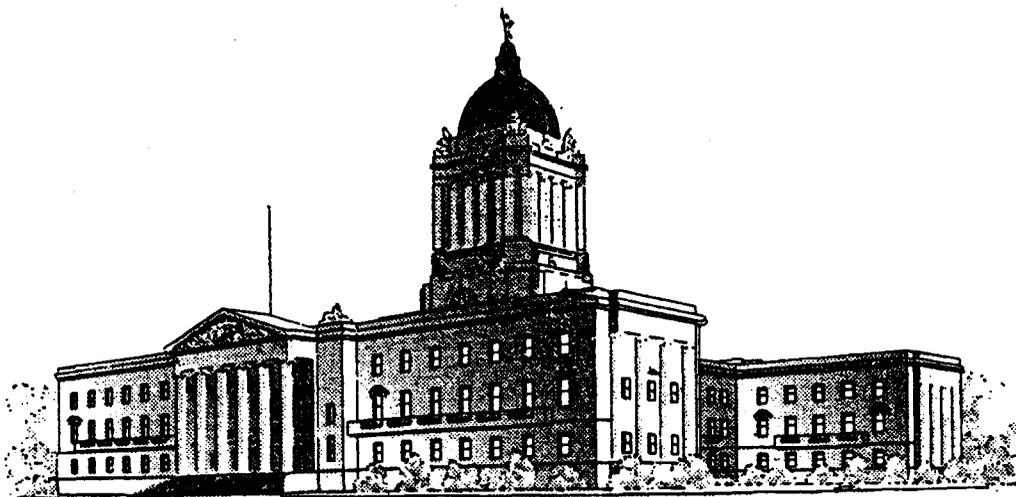




Fifth Session - Thirty-Fifth Legislature
of the
Legislative Assembly of Manitoba
DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS
(Hansard)

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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Fifth Legislature

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, May 18, 1994

The House met at 7 p.m.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

(continued)

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

(Concurrent Sections)

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Mr. Deputy Chairperson (Marcel Laurendeau): Good evening. Will the Committee of Supply please come to order.

The committee will be resuming consideration of the Estimates of the Department of Education and Training. When the committee last sat, it had been considering item 4.(e)(1) on page 41 of the Estimates book.

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): In the absence of a strategic plan for labour market, could the minister give us a summary of how he sees the characteristics of the unemployed in Manitoba at the moment? I am thinking in general terms of educational levels, gender and age.

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I probably should have brought my labour force statistics with me. They were in my book here before.

I guess the gender breakout I have not looked at recently. Certainly when one begins to look at the full-time employment beginning to creep up again to 500,000 Manitobans, I say globally that number is acceptable, given the reality of the time.

I still am very happy when I look at those numbers and recognize that fully two-thirds of those who are eligible to work, and yet who do not have work, are still being counted. That is about the highest participation rate within the land, because if you go to other provinces there are a significant number of people who are not counted within their unemployment numbers.

The youth number now being very close, or basically at the national average around 16 to 17 percent—16.2—having come down from 21 or 22 percent, is meaningful. I talk to young people today in my circles, and nobody has to accept this as fact, but there are job opportunities out there this year that were not there a year ago. Many of our youth are having more than one opportunity. Now, nobody is terribly overjoyed with the level of wage and the wage rate being offered, but there are positions there.

As far as those youth who are presently graduating from a lot of our post-secondary institutions, particularly universities in the professional areas, I know there are jobs there this year that were not there two years ago. Again though, the level, as I indicated before, of wage being offered to them is considerably down from where it was a few years ago. Nevertheless, there are opportunities there.

If the member wants me to be more specific, though, across the areas of gender, and I think—would she also like to get into sector review or not?

Ms. Friesen: No. At this stage I am particularly interested in the characteristics of the unemployed.

Obviously what I am interested in discussing with the minister is training, education—Department of Education. So what are the characteristics of the unemployed, and how is the department setting about meeting the kinds of training needs which are particular to each group, and how are they defining those needs?

It is the kind of thing which one would have anticipated would have been in the documents that we have been waiting for for some years. Perhaps we can continue the discussion on a more general basis.

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, youth unemployment, first of all starting there. We have

the programs, as I have referred to in the past, that we have carried over from the former government, whether it is CareerStart, and I cannot remember the origin of that. We have the other programming, and I will not move into it but to say that we are doing what we can in support of unemployed youth.

I do not think, though, that this is the long-run response that is acceptable necessarily to me. I do not know, maybe it is acceptable to the member, our Youth Career Development Programs. Certainly we still have the STEP services that have been in place for several years, the Youth Job Centres, of course, which are opening all across the province and have been successful. Then we also offer in government the Volunteers in Public Service, and there are a number of young people who are coming forward and offering their services to the public and are, of course, beginning to build an understanding of public service.

* (1905)

In the student youth areas, of course, CareerStart '94, Partners with Youth which is a combination of two departments, Education and Training and Rural Development, the special government initiatives, and I am thinking here now of some exchange opportunities, Employability Enhancement Programs and again, I know there will be further questions dealing with these later on, the HR0Ps program, the HROC's program, the Single Parent Job Access, and on and on and on.

(Mr. Ben Sveinson, Acting Deputy Chairperson, in the Chair)

An aside, Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, on the farm 20 miles from here I was lamenting the fact that we were not getting any of this [rain] exactly 10 minutes ago, and I am overjoyed. Maybe we should take a recess.

The committee recessed at 7:04 p.m.

After Recess

The committee resumed at 7:07 p.m.

The Acting Deputy Chairperson (Mr. Sveinson): We will call the committee back to order.

Mr. Manness: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, I cannot read all of this into the record because we have program totals and of course we have who it reaches, either social allowance recipients, youth, physically disabled, mentally disabled, aboriginals, visible minorities, immigrants and women. There are reams of data of who it is we are trying to reach by way of all of the programming that I referred to earlier.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, the question however was: What are the characteristics of the unemployed? There are different kinds of programs obviously one would want to offer, if a high proportion of particular sections out of the unemployed have post-secondary education, different kinds of training opportunities which you would want to open if they were illiterate.

I am looking for the characteristics in terms of education, gender—no, not that one. That will not work. That is the one you want.

Mr. Manness: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, what we know in general of course is that the higher the level of education and training the correlation is that there will be more likelihood that there will be employment. That is the general statement. If the member is referring to a document that she—I will quote from a public document.

This is April '94. This is the Manitoba Labour Market Information Bulletin public document, April '94. Unemployment rate among the male population is 10.5, amongst the female population it is 9.6 in the province of Manitoba. So that is one breakout.

Then we have employment, full time and part time, by age and sex. Let us go then by age. Manitoba Labour Market variables by age: unemployment rate amongst those 15 to 24 years of age, 16.2 as compared to 17.0 the year before; 25 years and over, 8.8 April '94 as compared to 9.3 the year before.

* (1910)

Again, when I was starting before, employment, full time and part time, by age and sex—I have global numbers, percentages. These are just

employment figures. They do not mean much in their absolute numbers. I am looking for percentages. I think they are more meaningful.

Here are some Manitoba employment, unemployment rate and participation rate by sex, family status and composition. The family head or spouse 6.2 percent unemployment compared to 8.3 the year before. For those single with children, I gather, 22.2 percent April '94 compared to 21.3 April '93; an attached individual 16.6 versus 18.8 the year before. That is all under the male category. Does the member want—

Ms. Friesen: I am looking for the educational levels of the unemployed in Manitoba.

Mr. Manness: The Manitoba labour market characteristics educational attainment by sex, if the schooling is zero to eight years of schooling, 10.1 versus 10.3—this is total across male and female; some secondary education 13.7 versus 11.8; graduated from high school 15.8 versus 16; some post-secondary 8.5 versus 10.6; certificate or diploma 6.8 versus 9.6.

That first 10.1, 10.3 I gave you is the total. Usually the total is at the bottom. In this document, it is at the top. So the 13.7, 11.8 that was zero to eight—so I have not changed the categories—the graduated from high school 15.8 versus 16; some post-secondary 8.5 versus 10.6; some post-secondary 6.8 versus 9.6; certificate or diploma 8.3 versus 7.9; university degree 8.0 versus 4.7. If the member wants the breakout by gender around those totals, I can provide—

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, what I am looking for is one of the rumoured categories of the Manitoba labour market and that is that we have a high proportion of people with post-secondary education who are unemployed. Am I right in assuming that would—[interjection] Well, certificate, diploma, post-secondary, high school completion.

Mr. Manness: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, we are having a fair amount of sampling problem. This is not even our methodology at work. This is Stats Canada and there is a fair problem with methodology when you take into account a population of 4 percent. That is why you have

these major gyrations from month to month which the NDP use to their advantage one month and then we use to our advantage the next month. That is all tied in to these numbers.

When we, for instance, look at certificate or diploma and we talk about post-secondary, as I indicated, 8.3 versus 7.9 across both genders and university degree 8.0 versus 4.7, so if this is the aberration that the member is referring to, I do not know whether or not it is a significant change, an accurate reflection or not or whether it is just a moment in time.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, what I am looking for is some discussion of who the unemployed are, what their educational level or social position in the sense of single parent is and where the training programs are matching up to that. If, as for example, it is rumoured that we have in the region of 15 or 16 percent of our unemployed have post-secondary education and if all of our training programs are at the level of Grades 8 or 9, then there is something wrong.

That is why I would have looked forward to a labour force development plan which would have given us some indication of the existing training programs, which needs they were meeting and who in the unemployed needed other kinds of attention. So that is really where the question is going. Are there any documents, any material that the minister might have that perhaps might be able to give some background on this question that he might want to table at a later date?

(Mr. Deputy Chairperson in the Chair)

* (1915)

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, without being able to provide all of the analysis around that question, we recognize that there are weaknesses in some broad areas, and that is why I have just listed the full area of programming and attempts to reach out into those areas where it is deemed that there are a shortage of opportunities. I have listed all of those. I indicated to the member per this table—there was a chart here, or at least a chart somewhere that showed specifically to whom we were reaching.

Now you say, well, on what basis are these programs doing their job? Well, that is an evaluation, and we have done some of those. But more importantly, I mean when we, for instance, have the Employability Enhancement Programs, Community Based Employability Projects, Gateway Human Resources Centre and all that, we have numbers to indicate who it is we are reaching under these programs.

Ms. Friesen: That range of programs, as I understand it, reaches people with less, probably around between a Grade 7 to Grade 9 education. Is that right? Okay. We have a number of those programs, and the proportion of people in the labour force that is addressing would be an interesting and important, I think, understanding for people in Manitoba to have.

We also have a considerable number of people with post-secondary education who are unemployed. Many of those people are finding it very difficult to know where to go and what to do. That is what I am trying to address with the issue of the Labour Force Development Strategy, if there had been a process of public input, if there had been a document for discussion and some sense of guidance or vision from the government of where the people are unemployed, where the programs are meeting the need and what gaps there still are.

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, we have programs in place, and they have been put in place to address, for the most part, measured needs by way of the surveys which point out who today does not have as many or as great an opportunity for employment as others.

We have got the programs in place. If the member wants to get into detail by detail on all these programs, we can do so. I mean, there is a section coming up that allows for that. If the member is saying, well, do you not have an input/output model that measures minutely the balances between what the shortage of skill is versus where the demand is within the marketplace as compared to the basic set of skills brought along at this point in time by individuals who present themselves for additional training, no such thing exists, and it does not exist anywhere. If you did

build it, I can tell you the minute you had it built, it would be out of date.

So I guess maybe I do not understand in totality what the question is, but I can provide more information on some of the programs if the member wishes.

Ms. Friesen: Well, I do not know how I can put it more clearly. Perhaps there is no point in belabouring it. The minister is prepared to discuss the programs he has got on paper, but he is not prepared to discuss a needs study of what is out there and who is unemployed and what the characteristics are and whether in fact the programs that he has on paper are meeting the overall needs of the Manitoba population who are unemployed.

That was really what I was getting at, and that is where you know some kind of a strategy paper would have been helpful to people to understand what is happening in Manitoba, because one of the difficulties that I think people face is not knowing where to turn, not knowing which program to go to, not knowing where the opportunities are, and not knowing what exists for them in the ways of training and what proportion of people are moving into that area, particularly for those people who have left school or have left college, and where there are difficulties in having access to career counselling.

I think many people feel very alone in this situation. That is really what I am trying to reflect and to see if there is any kind of provision or any interest from the government's perspective in providing for these adult unemployed; some kind of guidance as to the way in which Manitoba sees its future.

Mr. Manness: The member is asking for information. I gather that, but certainly behind the provision of that information, of course, would be the belief, I would dare say, by the member that you can socially engineer this. You can try and build upon the skill set that exists now and provide for everybody at the same time that you have got a whole new group of graduates coming through the course at the same time that the general work numbers, the general opportunities to work, are not

growing significantly. That is not a Manitoba statement; that is a statement of the western world.

* (1920)

I can say to the member to the extent that we can measure some of these areas. We cannot set up a bureaucracy. Stats Canada, for instance, has access only to limited questioning as far as measuring month-to-month activity for a labour force. We are not going to replicate that.

I say to the member that I guess we are going to have to live with the model of measurement that we have at the present. That is not, I guess, that acceptable to her, but we are going to have to live within the means that we have and continue to bring forward the programs that we think are going to hit the mark, and then after a period of time, evaluate and determine whether they are or not. If they are not, then we will make changes. No different than ACCESS Program.

In some respects, they were missing the mark; we made the change. We will do that with all of our programs as far as trying to support those who want to have a share in the labour market.

Ms. Friesen: There does not seem any point in belabouring this anymore. I had hoped for something different from a new minister.

Can we look at the branch role in international education? When it says in Estimates the review of this branch role, is that a particular document that we are looking for? Is that the expected result that there will be a review of international education, or is this a continuing event for the department?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, there is an interdepartmental group of individuals who, particularly through I, T and T, through Culture, Heritage and Citizenship and indeed our department, are trying to determine what direction the government wants to take in keeping with its commitment to international education.

Ms. Friesen: How does the minister define his commitment to international education?

Mr. Manness: Through the recognition that we are an advanced country, that we have an advanced level of education to the extent that we can share in a broader context with those who are not as

advantaged—firstly, and secondly, of course, to learn, to learn from what is happening in other jurisdictions because of course we do not have the final solution to all of the evolutionary trends that occur in education. This will be the thrust.

Ms. Friesen: So this is a sharing of information? This is not a sharing of programs or—I will come to another thing in a minute. Is that what it is? The minister talks about it in terms of information and this government learning.

Mr. Manness: Of course, the benefit not only to those students outside of the province but indeed ultimately we would hope there would be some benefit to our own institutions and of course wealth-creating sectors who establish, through this outreach, relationships that hopefully will last a generation and ultimately will make Canada and Manitoba a favoured place as viewed from the outside. I am, I guess, as close as I have come to this in my outside activities other than being a representative of the people. I have seen it work first-hand, for instance, in the International Grains Institute where we have a location and we bring in many people from outside. They learn all about our tremendous quality of wheat and how it is milled and all that, and they take that knowledge back. Not only do the people from developing countries eat better as a result of it, but the contacts made here represent an incredible benefit to our institutions and indeed to our wealth-producing sector. So it is a model that we want to expand.

* (1925)

Ms. Friesen: Just for my information—I realize it is not on this line or in this department—but what is the provincial contribution to the International Grains Institute?

Mr. Manness: None. Well, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I am glad the member asked the question, because here is the way things should work. Who makes that contribution? Obviously, it is housed in a federal building, but beyond that, you have many of the associations that are direct or indirect funded by the farm community who make a tremendous contribution financially, dollar contribution. Here is a case where the provincial government does not have to help directly so we

can have more funds to send back into public plant breeding.

The reality is, it is that whole business community, plus the federal government, who support that institution. It is a wonderful model, and I wish within the areas of hydro generation and some of our other areas where we have incredible strengths that we could continue to build upon that model. It is a wonderful model.

Ms. Friesen: I am familiar with the Grain Institute, something that we looked at when I was on The Forks board. I was not aware that there was a Manitoba contribution, so I am interested to have that confirmed. The model that the minister applies to hydro is also an interesting idea. Does the minister have any plans to develop that?

Mr. Manness: It is kind of a wish now but certainly I could ask the former deputy minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism for a comment. We have a couple of working relationships with provinces in China—Shandong and Shenyang in Henan [phonetic] provinces in a training capacity.

Again, this is the great frustration that I have in Canada. There are three provinces in Canada—B.C., Manitoba and Quebec—who are known as world leaders in DC-AC technology or direct current, pardon me, technology. You would think we would want to work together for the good of all, but we tend not to in this country. Everybody is sort of wanting to try and protect their—I would not even call it turf—but want to get one up.

In my view, that was one area after we had visited it, after I was part of the Premier's mission in visiting China, that there certainly was greater opportunity. I think ministers have asked hydro whether or not we could develop a plan, but I do not think it has gone very far.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the minister's model then for international education is primarily—I do not know if it is exclusively—but primarily that sense of a higher, of an advanced society in educational technical terms transmitting technology and ideas to others in Manitoba and overseas. I know that there are other models of international education, and one particularly which I thought might have interested

this particular government is the use of education as a commodity and its sale overseas. If the minister has been recently in southeast Asia, he will know that the Australians have gone extensively into that kind of commodity export.

* (1930)

Mr. Manness: I guess as compared to maybe Australia, we are probably somewhat behind. Our own public institutions have not been out really hard selling. I guess they have not felt the real pressure on the revenue side yet to do that.

Again, that just does not become a government outreach. There are institutions that also could be part of that. Yet I am mindful of some, I think, forward thinkers even within our public school system who sense that we could begin to sell some of the great educational opportunities we have for exchange students and supplement revenues to the public school system. Of course, with that comes individuals who have their own experience and their own culture, and we learn too. It is a very good model.

So I am aware what the member—at least, I think I understand what she is talking about. It has really just come to my greater attention over the course of the last several months personally, and yes, to the extent that we can help and promote, we will.

Ms. Friesen: What I am looking for here is the branch role or perhaps looking from the overall government perspective of who does lead in this area. For example, some of the ones that the minister I am sure is aware of—Assiniboine Community College obviously has international programs, and I have asked questions in this area before and to the college directly of how do they plan, in fact, to market these overseas, and that does not seem to be the direction they are interested in at this point.

The University of Winnipeg has brought entire classes over, particularly with Malaysia and a joint connection with a northern Malaysian university, and is delivering the courses onsite here.

Now Australia has done both. It has in fact established colleges overseas. It has brought entire

classes of, particularly, Malaysians to high schools in Australia, and it also has a marketing program essentially for its own university courses.

There are obviously pluses and minuses to this, but when people talk about knowledge-based industries, it seems to me that one of the obvious ones is that which begins in the classroom. I wonder who takes the lead in this in government? The minister seems to imply that it is up to the individual institutions and, I assume he is saying, school boards themselves.

Mr. Manness: Well, we cannot, nor would we want to, stop institutions for doing their own thing in this area, although as long as we do not have an awful lot of overlap, duplication. I can remember the last time I was in Japan borrowing money—this always comes back to money, does it not, Mr. Deputy Chairperson?—and the Premier had a reception at the Canadian consulate. I can remember unexpectedly showing up—Michel Janisse showing up, Continuing Education, University of Manitoba. I asked—[interjection] He used to be what? You probably know him well.

Ms. Friesen: Oh, yes.

Mr. Manness: Well, he and I, it did not take long before we got into a battle of words. I guess it is my nature more than his, and I said, well, from where did you come? He said, I just came from Fiji. I mean, I do not know whether there are great opportunities to do exchanges or to sell education in Fiji or not, but the reality being, I mean, there are only so many resources that can go to this, and they had better be spent very well.

What the government is trying to do in the committee I am talking about, the inter-departmental committee, is to put exactly a focus, a government focus, to our efforts at least, and to clearly focus as to who we want to reach. That has to be done and is being done.

Ms. Friesen: What I am trying to get at is which department takes the lead in this? It is an interdepartmental committee that looks at international education. How often does it meet, and who is taking the lead?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, our government, under the leadership of the Premier,

has worked very hard to try and break down this turf of taking leads. In this exercise, the report we made to the Economic Development Board, in other words, the Premier's committee of cabinet, deals with the economy. So again, it is not anybody taking the lead; it is the deputies and, indeed, their delegates coming closely to realize there is no lead, that this is going to be a co-operative effort, reporting to the Economic Development Board of Cabinet.

Ms. Friesen: I would like to ask about the Winnipeg development initiative and the role of labour force development in that agreement, and what part this government is taking in the labour force development section of that proposed agreement, which is one of four sections of the agreement, I believe.

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, this is one area that I do not have the lead. This comes under the leadership of the Minister of Urban Affairs (Mrs. McIntosh), and certainly we are just putting the final touches right now to greater definition under the agreement.

Certainly, we recognize there will be a training component. How that will be manifest is too difficult to say at this time. We really have not moved as far along as we may have liked. Right now it is basically an umbrella agreement, and as the member knows, we have set aside some funds or will be setting aside some funds, reaching out to the community for their input into this process, and determinations will be made after that process.

Ms. Friesen: I understand that Urban Affairs will be the ministry which carries through on this program. I am looking at the planning aspect of it, and as I understand it, there are four sections to that development agreement at the moment: a labour force development section, community development, sectorial development and then an agreement management part.

The minister said that there will be funds provided from this department for public input into the labour force development section. Is that correct? Did I understand that right?

Mr. Manness: No, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I would think to the whole agreement, covering the

basic three Rs of economic, labour force and community development.

Ms. Friesen: Will there be money from this department going into the labour force training initiative development section, whatever it is going to be called, that one part?

Mr. Manness: Nothing within our Estimates, no. But obviously in the sense that there is going to be training, I mean, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson) will fund this through—well, obviously the funding will be shown in a line in Urban Affairs, so the Minister of Finance has decided to allocate all of the funding under that departmental lead.

Ms. Friesen: Which department is doing the negotiation for this, and who would be dealing with the labour force development section?

Mr. Manness: The Minister of Urban Affairs is doing all the negotiating, but certainly there are other ministers that are meeting on a more or less regular basis to lay out how it is they would like to see their responsibility area begin to take shape.

Ms. Friesen: What is the direction of this department and the labour force development section of this department in looking at that agreement? I assume then that you are advisory to the Minister of Urban Affairs or a part of delegations, or interministerial committees, or whatever you want to call it, but there must be some input from this department into that Winnipeg development initiative in policy terms. This is the policy section of the department.

Mr. Manness: That is correct. I liaise with the Minister of Urban Affairs.

Ms. Friesen: And what proposals is the government putting forward?

Mr. Manness: Well, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, there is an awful lot of shadowboxing going on right now with respect to three levels of government which obviously all have different priorities, not specifically in the three areas mentioned, but maybe throughout the whole agreement, so that is what we are presently doing right now plus preparing to go to the public for their input, and until all of that comes, it will be

hard to say with certainty what anybody's priorities are.

Ms. Friesen: When the minister talks about the potential for public input, could he elaborate on that? This is for Winnipeg development initiative so that it will be Winnipeg public input. What is the form that is going to take? When will it be? I mean, are we looking at a year or six months or what kind of time frame?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I cannot scoop my own minister, and I will not. I will just say, for the record, conceptually, it has been agreed upon that there will be a public process. I would think it will not be a year; I think it would be much sooner than that. As a matter of fact, I fully expect this will occur—

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Before the election.

Mr. Manness: What election? The member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) says there is an election. Did you hear one being called?

If we are going to give meaning to this agreement, as all three levels of government, obviously we are going to have to have in place this process pretty quickly.

* (1940)

Ms. Friesen: The minister indicated earlier, I think, there would be some money from Manitoba going into that public process. Was that correct and is it coming from this department?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I do not know. The member asks questions that I cannot answer, and I do not think anybody can answer right at this point in time. I do not know which three levels of the government would fund the process, maybe each of the governments would put up a share. Certainly our share, if called upon to put up a share, would come out of that same line in Urban Affairs.

Ms. Friesen: One of the proposals under the labour force section of that agreement or potential agreement is for a downtown education centre. Does the minister, in this section of the department, or in which section of the department should we perhaps discuss that proposal?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, no, this is the place. When the member says a proposal, at this point, it is hard to know who is bringing forward that proposal. It may or may not be part of the agreement. It is just too difficult to say, and yet the agreement could conceivably lead in that direction, but it may not either.

(Mr. Jack Reimer, Acting Deputy Chairperson, in the Chair)

I mean, again, there is an awful lot of uncertainty around where dollars should be best spent on training.

Ms. Friesen: The public process that the minister is anticipating for the Labour Force Development program, will that include discussions of a downtown Winnipeg education centre?

Mr. Manness: Again, Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, I cannot respond fully and satisfactorily to the question because, as at this point, all we know is there probably—most of them, well, there will be a process of public input, and I would have to think it would be nonrestrictive. People can talk about anything they want. There is going to be a sizable amount of money, and I imagine people will come in and talk about social programming. They will come and talk about community development; they will be talking about infrastructure commitment, economic sector development.

I expect people to come in and present a wide array of issues around what they would like to see these millions of dollars directed either to do or to build or to provide for in the future.

Ms. Friesen: The minister is anticipating that sooner than a year, he said. Then, presumably after that public process, the three levels of government then go back and come up with a formal agreement. Does the minister anticipate that formal agreement will be reached within this fiscal year?

Mr. Manness: An agreement this fiscal year? Oh, I would fully expect so. If we do not have an agreement by March '95, I am sorry—I would call into question the process of three levels of government coming to an agreement on anything.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, I do not really have any questions on this particular line. The only thing that I would ask is, because I know that the member for Wolseley virtually covered a lot of territory over the last few hours, the minister had, in reference to this strategic plan, if you like, that the member for Wolseley implied or asked in terms of, well, this is something that has been ongoing over the last number of years, and she has put forward questions.

I am wondering if in fact the minister could just indicate, is right now the office operating under what sort of a plan, or is there a plan that they are operating from?

Mr. Manness: For the record again, there is a divisional plan and a strategic plan that the government is working on, and it has been made public in the past. Again, Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, both of those are public documents.

The Acting Deputy Chairperson (Mr. Reimer): Item 16.4(e) Labour Market Support Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$479,700—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$70,400—pass.

Item 16.4(f)(1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$419,400.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, I do have a number of questions on this particular area because it has been a concern that I have risen over the last number of months to the Minister of Education and the former Minister of Education, and that is the whole question in terms of literacy and the government's commitment to fight illiteracy.

Actually, I guess it would have been about a week and a half, two weeks ago, in fact, I had brought up the example of New Brunswick. The Minister of Education had indicated that he did not need to look in terms of what was happening in New Brunswick for the simple reason that we have an excellent model in the province of Manitoba, indeed a model that was being copied from other provinces or that other provinces were copying because of the results of this particular model.

I am wondering if the Minister of Education can give some sort of a detailed explanation in terms of what his model currently is.

Mr. Manness: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, our model is one where we ask the community to take ownership of Outreach to those in their community who with some special attention and through the contribution of time and effort and some funding will be successful in upgrading some basic literary skills of our citizens. We have had the model in place for some period of time with it. We act as mentors, facilitators. We monitor the program. We try and make sure it moves off to a good start within the community, and we sort of back away and just then watch.

I saw an incredible example of that recently in Winkler where not only were there those who were contributing time and effort under this program, but they came together with respect to Manpower, whatever the new term is now today, Human Resources Development, and they came together also with those who were trying to match supply and demand on the market of jobs, but Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, what struck me in that community, of course, that where we did an opening of a learning centre and all of these various groups of people and the programs that were in place and the people, of course, who day to day administrated these programs, what we could not get over was that they were outnumbered at this opening two to one by employers—I stress the word employers—within that community.

The only point I am trying to make is that within the area of literacy, within the area of training, within the area of trying to see upgraded sets of skills so that individuals can make a fuller contribution to society by way of their energy and/or their talents, however defined, that through it all, the community better be actively involved or it does not work.

* (1950)

That is the model we have adopted here in Manitoba. It has been extremely successful in those communities where individuals will take the challenge for the greater good of humanity in their immediate district.

Mr. Lamoureux: Can the minister indicate how many, using the minister's words, communities have in fact taken the challenge over the last year?

Mr. Manness: 32.

Mr. Lamoureux: Can the minister give an indication of the number of students this would be applied to?

Mr. Manness: 1,085.

Mr. Lamoureux: Can the minister indicate how that compares to previous years?

Mr. Manness: The year previous, 1,043.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, can the minister give us some sort of—over the last four years. It seems that in the last couple of years the government has made a commitment to fighting illiteracy. If he could just go back, it would be nice to go back from '88, but that is fine, just a few more years than just the two.

Mr. Manness: The base three or four years previously is around 650 students.

Mr. Lamoureux: Can the minister—and I am going to go back to the community models—he makes reference to the fact that the private sector, if you like, is very keen and interested in participating as an integral part to the success of some of these communities that are taking ownership of the fighting of illiteracy. How is the government facilitating or promoting or encouraging these communities other than to say, here is a program and there are some dollars there? How is the government promoting this program?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, within the limits of the resources that are available, of course, we build on what we have. People come forward, service groups, primarily, come forward and make application to provide some instruction within their communities, and to the extent that they provide the best proposal for their community, if indeed there are more than one, then a judgment has to be made. In some areas where, of course, already volunteer groups are in place, we will have to say no in those cases. In some cases where they exist in point A but in the community point B, nobody really wants to take the lead, we may ask the leadership in point A to

share their expertise, in a sense reaching out to another location and providing their leadership.

So it is a combination of ways we handle the decisions around those who apply to come forward and contribute their time. I mean, there are a number who want to be added to the total list of those who are outreaching.

Mr. Lamoureux: Can the minister indicate in terms of the demand for literacy courses. Is it being met in his opinion?

Mr. Manness: In terms of individuals, yes, there is a very large demand. As these become successful in their own communities, of course, word spreads very quickly. The examples that I am used to, certainly there is a strong expectation of the students, and most students respond. They realize that this is an opportunity that may not be provided again, and so there is real learning that takes place. So in the communities where the model is working extremely well, we probably could reach more people if we had more resources.

In other cases—he talks about groups coming forward. Last year, I think, we had a half dozen new groups come forward, and there may be more. Again, the restraint around resources maybe has curtailed the number of supporting groups within communities who might have otherwise come forward.

Mr. Lamoureux: What would be the financial breakdown or the dollars that are actually put towards these groups?

Mr. Manness: Almost two-thirds of a million dollars, \$650,000.

Mr. Lamoureux: Does the community itself participate financially and, if so, to what degree?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, I forgot the first response I was going to make, but many of the communities contribute greatly in kind, whether that is heat, light, power or buildings. Some others, I do not know how many in number, also raised funds locally, through fundraisers, to support the general course, although that is not required.

Mr. Lamoureux: So there are no private dollars. It would be strictly donations right from that particular community, from volunteers?

Mr. Manness: No, not donations from volunteers, donations from people in the community during fundraiser time. I imagine businesses and individuals and other service groups, probably, if they sense it is working well within their community and they want it to continue to work well, if their is an appeal made, they will come forward and try to meet the specific goal in mind at that time.

Mr. Lamoureux: What sort of an impact would that have on—if you have 32 different community groups that are out there currently, in terms of their abilities? No doubt some would have better abilities than others to be able to raise additional dollars in order to provide possibly better teachers for these courses. Is there any concern in that area?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, we, in our mind, provide adequate resources, and to the extent that some communities want to go beyond that and raise money locally, obviously then it is an enhanced service, and many of the teachers to whom I have spoken are just incredible. They have sort of become a love of learning almost, and there is such a wealth of experience. These students who come along, of course, are just so willing to learn in many respects that there is a tremendous atmosphere developed within the classroom.

Mr. Lamoureux: What would be the actual cost of having one group?

Mr. Manness: The average cost is around \$22,000.

Mr. Lamoureux: For each group, they go year long, or are there a certain number of weeks, a break, then they are back at it for another period of weeks? Are these ongoing groups, or are these more so one-time groups that will take a look at the community and then dismantle after they have provided one course? How does that work itself?

* (2000)

Mr. Manness: Well, we generally recommend, Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, a 35-week

programming period, and although that varies depending on the course of study, that is the general guideline.

Mr. Lamoureux: Now, if that would be a 35-week, that would be just for one group then, and that would be a cost of, on average, \$22,000, and the only dollars then are strictly virtually provincial dollars, which would be adequate enough for them to provide that full 35 weeks for each group.

Mr. Manness: I think it varies. There is part programming time here. I mean, not all programs run 35 weeks. It varies from program to program. I guess the basic literacy times—I mean, if you are taking some heavy remedial language arts or math, that would tend to be, I think, a fuller portion of the 35 weeks, but it is not that uniform across all these program areas.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, I am wondering if the minister can give us some sort of indication of the amount of or the percentage of the population being illiterate. I know through Statistics Canada they have thrown a number of different percentages. I have heard it as high, for example, as being up to 70,000 in the city of Winnipeg, but there is a number of things that are taken into account which do not necessarily reflect that particular number that was suggested. I am wondering if the minister can give us some sort of an indication of just how severe a problem illiteracy is in the province.

Mr. Manness: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, I have just been presented this material by Mr. Devron Gaber. I am sorry I did not introduce him earlier.

All we have to go by is Statistics Canada numbers. Certainly, for some period of time, many of us have felt that the 30 percent statement that has been made has been overstated. As a matter of fact, I have taken a severe kicking around from the public school system which said: Well, you did not stand up and say that it was much lower. Really, basically, it is 2 or 3 percent. Well, I mean, how do you know with certainty what it is?

I will share with the member what Stats Canada says. This is the results of the survey using a

functional literacy continuum with four levels, and it says: 7 percent of Canadian adults have difficulty dealing with printed materials. That is Level I. Nine percent can use printed materials for limited purposes only, such as finding a familiar word in a simple text. That is Level II. Twenty-two percent can use reading materials in a variety of situations provided the material is simple, clearly laid out and the tasks involved are not too complicated. These adults generally do not see themselves as having significant reading difficulties but tend to avoid situations requiring reading. That is Level III. Sixty-two percent meet most everyday reading demands. That is Level IV.

(Mr. Deputy Chairperson in the Chair)

So those are the level breakouts and the member can put his own interpretation to them, but, I mean, this is the StatsCan overview of literacy. But, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, before I close, certainly they are going to another survey as this particular statistic is drawing an awful lot of attention these days.

Mr. Lamoureux: Can the minister give some sort of indication of where geographically in the province there is a higher need for literacy courses?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, without knowing with certainty, we would have to think that northern Manitoba would have a higher incidence of those without the ability to read certainly at Level IV.

Mr. Lamoureux: Would that be the greatest breakdown that the minister would actually have in terms of illiteracy? For example, I would cite possibly the inner city of Winnipeg might have a problem with illiteracy.

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I do not have that because Stats Canada does not have it. I mean, the information which I provided is based on a survey of 9,500 adults between the ages of 16 and 69 across Canada, 4 percent—if the survey has been done right—of that total have been surveyed in Manitoba, and whether you can draw any trends or not region by region in the province of Manitoba, I would question whether there is any scientific validity if you could.

Mr. Lamoureux: Was there not a Literacy Task Force that this particular government did have a few years back, and would they not have looked into that?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, yes, and certainly that group interviewed people far and wide across the province, but it was not based on a scientific survey of any means, one that could allow anybody to draw objective conclusions.

Mr. Lamoureux: So the minister does not have really too much of an idea in terms of where the greatest potential demand for fighting illiteracy is in the province other than the statement that, well it could be, we suspect, in northern Manitoba?

Mr. Manness: The demand comes forward from the community groups who want to sponsor, and I dare say my greater responsibility right now is to try and stop the trend increase in this area, if indeed it is trending upward, by way of making improvements in the public school system. Surely that is a better way, a much better way to address this situation in a meaningful manner.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, there are a number of generations that in fact are not going through the public school system right now, and the minister refers that this is actually through the community groups and where the community groups come to the Minister of Education or to the department.

I am wondering if the minister believes that there are some areas where you maybe do not get the same sort of community support as other areas of the province of Manitoba. Does he not believe that would be the case?

Mr. Manness: Well, remember that the target groups are basically two, those who are studying English as a second language and the aboriginal component of our society. I mean, those are the basic target groups. That is what the report says, and as far as community groups coming forward or not, well, that may very well be the case, but I do not know what the member is inferring here.

The community will always do it better than government, and, of course, it is the challenge of every community to look around and see if they

can help those who basically are short of some basic literacy skills at this point.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, out of the 32 groups, for example, how many of those groups would actually be in the north end of Winnipeg?

Mr. Manness: Five within the core, four within the greater definition of the north end.

Mr. Lamoureux: Could the minister in fact provide for the committee or for myself a copy of where all of the 32 groups are throughout the province? I wanted to comment because on the program or the model that the minister himself talks so very highly of, opposition has continuously been criticized, particularly from this minister, in terms of always wanting to see more dollars being spent and never coming up with ideas or alternatives or better ways to spend money.

An Honourable Member: That is right.

* (2010)

Mr. Lamoureux: From his seat he says, that is right. A couple of weeks ago, I had asked specifically a question with reference to the New Brunswick model that was there. The minister's response to me was that Manitoba's model was in fact good enough, that it was being copied. Before I go on to the New Brunswick model, I would ask the Minister of Education if he is aware of any other provinces that are following Manitoba's lead on fighting illiteracy?

Mr. Manness: Right today Nova Scotia and the Yukon are shifting over to a community-based model. Ontario, Alberta and the Northwest Territories have a similar community-based model.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I do believe that the minister is right, that the best way to do it is through a community-based model. The model that I had pointed out to the Minister of Education goes a bit beyond in terms of not only being community-based but also providing a manner in which the private sector in the community itself can get directly involved in the promotion and in ensuring that where there is the highest demand that in fact there are better

opportunities for these groups to get up and running.

I know, for example, in New Brunswick, we have seen, I believe it was approximately over 4,000 individuals that went through literacy programming. The province itself contributed approximately 50 percent of the funding for these particular programs, and the private sector got involved in a very significant way. The national government also contributed a significant amount, but it is in fact community-based, driven, and members from the community as a whole, through business and management, virtually runs the corporation.

I am wondering if in fact the Minister of Education has given any thought whatsoever to moving towards that sort of a model, or does he feel his model will suffice for the up and coming years.

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, one thing you had better do when you are a critic and you are trying to dialogue with people in other provinces, particularly when you are of the same political stripe and they give you information, is you better be very careful how it is you ascertain or determine the validity of this information. The member threw out a number the other day in the House when he said there were 2,900 students in one year. We tried to verify that. We know that in '93-94 the New Brunswick program started with about 1,665 students. So maybe he has the latest information, I do not know.

The member challenges then to put up a program, and that causes to be generated within the local community some money. Well, the New Brunswick model did that. They thought that they would enter a model where communities were expected to contribute \$3,000 each. The fact is, the communities did not come up with \$3,000 and the government had to find another \$94,000 because there was a shortfall.

So I only caution the member that when he says that there are models out there that are better than what we have, that he fully explore to what end they have delivered. We have done evaluations on ours, and of course I am almost certain that no

evaluation has been done on the students who have graduated or come forth from the New Brunswick model. We have done evaluations on our students. Other provinces do evaluations.

So, again, I do not have to have the New Brunswick model thrown at me as being leading in this area, because I honestly do not think it is. Yet I recognize it too as a community-based program. I have spoken to the individual—and I am sure, because I spoke to him in Victoria about a year ago, who is a Manitoban and as a matter of fact worked in our department I think about 15 years ago—who has gone and designed this program. I forget his name right now, I think his name is Smith or something. I am not going to run down anybody else's program, but similarly, when the member jumps up in public profile and says, hey, here is this wonderful model out there, why did you not think of doing this, in a sense being critical, I am saying, no, I do not need to take that when we are starting and maybe being a little bit less flamboyant than New Brunswick tends to do things.

Yet I do know that we have a pretty fair model, and let us continue to build on it. Let us continue to entice the community groups that come forward, not by way of money, but by way of the satisfaction they receive from contributing of their time and energy. We ultimately will end up with a better model, and that will be proven more importantly by the evaluation that is performed with respect to the students, and that is all we really care about, is it not?

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I think that would in fact be first and foremost on everyone's minds, is students. That is the reason why in a discussion that I had with the province of New Brunswick, the minister could say or attempt to say that I am giving it 100 percent full endorsement and say that we have to move in that direction if he so chooses.

I compare the model not in depth. I do not have the same resources as the Minister of Education has. My resources are much more finite as a critic, but I do believe that the concept that is being used over in the province of New Brunswick is a viable

concept in that the Minister of Education, when they were talking about literacy, I believe it was their 1991 throne speech or it could have been the '92 throne speech, made a commitment to combat illiteracy in the province of Manitoba.

If they are serious about this commitment, one would think that they would in fact be reviewing other models that are out there and picking up. I would ask the minister, does he feel, for example, that the private sector is prepared to put in dollars towards fighting illiteracy, or would he oppose the private sector getting involved to the same degree that they are in New Brunswick?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, there is an awful lot of workplace literacy training going on within our province. The federal government for the most part picks up the tab of that, but we do the co-ordinating. It comes under this branch and this division. So we have an effective and real involvement. It is occurring, and it is far beyond the discussion we have had on the 32 groups who are presently providing service at this time.

But further to his point about dialogue, there will be a meeting in Winnipeg in June of all provinces who are engaged in this area of programming, and at that time, there will be a sharing of, I will not say resources, but certainly a sharing of what each is doing and the reflections on what is working and what is not working, as well.

That is what we try to do during these times because we no longer can guarantee that we will all have the best solutions, and during this time, we at times have to share responsibilities and information, particularly information. It is just so essential today in Canada.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, can the minister give us a couple of examples of some of the workforces that actually have a literacy course being taught to the workers?

Mr. Manness: I could give the example of Fort Garry Industries. I can talk about Westeel, Canadian Liquid Air, Chemcrest, North American Life, Kitchen Craft, Dominion Bridge, Motor Coach, Winnipeg Hi-Therm, Manitoba Pool, Versatech, Labatt's Brewery, Atom-Jet, Qualico homes, Salisbury House, Great-West Life, again.

So we have a listing at this point of 38 projects within the private sector.

Mr. Lamoureux: Does the provincial government have any role in those projects?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, we have the full-time co-ordinator who puts the programs together for these hosting employers, and then, of course, we go in and do a monitoring and an evaluation. So yes, we have a big role to play.

What the employer, of course, provides is half the payroll cost to the employee during his period of training. I suppose the other half comes from the employee, and then the federal government pays the teacher. So that is the split. The employee in essence works for half wage. The employer pays the other half. The federal government pays the trainer, and we contribute the program development, monitoring and evaluation.

* (2020)

Mr. Lamoureux: Can the minister indicate the success rate, like how many numbers of individuals is this reaching out to?

Mr. Manness: At this time 234, Mr. Deputy Chairperson.

Mr. Lamoureux: That is 234 with all the businesses that the minister just listed off. Would that include ESL, English as a Second Language?

Mr. Manness: No, that is separate, beyond that. Of course, that program, as the member knows, is housed in Culture, Heritage and Citizenship.

Mr. Lamoureux: Through the Literacy line, does this department deal with at all English as a Second Language, other than possibly indirectly through the school division?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, within the formal setting of the school divisions, particularly Winnipeg School Division No. 1, that does not involve us. I mean, there is a separation as between our outreach here and the Winnipeg School Division No. 1 and/or Education per se.

Where we get involved with ESL again is within the community-supported program where roughly 34 percent of the students we are talking about, totalling a little over 1,000, are basically ESL

students. It is that group, that roughly 350 that we deal with under ESL programming.

In the workplace also, there is a dimension of outreach ESL on an ESL basis. I mean, there, it is writing skills that are a shortcoming, as compared to speaking and communicating skills.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mostly just for clarification, no dollars from this particular line would go towards ESL.

Mr. Manness: Not in the generic sense, no, because that is funded out of Culture. I mean, our contribution is within the programming area by way of staff time, and this is grants that go out to the community groups, a good portion of this, and, of course, some part of that goes to ESL in the more narrow definition.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the only other thing I would like to get is just, again, going back to the community groups themselves, to get some sort of an idea, if there is a community that would like to establish one, can the minister go through what would be the process of actually establishing one of these groups?

Mr. Manness: Well, I imagine, first of all, coming down and making contact with the branch, getting a feel for the program, and then deciding whether or not wanting to proceed and filing an application with the—[interjection] That is right, in conjunction with the needs assessment, and making application to the branch, and through that convincing the branch that, first of all, the needs are there and, secondly, that it is a group worthy of taking on this onerous responsibility, and I guess once that match happens, and within the funding available to this program, ultimate acceptance and then the beginning of the program.

Mr. Lamoureux: The group is anticipated to form a board—is that the idea?—which would be elected from that particular community.

Mr. Manness: Yes, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, somebody has to be ultimately responsible and held accountable. Of course, this would be a nonprofit group, but nevertheless it has to be formally structured.

Mr. Lamoureux: Can the minister indicate if in fact the number of groups that are actually applying—are there groups in fact being turned down?

Mr. Manness: I guess it depends what words we use. Some are turned down, yes, because of the reasons I have mentioned before, particularly if they come forward in an area where already a need is being addressed. In some cases, they are turned down because of greater requirements elsewhere, and obviously resources might cause the turndown and the placement on a waiting list for some others. Again, I remind the member, it is a geographical issue. It is not like first come, first served, or we have one here, but somebody else wants to rush in with a good program. It would be more like, well, where is the deficiency right now? Where is the greatest need? Is there somebody prepared to do that? That would, of course, jump the queue, I would imagine, come to the front.

Mr. Lamoureux: So that if in fact there were additional resources, we would see more of these groups out there. I am wondering if one says, for example, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, that we have a finite or this is how much in terms of dollars this government or this minister is prepared to allocate out towards these groups, does he feel that there are other means that the government might be able to get involved and to assist in generating additional dollars to meet that demand that is apparently out there, because if in fact you are turning down groups, it would seem that it would be the case?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the member's point reflects some of my own concern and certainly another year we will again, as we have, try not to starve this branch. It is one that is very important.

To the extent we can find any additional dollars, we would want to favour this group, and this year we had an 11 percent increase. It was one of the few lines in government in 1993-94 that experienced this level of increase, so we are not disagreeing here. It is a very worthy area of programming and one that we are going to continue to try to foster, because again, so much of

the time and effort, indeed the result, is of course because of the giving of local individuals.

Mr. Lamoureux: The minister indicated that some would be turned down because of priorities, in the sense that a greater emphasis elsewhere because possibly, again, he made reference to geographics, or demographics if you like. That indicates to me that the department would have some idea in terms of where it is in fact most needed. I am wondering what they would be using for statistical information to reach that.

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, it is no different than Manitoba Telephone System deciding to put up towers in support of cell phones. I mean, you geographically look at your major centres rurally, and you know that you try and have a presence scattered throughout the province in keeping where the populations are, and therefore the overriding criteria is that one will not be any closer than 25 kilometres to the next in a rural context. Of course, once we get into the cities of Brandon and Winnipeg, then it is a different approach.

That is the overriding criteria, but certainly, I mean, we have no statistics, as I have indicated before, that suggest that three-quarters of the community support groups should be in the city of Winnipeg. We sense, though, that of course to the extent that there are more community-based groups in the city of Winnipeg who would like to come forward in support, I would have to think there certainly would be a greater opportunity for them to be part of this program. So the issues are, of course, needs assessment, the local effort being put forward—[interjection] That is right; and of course after a local needs assessment has been conducted.

* (2030)

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, so the priorities would be population based more than demographically based in terms of economics.

Can the minister indicate how many of these groups that have met the criteria through needs assessment and the local input of active boards and so forth, but would have been turned down, let us

say over last year and the previous year, how many would have been turned down?

Mr. Manness: Last year there were four applications that were not funded.

Mr. Lamoureux: Those four groups, that would have been because they did meet the criteria?

Mr. Manness: A combination of funding and the fact that there were other service providers within that area. In other words, somebody was already there.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, could the minister indicate which four would have been turned down, not necessarily the names of the individuals or the community group, just more so the general regions, whether it is in northern Manitoba, or Winnipeg or Brandon.

Mr. Manness: There was a support group in the Seine River School Division. I do not know based in what towns specifically. There was a group in southeast Winnipeg. There was a group just outside of Portage, and there was another group in Winnipeg in the Shaughnessy Park area.

Mr. Lamoureux: The Shaughnessy Park really interests me. That is the area that I represent.

An Honourable Member: Oh, so that is why you asked the question.

Mr. Lamoureux: No, that is not—well, it is not why I initially had asked the question, but it is definitely worth pursuing.

Again, the minister indicates that it is strictly based on population or that that is one of the primary reasons why they decide to accept or turn down, because they do not want too many around one specific area or in rural Manitoba within the 25 miles, as he had made reference to.

I am wondering if he can indicate where the literacy course is in the Shaughnessy Park area.

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, there is one in the King Edward School, but, again, to the extent that there are well-prepared applications and there is a comfort zone around the host group and finance has come available, we understand there will have to be a broadening of this in the city of Winnipeg.

So if that is the point that the member is trying to draw, I have no problem supporting that.

Mr. Lamoureux: I am wondering if the minister, because the minister had made reference to the fact that they are not too sure of the actual number or the percentage of illiteracy in the city of Winnipeg, that they do not know how they could go about tracking it or they might know how they could go about it, but they have not tracked it before. So it might be an appropriate thing for me to be able to comment a bit about Shaughnessy Park.

Shaughnessy Park is an older area of the city of Winnipeg. If you take a look at the demographics in Shaughnessy Park, especially if you go towards Gilbert Park, which is a nonprofit housing complex, which houses approximately—I believe there are about 240 units and a number of them are vacant. Eighty percent, I hope the minister will not quote me on the actual percentage, but I believe around 80 percent are single parents. Illiteracy is in fact a very serious problem. There is, and I do not know if this is the same group that in fact applied, but I do know, for example, that we did get a resource centre over the last couple of years put up in Gilbert Park. I am sure the minister being the former Minister of Finance might even be aware of the resource centre coming up.

An Honourable Member: We did that for you, Kevin.

Mr. Lamoureux: I appreciate the minister doing that for me. [interjection] I am glad it would be mainly for my constituents.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, one of the things that we want to be able to develop in that area is some programming that would see the community be able to address some of the social problems that are around it. It is not to say that just Gilbert Park would be in need of a literacy course. There are a number of families that I have met with first-hand that have expressed concerns with educational opportunities. It is very affordable housing in this area of the city, and you will find that in fact there is a very high demand, I would imagine, for a literacy course. It would be interesting, and I know the minister made comment that he will provide for me a listing of all the different literacy

programs, the 32 of them that are scattered throughout the province of Manitoba.

I guess it would be somewhat advantageous for the minister to be able to sit down, to look at those 32 groups, and to look in terms of the communities that they are serving and compare them to Shaughnessy Park and see where he feels the demand is most needed.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Shaughnessy Park is a wonderful place to live. I do not believe it would rank right at the bottom in terms of illiteracy in the province of Manitoba. I would likely argue that Shaughnessy Park is a community that could use a program of this nature, more so than many other communities that are out there. That is why it would be interesting to see, in terms of where the other 32 programs are. I am aware of at least one community, the Gilbert Park Tenants' Association, I am sure, would be more than happy to take on some of the responsibility of ensuring that the course could in fact be implemented.

What concerns me first and foremost, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, is not because I represent the area of Shaughnessy Park, but it proves a point that I tried to make earlier, and that is that there is a responsibility of government, of the Department of Education, the provincial government, to find out where these services are most needed. So that, if we are talking about a finite amount of resources, we are serving those communities that need it the most. I am not convinced that has in fact been happening.

The minister has talked about doing what he can to increase the levels of literacy. I would argue, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, that there is a considerable amount more that the minister could do, right across.

For example, from Shaughnessy Park we have got industrial parks in which there are a number of businesses that, I am sure, would be able to contribute, if in fact it is just a question of dollars. I do not think that the private sector is the only group that has to get involved in this. Government has to lead. Government has to take on the responsibility of providing these courses.

If, in fact, they are not able to provide the needed amount of financial resources to be able to facilitate individuals from acquiring the ability to read and write because of a philosophical bent, in the sense that they are on the side of minimal government involvement, well, they still have a responsibility to do what they can in terms of what dollars they do allocate for programs for literacy, allocated where they are most needed.

* (2040)

I would ask the minister specifically, because the minister and the department is not aware of the demographics or the social demographics of the areas in which these 32 groups are currently in, will the minister review those 32 groups and at the very least sit down at a table and get some sort of an assessment, if he feels that the demand, because of the finite amount of resources, that we are putting all the programs in the ideal places?

I might not have had as strong a base to argue from if Shaughnessy Park did not apply for this particular program, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, but Shaughnessy Park did apply. So even using the minister's argument by saying it has to be community driven, well the community of Shaughnessy Park is driving it. They are saying that we do want to have a course, and the minister says, good, and yes I am very glad to see it. I am sure I would likely even know a couple of the individuals who are driving it, but that is all that much more reason why it is the Department of Education should be better able to make the decisions in terms of where these programs should be approved.

Again, the Minister of Education could likely prove me wrong by saying, well, we could only afford 32 this year, here are the 32, and I look at the 32 and you find that 20 of them are northern Manitobans in some of the remote regions where there is very high demand, and you have—well the minister indicated that there were, I believe it was, four in the inner city. But Shaughnessy Park in particular, if you talk to, for example, the principal of Shaughnessy Park high school—this particular individual has a great deal of experience with inner city schools. This individual would be able to

indicate to you very clearly, I believe, the needs of the community when it comes to literacy because he is dealing with the children of the many single parents who are out there and shares the frustration, I am sure, that I have with trying to ensure that programs are in fact made available for where they are most needed.

That is one of the primary reasons why I have been, I like to believe, a very strong advocate of government playing a more active role in fighting illiteracy in the province of Manitoba. Having said that, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I would be interested in hearing what the Minister of Education has to say.

Mr. Manness: The member put some good comments on the record. Naturally he will now be able to take them out to the host group there and show his strong commitment to the program, and I think he wants to make the same remarks with respect to the King Edward Community Group.

I will just say that I agree with what he said and we are trying to find additional resources that we can. We did a year ago and will continue to try and see this program grow within the limits that are obviously imposed on all programming these days.

Mr. Lamoureux: The minister mentioned that there are 32 groups currently. Is he anticipating the number of groups to increase for '94-95?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, this is where it becomes more difficult because one thing we know, you cannot start one group and then have it working well like most of these are—I gather they are all working fairly well—and then say ah, we are going to stop the level of support and now move the money from here and start a new one. So I do not know whether there will be room for significant increase in term of '94-95, but hopefully there will be in the year following.

Mr. Lamoureux: Out of the current 32 groups, is this something that is approved annually, so, for example, if it is demonstrated clearly to the Minister of Education that the demand is very strong in the Shaughnessy Park area, that the minister would be prepared to bump if necessary in order to get Shaughnessy Park involved in this particularly program?

Mr. Manness: Unless we have performance problems associated with some of the existing 32, or something collapses and resources are freed up, the answer is no.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the future is not bright then for areas similar to Shaughnessy Park in the sense that they are being told that we have 32 groups that are in place right now; it does not appear that we will be able to increase the number of groups in the future. The government, albeit gave an increase on this particular line, it is abundantly clear that the band is not even closely being met for the need of additional community groups.

I would then, again, ask the minister, does he believe—and again it is not to say that we would not want to commit more dollars to this, but does the minister himself believe that there are other things that could be done to enhance the amount of dollars going to combat illiteracy in the province of Manitoba?

Has he explored the possibility, for example, of getting the communities, where some communities can afford to pitch in—where other communities cannot afford, well, you cannot draw blood from a stone—but to look at something that would enable the private sector to get involved, unions possibly to get involved.

Maybe there is a role for the community outside of the politicians, outside of the provincial government to start participating because this government is not prepared to throw in additional dollars yet. When we are saying no to areas like Shaughnessy Park, the long-term costs of not providing a literacy course is going to be significantly higher.

So I would ask the Minister of Education, what is he prepared to do to ensure that additional resources in the future will be coming to combat illiteracy, to ensure that areas like Shaughnessy Park will be given the opportunity to be able to have programs of this nature?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, a year ago, when I was the Minister of Finance and I brought down my last budget, I put a list out of receiving groups which were no longer going to

receive grants, and I can remember the members opposite chewed me out almost for every one of them. But at that same time, we provided an 11 percent increase in this line, and I cannot remember one word of tribute or indeed commendation coming to the government for the increase. So the member does not have to tell me as to what the priority is that we have put on literacy training within our province.

* (2050)

Do I wish I had more money to reach out in larger fashion? Of course I do, but I do not. Yet, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, when we tried and made all the changes we did and increased funding in this line last year, it drew not a note of comment from the member opposite.

So I say to him, you know, if he wants to play fair here, then recognize what effort has been provided in support of this line. Do I wish we could double it? Yes, I do, but the fact is it is going to have to be subject to the same pressures around all areas of programming that we have in government. It certainly is on the favoured list. I say that in all sincerity, and to the extent that we can find any additional dollars within the department, certainly this area of programming will be a high-level candidate for receiving those extra dollars.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the minister says that if he could double it, he would double it, but because of financial constraints he is not prepared to be able to enhance it any further in terms of financial resources from the government.

The question that I had asked him was, what about looking at groups, whether it is the Manitoba Federation of Labour, the chamber of commerce, the private sector that is out there, some of the very strong social activist groups that are out there, getting them around the table and seeing if we can come up with a model that would see more participation? Monetary participation would be one of the major objectives of this group of individuals that would be sitting at the table.

(Mrs. Shirley Render, Acting Deputy Chairperson, in the Chair)

I would argue, and I am sure the Minister of Education would agree with me—maybe put it in a few different words—that the more literate our society is, the better quality of life all of us will have, because through a literate society, ultimately you will be able to have an impact on things, whether it is the GNP or the quality of life, if you like, as a whole, to allow more individuals to participate in society.

So I would ask the minister specifically, is he prepared to meet with individuals, groups, outside of government to see if they have a role to play in combating illiteracy?

Mr. Manness: In a broad thrust, I do not, but what I do have, and indeed my predecessor set this in place, is an advisory council on literacy. That council, although not overly active this last year, is reconstituting, and one of the challenges that we will give to it is exactly what the member indicates, to approach the community as to how it is we might bring in additional sources of revenue and/or maybe even setting up a foundation which will spin off yearly revenues or dividends to help. So yes, we will put that challenge out to the council that is constituted.

Mr. Lamoureux: Madam Acting Deputy Chairperson, I am encouraged to hear that, and I will look forward to hearing about the advisory council actually getting together. I do not know when the last time it was that it met, but I do look forward to hearing something in the not-too-distant future with reference to the government taking some form of action on that.

The other aspect is of course the methodology in determining which community groups will get these programs. I would ask the minister if he would also be prepared to have the advisory council review how the different community groups are in fact prioritized.

Mr. Manness: When my predecessor, the member for Roblin-Russell (Mr. Derkach) was the Minister of Education and put into motion this whole process, the Literacy Council of course was instrumental in helping him forge policy in this area. So the government did not just develop this model on their own, and that is why it has been

bought into by so many groups because there were outside resources and highly motivated individuals who helped design it. This just was not designed internally. The community does have an ownership to the model that we have in place.

Again, it rose out of the task force report which sought the views of the wider community throughout Manitoba. So it is the perfect process. It is what members have been encouraging us to do in all dimensions with respect to public policy: say generally what you want to do; go out to the public for feedback; see how it is; what methodologies they might want to see encompassed within a policy; and ultimately, build a plan and see it implemented. I mean, this is a textbook case. The community has ownership of this model.

So I do not know, I hope he is not being critical and I hope he is not sensing that it has just been developed under some monopoly of the human mind trust within the department. It is beyond that. It certainly is a community project.

Mr. Lamoureux: Madam Acting Deputy Chairperson, I would be somewhat concerned if the Literacy Council, going through that entire process that the minister just finished talking about, came back and did not give any consideration to the need to have some sort of socioeconomic database that would allow the Department of Education to determine where these programs would be most needed. I am wondering if in fact that is the case.

Mr. Manness: Does the member want us to spend money measuring or getting on with the job? Because I can tell you, two-thirds of a million dollars could be spent overnight in support of StatsCan doing a more in depth measurement and analysis. That would be spent overnight. I know the member does not want to believe that, but two-thirds of a million dollars does not go very far when it gets taken to the bureaucracy for the purposes of measurement, scientifically. And I underline the word twice, "scientifically," because that is what he is asking us to do. And I say to him, no, let us spend the money right now where we are pretty sure the needs are, and let us deliver the program. And that is what we are doing.

Mr. Lamoureux: Madam Acting Deputy Chairperson, I do not think it has to be scientific to get a better idea of where the demands are potentially the greatest. I think that just by looking, for example, at the—I believe Statistics Canada gives some sort of an income base—not evaluation, a report on income of the average family through postal codes, for example. I think by spending 20 minutes of looking at those sort of statistical—or that sort of statistical information—I should not even say 20 minutes—spending possibly a day or two from the literacy office analyzing that sort of information would, in fact, give the Department of Education a fairly decent idea of where it is that literacy programming is needed more than other areas.

I do not believe—you know, at least that would be better than what the department is currently doing. Again, you know I have to say it with some reservation in the sense that I have not seen the 32 groups that are currently going in their actual locations. So everything that I have said I would have liked to believe is fairly accurate in terms of just with the minimal information I have been provided. But that is why I do hope that the minister will get me that information relatively soon, and define soon, before we get out of session anyway. If not, even in the next couple of days would be wonderful, because even when we go onto the ministerial salary, if the minister can give it to me by then, it might be either a good opportunity for me to do a bit of back-tracking possibly, but I think that what it will do is likely reinforce what it is that I have been talking about.

Again I would emphasize to the minister that the minister should be establishing priorities in terms of the selection of programs or communities, not only strictly on population density or, in rural Manitoba, a radius of 25 miles or whatever it was that the minister made reference to, that there has to be more of a scientific approach to just—there are 600,000 people in Winnipeg, so they get 60 percent of the programs, and north Winnipeg has this.

* (2100)

Mr. Manness: Madam Acting Deputy Chairperson, it does not work that way. This is a community-based program that says that if the community base wants it, they will get it prior their needs. I am sorry, I cannot help that sponsoring groups in the city of Winnipeg have chosen not to come forward. They exist everywhere. They exist everywhere within the city. [interjection] Well, there were two rurals that were turned down, too. So the member is trying to already make this a political issue.

I will give him the list, and the list is this: Brandon Friendship; Camperville Adult; Dauphin Friendship; Salvation Army of Winnipeg; Russell-Binscarth; Lord Selkirk School Division, Selkirk; Pembina Valley Language Education, Pembina Valley; The Pas Friendship Centre, The Pas; Ka-Wawiyak Friendship Centre, Powerview; Aboriginal Literacy Foundation, Winnipeg; Pluri-Elles, St. Boniface; Swan River Adults, Swan River; John Howard, Winnipeg, Headingley; Stevenson-Britannia, Winnipeg; Samaritan House, Brandon; Agassiz Independent Learning Centre, Beausejour; Central American Literacy Program, Winnipeg; Ma-Mow-We-Tak Friendship Centre, Thompson; King Edward Community Group, Winnipeg; Transcona Literacy, Transcona; Association of Parents and Professionals for Literacy Education, Virden; Lynn Lake Adult Education Program, Lynn Lake; Pluri-Elles, St. Malo; Central Manitoba Literacy Association, Portage; Journeys Adult Education, Winnipeg; Winnipeg Volunteer Reading Aides, Central Winnipeg; Flin Flon Adult Literacy Committee, Flin Flon; Steinbach and Area Language and Literacy Adult Service for Adults, Steinbach; Pluri-Elles, St. Claude; Interlake Region Adult Basic Education, Gimli; Garden Valley School Division, Winkler; Rhineland School Division, Altona.

Madam Acting Deputy Chairperson, the member may want to take fault with the list. I think that is a pretty good representation across the province and the city of Winnipeg. To the extent that there are other sponsoring groups strongly in Winnipeg wanting to do this and funds become available, that will happen. I do not need to sit here

and listen to the member try and leave the impression on the record that this is favouring rural Manitoba.

He is saying, do the needs assessment. Can he tell me any one of those communities that does not have the need. Two things have to line up: the needs, No. 1; and No. 2, a community-sponsoring group coming forward. If one of them is missing, then obviously the community-based program cannot work. So then he would say, well, the government should take a more active role, it should fund more, it should, what, entice somebody to come forward from the community. This is nonsense, Madam Acting Deputy Chairperson.

I think this is a good program, and I am very defensive with respect to the methodology put into place for selection. It is not government imposed. We took the views of the community at large, representatives from the city of Winnipeg who sit on a literacy council. The methodology is in place. The locations to date are in place. If we had more money we would even do a better job, and we will try and find more money.

Madam Acting Deputy Chairperson, I am sorry. I rest my case on this. I have nothing more to add for the record.

Mr. Lamoureux: One final question and that is: Would the minister agree that, yes, there is a need in all of those that he just listed off, but does he not also agree that in some areas there might be more of a need? Is that a fair statement? It is not to be antirural or anti one end of the city of Winnipeg than the other. Does he recognize that there is a difference between need in the sense that some areas there might be a higher need and still the community groups are still there saying we want it but they have been turned down?

Mr. Manness: With the mechanisms we have in place today to measure that need, in our view, we have done a wonderful job and we have reached out into the areas of greatest need, because there is great need everywhere.

When you start to measure 20 or 25 percent, obviously it just is not located in pockets. It is

obviously a problem that is pretty uniform across the piece.

The member can shake his head off till the cows come home. I am telling you, Madam Acting Deputy Chairperson, the reality is, this program is reaching out in a fairer fashion. I agree with him to the extent we can find more money to make it even better, we will.

Ms. Friesen: The member for Inkster's questions about need in establishing priorities are interesting ones. Some years ago this department did have a report by Arthur Mauro and I understand the present new deputy minister, which did indicate other ways of establishing community needs. It talked about developing a labour force development strategy, of which the second step was community committees which were going to establish the skill needs and training priorities of particular regions. It does not necessarily involve the kind of expense which the ministry immediately looked at, but it is an alternative way of ensuring that the community can become involved in defining the need and does it on a systematic basis. Since we never saw the first step of that labour force development strategy, it is unlikely that we are going to see the second step.

I am trying to follow some of the financial lines over the last three years here, and I am not quite sure what I am seeing so I am asking for some assistance here. Under the current line that we are looking at, 16.4(f), it is identified as Literacy and Continuing Education.

Last year, it was also identified as Literacy and Continuing Education, but the year before, the one that the minister I think identified as the base line, when he was trying to show the increase in funding for Literacy, Continuing Education was not included. I am wondering if the actual money follows that line.

There seemed to me to be three terminologies that are used in the current explanation of this line, basic education, adult education, continuing education and literacy. So I am trying to follow how much money has been devoted to Literacy specifically, which in 1992-93 was \$909,500, in 1991-92, it was \$891,000, and then it does take a

jump with the expansion, the addition of Continuing Education in '93-94.

So I wonder if the minister and his staff would have the material here to try and sort that out, the responsibilities for this particular line.

Mr. Manness: Madam Acting Deputy Chairperson, the total under Grants/Transfer with respect to this area of programming represents \$812,000, of which \$650,000 is Literacy and \$167,000 is Continuing Education; \$167,000, Continuing Education, made up of two components, Continuing Education grants—this is for evening school, evening classes, roughly \$110,000 within school divisions—and \$52,500 for special needs senior citizen grants.

That is the base breakout in terms of '94-95. The \$167,000 we are talking about came from the Special Skills Training branch.

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

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, so is it fair to say then that in fact Literacy allocations have declined over the last three years, beginning from '93 when it was \$909,000, down to \$600,000? Is that what this means?

Mr. Manness: No, Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, the Literacy grants continue to grow. It is the Continuing Ed side that slid slightly.

* (2110)

Ms. Friesen: Could the minister then, for the record, indicate what the last four years have been in Literacy grants?

Mr. Manness: Purely on the Literacy side, there was a base level of funding of \$587,000 for basically three or four years, and then that moved up to \$650,000 in '93-94, and in '94-95.

Ms. Friesen: When the minister was responding to the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux), he read off a list of Versatech, Labatt, Qualico, Salisbury House, et cetera—I did not get them all down—but it was the workplace-based literacy programs. I could not follow from his discussion whether these were the ones which were funded by the federal government or whether this also included Workforce 2000.

Mr. Manness: These were ones purely funded by the federal government, but as I indicated, there were four partners, obviously, making contribution to the program.

Ms. Friesen: The federal government funding then applied to the 38 projects and includes 200 people?

Mr. Manness: 234 people, correct.

Ms. Friesen: What component of the Workforce 2000 grants are for comparable literacy programs?

Mr. Manness: There is some overlap. It is very complex and complicated and depends what course skills we are talking about. We are talking about basic problem solving and talking about greater contribution to total quality management, but again, trying to encourage employees to use their basic set of skills better.

Again, I want to indicate there is not a focus on the employer. It is a sector approach that comes forward. If there is an identification of basic skills that are not evident in sufficient fashion in a significant number within that industry, then some support will be coming forward from Workforce 2000 in support of the industry. It is hard to break out exactly what percent of the total is directed towards trying to improve the quality of skills by sector.

(Mr. Deputy Chairperson in the Chair)

Ms. Friesen: There is a category under Workforce 2000 of what is called basic education—I forget which number you assigned to it—so it would presumably be easy to pick out the number of employers who have that particular category applied to them. Then, perhaps the minister could tell me what in fact is meant by basic education in the context of Workforce 2000 and how is that different from what is meant by literacy in the context of this program?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I cannot answer those specific questions here, because I do not have Workforce 2000 staff here at this point. Certainly, I will entertain that question at that time. But I acknowledge that there is a collaboration effect here and work that is between the Literacy Council and at times Workforce 2000 seeking, I

guess, input from this branch as to what really qualifies under that program.

Ms. Friesen: Perhaps if there were community training committees in place, there might be some combinations that might be made here, some collective action on behalf of communities.

I just wanted to check. The federally funded programs that are listed here are not included in any budget line here. There is nothing. That is just an information line.

Mr. Manness: No recoverables directly from Ottawa, no.

Ms. Friesen: Could the minister tell us a little more about what is meant by literacy in the context of this program? What level are we aiming at?

Mr. Manness: We do not use grade equivalents. We use Levels I to IV, but if somebody wanted a proxy, I guess, those levels might represent a range from Grades 1 to 9.

Ms. Friesen: I was concerned by one of the statistics quoted in the Mauro report, and that was that 45 percent of the Manitoba labour force does not have secondary education. I wondered how the minister saw the literacy programs possibly beginning to make changes in that. Will it make any changes in that? What level is below the Grade 9 education and how is that contribution?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the reason I have become a strong supporter of the program before even seeing the results is not the initial imparting of knowledge; it is my belief, because many people have told me this, what happens is that you have a location of learning when all of a sudden the students who, I guess in many respects, realize maybe this is the last chance, are just so desirous of knowledge and wanting to learn.

From that, upon achievement and after the achievement of some level under this, they realize that, first of all, they have got the basic ability to learn, and secondly, in so many cases, then set aside and make learning their priority and now develop the confidence to go beyond and to enroll on their own in other post-secondary institutions or train in other respects.

To me that is the great success of the story, not that it ultimately—there is an equivalent to a Grade 12 standing, that it brings you out skilled ready to do a job, but what it does is develop a sense of confidence that, my goodness, I can do it, and I can on my own now hopefully enter other avenues of post-secondary training.

Ms. Friesen: I expect the minister is aware of the corollary to that. That is, long-term unemployment in fact decreases your literacy skills and that the loss of confidence for long-term unemployment or even relatively short-term unemployment does have an impact on literacy skills. In fact, people who had them, lose them.

I would like to ask the minister, is the Literacy Council, is the labour force development strategy, is his skills training strategy looking at that in any way?

Mr. Manness: We are talking about adult education in an area of basic skills. There is no way the province has the capacity to take that on itself and yet we are mindful of again—and we get back to Axworthy's social reform changes associated with unemployment insurance and any other device and/or method that may be available to encourage adults to again refocus in a learning sense on their basic skills

This is not purely a Manitoba education domain. This is the essence of the training reform, the social reform process that we are engaged in, in this nation at this time.

Ms. Friesen: How is Manitoba engaged in this? I am speaking specifically about the training and the literacy skills of people who have been long-term unemployed.

Mr. Manness: Whether they have been long-term unemployed or not, we are dealing in illiteracy, and the fact is that we are trying through our various programs and indeed through the various programs of some school divisions, we are all out trying to reach—trying to improve the basic foundation skill set of our people.

* (2120)

Whether one is unemployed or not, obviously we have some task to do because, if the numbers

are right, between 20 and 30 percent of our population, by some measure at least, are being measured as not being literate and the level of unemployment in this province is 9 percent, obviously the issue is much greater than the unemployed.

Ms. Friesen: Well, it goes back to my earlier comments, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, about the economic implications or long-term implications of unemployment. It is the issue of retraining and the loss of skills that people once had. Whereas I share the minister's enthusiasm for the confidence that new learners have, I want to draw his attention to the fact that there is another side to that, and it is one of the long-term costs to the province of unemployment.

I wanted to ask about evaluation of literacy programs. In the grants to community agencies, what kind of evaluation is conducted?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the assessment is based both qualitatively and quantitatively on a number of criteria. First, Literacy and Continuing Education Branch staff have developed a good practice guide, which has been used to assess the success of community-based literacy programs from a variety of perspectives, including those of the learner, the community, the teacher and the funder. All literacy programs funded by the office were assessed by the good practice guide in April '93 to determine their success. The information gained from the assessment was used in part to determine whether or not to recommend continuing funding of the programs in '93-94.

Statistical return that was completed by the various program areas gathered information on student enrollment levels, student goals and achievement of those goals, students' literacy levels, the age, gender and language background of students, the extent of literacy provision, the number of volunteers and ways in which they were used, and training activities attended by staff.

In '93-94, statistical return results showed that total enrollment was, as I indicated before, 1,085, with 419—39 percent—being aboriginal, 346 speaking English as a second language, and

109—10 percent—being Francophone. Questions on stated goals revealed that 34 percent stated direct employment, 31 percent stated further training, and 34 percent stated personal goals. Results showed that 90 percent of students from the '92-93 academic year either achieved their goals or returned for further training in '93-94.

Ms. Friesen: The staff guide that was prepared, I was not sure from the title of it what exactly it was. Is it the format for a questionnaire, or is it the evaluation of this type of community program?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, it is a guide to allow any program to do a self-examination, and it lays out a format for, I guess, providing questions that groups can ask themselves.

Ms. Friesen: So the group takes the self-evaluation guide and evaluates itself and its teachers and then submits the result to the department?

Mr. Manness: Yes, although the evaluation and, I guess, the questioning and the setting in which this occurs, certainly allows the presence of staff to help in going through this process.

Ms. Friesen: Is it possible to have a copy of this evaluation guide?

Mr. Manness: Yes, we will attempt to provide a copy at the next sitting.

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

Item 4.(f)(2) Other Expenditures \$118,200.

Ms. Friesen: Well, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, you can rule this out of order, but I did notice there is a considerable increase in the managerial salaries here and a decrease in the Professional/Technical salaries, but we have passed that line and so we will let it go, but I put the comment on the record. I am on page 91.

Mr. Manness: I am just having some fun with Mr. Gaber, of course, who has put his heart and soul behind this program and is one individual, if there is any one individual and, of course, there is not, this is a community effort, but certainly has provided incredible leadership to this whole program, and I want to take this opportunity to

thank him for all his efforts and contributions to what I still consider a very, very good program.

Ms. Friesen: I think the minister knows that I never deal in individuals. The issue is the relative change in salaries here, and I do not know the individual involved. I accept the minister's reference, but that was not the issue at all.

Mr. Manness: I understand that, and maybe some day soon, the member will understand why I made the remark. It had nothing to do with her comment or her question.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Item 4.(f)(2) Other Expenditures \$118,200—pass; (3) Grants \$812,100—pass.

(g) Employment Development Programs (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$2,101,700.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I am not sure how you want to proceed on this. In the extended Estimates that I am looking at, we go from page 92, 93, 94, 95, 96 which are explanations of a variety of programs, and then we have only one page of numbers. So I would be prepared to go through each of these programs, or we can move around, or what is your wish?

Mr. Manness: My wish is that we pass the section right now and move on to Workforce 2000.

Ms. Friesen: I never suspected this minister of utopian dreams.

Well, perhaps we will start then with the Employment Development Centres, the single wicket approach offering a spectrum of employment and training services.

I understand that this is the federal proposal, or this is part of the joint federal-provincial initiative. I wonder if the minister could give us some sense of the amount of money on this general line that is being appropriated towards that and what the time frame for discussions is, and I would be also interested in knowing a little more about what is meant by a single wicket approach.

* (2130)

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I have to indicate to the member, having been on Treasury Board for all the years that I was and going through

all these myriad programs that were once housed in another department, the Department of Family Services, it became evident pretty quickly that in a sense, a lot of the programs were distinctly different from each other, and there was not in some cases continuity, and I guess there was the realization in some cases that there were clients who were moving from program to program and starting over and over again.

We sensed it would probably be better and more efficient that there be a single stop to provide access to these different training opportunities after assessment, so we began to build on this concept, tried to define it, and, of course, we gave it the function to provide a co-ordinated access point to employment and training opportunities for unemployed Manitobans who require assistance in securing and sustaining employment, and that is the general thrust.

At the same time that we were trying to give greater effect to this concept, the federal government under Mr. Axworthy indicated there was \$800 million in place for pilots that would be used as models to determine whether or not they had a place as we restructured the \$65 billion, \$67 billion social safety net of our country. So he was seeking pilots from provinces, ideas, germs of ideas, anything—I would even say in some respects a sense of desperation—to come forward. We sensed that this was a good candidate to try and have the federal government support under a pilot basis.

So presently, discussions are taking place with our federal and municipal partners. Obviously, there are issues of co-location, sharing of staff, program resources, administrative efficiencies. These are all under discussion, and we honestly believe that if we combine the staffing and training expertise of the former Human Resources Opportunity Program, the Manitoba Human Resources Opportunity Centres, the Gateway Program, New Careers program, Single Parent Job Access Program, that we will provide better programming and service to our unemployed.

That is the concept at work and what will happen basically, individuals requesting service from the

centre will participate in an in-depth assessment of their current marketable skills and labour market prospects. Upon completion of the assessment, recommendations for training options will be made, and referral will be made to the resource that will enhance the client's marketability in the most efficient manner.

Of course, the Special Employment Initiatives program, whether it is in pre-employment skills or skills training will then come to bear to try and help those enter the labour market.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I will not go on and on, but this is the germ of the idea that we are now giving effect to. Of course, hopefully, they will be followed by employment connections, which is a replacement function, then will follow hopefully in terms of job finding club services. Employers, of course, will be actively recruited to assist the unemployed and partner with employment development centres. Information training services will be provided to employers to enable them to train, evaluate and offer job opportunities to unemployed Manitobans.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, in theory this will become the nerve centre for matching training needs after assessment with what it is employers require and hopefully also will encourage some to begin to do some of their own employment on a self basis.

Ms. Friesen: Is the goal to assist just the disadvantaged or is it all unemployed?

Mr. Manness: Basically, the disadvantaged. The Canada Employment Centres will continue to deal with the general unemployed.

Ms. Friesen: It is clear that those people who are on a program such as we have now, UIC will be dealt with by Canada Employment Centres but what about that next level? How are you defining disadvantaged and those people who have moved from UIC onto welfare?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, UIC exhaustees, social assistance recipients or any of the special targeted groups that the government wants to focus upon in a policy sense.

Ms. Friesen: So these centres will deal with anybody who is not on UIC?

Mr. Manness: Right.

Ms. Friesen: What proportion of this is going to be—well, no, let me start again. How many Manitobans are in that position?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I do not have an exhaustive number but certainly we sense today there are 40,000 on social assistance. There are 40,000 files.

Ms. Friesen: That would not include reserves I assume?

Mr. Manness: No. We are not responsible for Status Indians on reserves.

Ms. Friesen: Would Status Indians be eligible for any of these programs?

Mr. Manness: Well, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I guess they are. If they have left the reserve after six months, and, I mean, this was a major offload by the federal government about three years ago, of course, where they refused to share. Two years ago they refused to share 50-50 funding. This was a big issue and after one year, one that is still very sensitive in my mind from a financial point of view.

Ms. Friesen: So the 40,000 number, in terms of the likelihood of people who might apply to these kinds of offices, is actually a considerable underestimation, because if you have 90 percent unemployment on northern reserves, could we double that number?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, there is a year lag. There still is a significant count of aboriginal within the . . . but furthermore, certainly not everybody under social assistance would require this service.

Ms. Friesen: So 40,000 then is the base number, but it could include all status Indians who are unemployed and not on UIC and who for other reasons are unemployed.

Mr. Manness: And are unemployable. There is obviously a group here that is unemployable, too.

Ms. Friesen: The term "unemployable," as the minister uses it, was not one that he used earlier in

defining access to this service. It was all disadvantaged. That came to mean, as we followed it through, anybody who is not on UIC. So is there a new selectivity being introduced here?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, we are confused. The member asked how many were on social assistance, and it was from that that I indicate, obviously, there are a number there who are unemployable, too.

Ms. Friesen: How is the minister using the term unemployable?

Mr. Manness: I do not want to draw too fine a point here, but the reality is there are certainly some who are severely physically handicapped and have other handicaps that do not allow them, in today's context, to be considered employable.

Ms. Friesen: How are these offices to be regionally distributed? If we are looking at a 40,000-base population for use of these centres, where are they going to go?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, there is no final determination yet. Obviously, of the list, I can tell the member regional offices today exist in Brandon, Winnipeg, Portage la Prairie, Gimli which includes Selkirk and Beausejour, The Pas, Thompson. Obviously, Winnipeg, Brandon and Portage would have to be considered prime centres, but whether or not ultimately these centres will exist in all the locations where regional offices are today is too soon to tell. I would think there would tend to be a match, but that has not been decided.

Of course, the federal partners obviously will have some influence in location. If it becomes a shared program as we think it will, then obviously it is not our say totally.

* (2140)

Ms. Friesen: The minister expects 5,760 persons to use this service. Where does that number come from? What experience is that based on?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, there is no great science behind this. It is based on the referrals that we see today and our best guess. It is based somewhat on historical data. We keep track of Family Services reports. Again, this information

can be found in annual reports of the Family Services department where it was once lodged. I am talking about this training area.

Ms. Friesen: I am sorry, but I missed a number that the minister gave earlier. Was this an \$8-million pilot project on the part of the federal government?

Mr. Manness: No. What I said was that the federal government had \$800 million to direct towards strategic initiatives throughout Canada. That was announced by Mr. Axworthy on coming into office, \$800 million to be divided across the country. Of course, the member asks sometimes what happens at the meetings with respect to labour market development and much to my frustration a lot of the provinces, of course, just want their percentage share of the \$800 million and say, well, take off, we just want the money. It is very disconcerting at times to watch this process in action.

Ms. Friesen: How much federal money has been identified for this pilot project?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, no commitment yet because there is no agreement yet. It is under discussion, but this is not a model that only exists here. We do not have an agreement. We are pushing hard though to try and strike one.

Ms. Friesen: Where is the innovation in this project? What would happen under the new model that is not happening now other than the sense of one stop? Are there new services? As I look at it, it is assessment and referral. Presumably, that is happening now.

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the evaluations of the programs indicate that although we are strong up front with respect to receiving and assessment, towards the back end—to use a term—as far as finding the employment opportunities in matching and placement, we were not terribly successful. So that is the area that we will focus on in an integrated concentrated approach.

This model can be different and will be different to the extent that the community and the employing community buys in, and if they are strong contributors in providing training

opportunities, workplace training opportunities, then obviously it will be a more successful model than it was in the past.

Ms. Friesen: We do have community training opportunities now and they do involve, under the New Careers program, payment of wages, a portion paid by the province, in some cases 100 percent at least in the past. What does this program involve in terms of payment of wages?

Mr. Manness: There is a myriad of programs here. It depends exactly where you are and which ones you are slotted into and what your basic requirements are? Some are wages, some are a day-to-day stipend. I would have to go through these programs one by one. It depends where you are slotted or where you fit.

Ms. Friesen: The new federal program, or the new pilot project then, does not involve any new types of programs. It is simply a co-ordination, an assessment and referral of existing programs.

Mr. Manness: The pilot we are talking about is an integrated approach in the city of Winnipeg to try and see if it works. We do not even have an agreement yet. If we do have an agreement, then obviously it will be piloted to see how it works as a single wicket opportunity.

But there are other areas in which we are working. There is a single-parent initiative where another department of government, particularly the Department of Family Services, we sense we might be close to an agreement as a pilot. Again, that is an extension of an existing program.

I am sorry for being so vague in this area, but I can tell you I am almost as frustrated as the member asking me the question. I am the minister who is supposed to have the answers, but the reality is, if the member does any reading, she is beginning to see that some provinces are beginning to balk. They are beginning to back away. They are beginning to lose a little bit of faith in this process, the federal process. They are beginning to question whether or not there will be anything there at the end.

We had a meeting cancelled as Ministers of Labour, Market Development ministers, here two

or three weeks ago. As a matter of fact, the Liberals gave me a pair to go to it. I got on my hands and knees and got it, then I said I do not need it anymore. I think the federal minister asked the Liberals to give me the pair so I could be there.

Well, then some provinces started jumping off; they did not want to be there. Manitoba was not one of them. No, it was more than the Province of Quebec—as a matter of fact, the NDP Provinces of Saskatchewan and Ontario and B.C. in conjunction with Quebec. Manitoba still wanted to be there because we still sense that the federal government has something at the end of the day, but a lot of people are beginning to question whether there is something. [interjection]

No, because I have got faith in Mr. Axworthy. [laughter] The member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) has told me to have that, and I always listen to the member for Inkster.

I guess I have been at these conferences for so long, and I so badly want to see a national perspective as compared to provincial jurisdictional problems, I want to see something work. Therefore, I am not going to pour cold water on any of the attempts of our initiatives to try and bring the federal government around to understand that they are worthy of being considered a candidate for pilots and, secondly, worthy of some support and ultimately study and evaluation. So that is a long-winded answer, but I indicated to the member that we do not have an awful lot to show for a lot of the discussions that have been going on, but that is what happens when you try to bring together several levels of government.

* (2150)

But still, Employment Development Centres—it is an approach that we are going to move on, whether the federal government is part of it or not. We have to, because we, under the social program and this employability enhancement area, whether we are reaching out to equity training or whatever definition you want to give to it, right now—and staff will not appreciate me saying this—I have to say that we have to do a better co-ordinated job, if we are going to maintain them. They cannot continue along in the fashion that they were, and

there have been changes made, and they have had some impact. Some would say some negative impact, and there has been fallout all over.

The reality is, we think it is time now to begin to rebuild, take the best of what is left but centre them under one co-ordinated unit and therefore try and maintain the good that still remains. That is what we will do. We sense that the federal government should partner with us, though, because we have a lot of experience in these programs—the member knows that well—there is a long-standing existence of these programs within Manitoba, but again we are still going to have to try to reach out to a maximum number of people, but the evaluations and the success stories are going to have to be there and possibly in larger measure than they have been in the past.

Ms. Friesen: The issue of what is left is certainly an important one. I noticed that there is a difference in the layout and reporting of the amounts for each of these programs, and that is partly why I am having some trouble following these lines. In last year's Estimates, there was on page 98 a financial summary by program. We do not have that in the current year's Estimates, and we do have the addition in the descriptions of programs which do not exist and for which no agreement exists. So could the minister perhaps give us something comparable to last year's financial summary by program?

Maybe first of all we should identify in the descriptions of these programs which ones are contingent upon federal participation.

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, everything that we have built into these Estimates I will break down this way: the old HROP Program, \$1.3 million. Is that noted somewhere, or am I—

Ms. Friesen: It is not in the current one. It was obviously in last year's.

Mr. Manness: And then HROC, the old program, \$3.1 million, coming to a total of \$4.46 million, and now that would then become Employment Development Centres, a combination of those two totals. New Careers, \$1.9 million; Single Parent Job Access—

Ms. Friesen: New Careers, \$1.9 million, down from 3.45?

Mr. Manness: 3.045 is correct.

Ms. Friesen: So it is now down to 1.9—

Mr. Manness: 1.928.

Ms. Friesen: Under the other two that the minister mentioned before, Human Resources Opportunity Program which last year was 1.130—

Mr. Manness: This year that is increased to \$1.321 million. Under the HROCs program, last year it was 3.451; that decreases to \$3.139 million.

So the total of HROP and HROC, whereas last year the total was \$4.582 million, this year the total, as I indicated before, is \$4.461 million.

Ms. Friesen: Thank you, that is helpful. Could we then go down the list of the Single Parent Job Access Program, the Gateway Program, Community-Based Employability Projects, and look at what the amount in each of those is this current year?

Mr. Manness: Yes.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Could I ask the honourable members, if they are going to go through the numbers that way, if you will come through the Chair, because it does get confusing for Hansard when you start barking numbers back and forth.

Mr. Manness: My apology, Mr. Deputy Chairperson. I will give a whole listing here so we do not have to go back and forth. Under Single Parent Job Access, last year \$1,694,000; this year that number is \$1,572,000. Under the Gateway Program, last year the figure was \$1,596,000; this year the number is \$1,431,000. Community-Based Employability Projects, last year \$729,500; this year \$635,800.

There is a new line this year called Welfare to Work of \$1 million.

Ms. Friesen: Thank you, that is helpful. The other question I asked was which of these programs indicated in the introduction to Employment Development Programs are contingent upon federal participation. The minister indicated that, as I understood it, what he was saying was the

single wicket approach one would go ahead in some form. Are there others which would also go ahead in some other form?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the Employment Development Centres that are our own will not be federally cost-shared, but those that are—the one in Winnipeg, indeed, if it is accepted as a pilot by the federal government, there would be some federal money coming in support of it.

Ms. Friesen: I am beginning to get a better picture. There will be a variety of single wicket offices. The one in Winnipeg will be jointly funded, and if there is no federal funding then that will revert to the province and the project will go ahead in some form. Okay, thanks.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: The honourable minister is just going to be replaced for two minutes. Is it the will of the committee that we allow the honourable minister to sit in for the honourable Minister of Finance.

Ms. Friesen: It would be a pleasure—no, the Minister of Education.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: For the Minister of Education. He has always wanted this job.

Ms. Friesen: It is a revolving door, I am sure it is open. Three in six years. [interjection] It was humour. Relax, relax. It could come your way.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I do not know if the minister was following the line of questioning, and it was, which of these programs identified under Employment Development Programs are contingent upon participation by the federal government?

Hon. Jim Ernst (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): These programs, I am advised, can all proceed. They have some federal funding attached to them already. The Welfare to Work new initiatives are kind of separate from these particular programs. These all have some federal money, a little here, a little there, that will allow them to proceed as is, so for these programs, you know, they are all basically a go.

However, the new initiatives that will come through Welfare to Work and other changes that

are proposed by the federal government, or are at least being looked at by the federal government, will be separate and apart.

Ms. Friesen: So the Welfare to Work program then is the major innovation here?

Mr. Ernst: By and large, the answer to your question is yes, that is the new initiative, the new program, although the consolidated assessment centres, I guess, still will form part of that process as it unfolds.

Ms. Friesen: Now, this is done in conjunction with the Department of Family Services. Could the minister outline for us how those responsibilities are being assigned? Is there a committee that organizes this? What is the relative responsibilities of each minister?

Mr. Ernst: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Family Services is working on a single parent access kind of pilot project at the moment. The rest of it, by and large, falls in the purview of Education, although there is a lot of interaction between the two departments: client referrals, information transferring back and forth and so on.

* (2200)

Ms. Friesen: So this is presumably a longer program. The first phase is the single mothers program which is being organized by the Department of Family Services.

Mr. Ernst: As a pilot project.

Ms. Friesen: So the \$1 million in this budget for that program, what is that going to be spent on?

Mr. Ernst: There are a number of issues presently being worked on with the federal government covering a number of areas, one being, for instance, youth on social assistance, as an example, but some clearer delineation of exactly how these things will unfold will have to take a little more time to be fleshed out and to have appropriate programs detailed sufficiently enough to be analyzed by information available to yourself.

But there is work being done between the department and the federal government to try and flesh out some of these programs.

Ms. Friesen: Where does the \$1 million come on this budget line, that is, the contribution of the provincial government, and what other contributions from other levels of government does the minister anticipate in this program?—because it does indicate that there will be federal and, I assume, municipal contributions in here.

Mr. Ernst: I guess the money was gathered up here and there from a variety of other programs to put into the million dollars. I do not think there is a magical number but there was a significant thrust, I think, aimed at trying to do something in this area and to put some significant resources towards it.

The federal government has anticipated that we will be matching on an equal basis, and what benefit will come from municipal governments is yet unknown, but they may well want to participate or be asked to participate in certain levels, as well.

The current schedule is about—social assistance cost sharing is something like 20-30-50, so at some point there may be some municipal cost-shared portion, dependent again on the program and how it impacts on municipalities.

Ms. Friesen: Which line is this million dollars applied to? Is that Personnel Services? Where does it come?

Mr. Ernst: Line (g)(4) Welfare to Work, \$1 million, is the line, in the Estimates book, page 42.

Ms. Friesen: In the Supplementary Estimates that I have, it is not broken out by each program. The minister has just done that for existing programs, and he indicated that there was a new line, Welfare to Work \$1 million, and in the Supplementary Estimates under Sub-Appropriation 16.4(g), I have Salaries and Employee Benefits and then I have Other Expenditures, so I am asking if it is coming under Grants/Transfer Payments, or is it coming under Personnel Services? Where is this \$1 million?

Mr. Ernst: At the bottom of the page, Social Assistance \$5,191,300, it is included in that line, although in the Estimates book itself, it is shown as a separate line and identified earlier by the Minister of Education (Mr. Manness) as being a separate line.

Ms. Friesen: The identification of this activity talks about working with the private sector community groups and other governments.

Could the minister give us an indication of the relationships that are anticipated with the private sector and the community groups? Are these going to be in a sense comparable, say, to the literacy program in which the community initiates the program and then delivers it?

Mr. Ernst: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, there are preliminary discussions going on at the present time, and no models have been established. There is not even a formal agreement yet. Discussions are ongoing, but it is still pretty preliminary. So nothing is finalized, and no particular model has been set based on discussions to date.

Ms. Friesen: Is the minister considering that kind of subcontracting of this program to community groups or to others?

(Mr. Jack Reimer, Acting Deputy Chairperson, in the Chair)

Mr. Manness: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, this item is still under discussion with the federal government. We have not been pushing for subcontracting, but the federal government seems to want to introduce a component of third-party contracting under the single parent program if we can enter into an agreement.

Ms. Friesen: Could the minister explain why this government is not in favour of that model?

Mr. Manness: It is hard to know really how to answer the question. I mean, what we have here is, I guess, a request by the federal government that third-party, nonprofit community groups do assessments, and there is so much detail around that. It is such a different model that—we have to see what is being proposed in detail. Right now, it is just, I gather, a concept that is being pushed by the federal government. So we have two different views and there is no agreement at this point.

* (2210)

Ms. Friesen: What is the time frame for this particular agreement?

Mr. Manness: I will be very disappointed if we do not have an agreement within the next two months.

Ms. Friesen: Can the minister tell us how much training is anticipated as part of this program? Are we looking at—how should I phrase it?—assessment, job search, what I would say job search techniques as opposed to training and the adding of skills?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, again it depends on the client, and we would expect the employer also to have some influence on setting the training program into place which best suits not only the needs of the student but also ultimately the employer.

Ms. Friesen: Will there be a wage assistance component to this?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, it has not been determined, but what is becoming more evident—and I say this from the couple of meetings I have had with Mr. Axworthy and indeed observation maybe a little bit from a distance—the more we come to the final hour, the more there is a realization that we have not really come across anything too startlingly new and that there will be more wage—basically, we are talking about wage assistance.

So there may be new names, and this is the federal government I am talking about, there may be a whole host of highlights, but when you get down to it, we are beginning to realize that a greater emphasis in every discussion seems to be moving towards wage assistance by the federal government. Now, whether that ties into the unemployment insurance program or whether it ties into their share of commitment under—well, let us leave it at that.

Ms. Friesen: Could the minister describe the community consultation process which is going to take place under this program, and will it take place in the next two months?

Mr. Manness: It was just a week ago or two weeks ago tomorrow I can remember walking through the Convention Centre one Friday evening and it seems to me there was an employer group seminar at which Lloyd Axworthy, our Premier and Ethel Blondin spoke, and part of that whole process was reaching and seeking views leading to the Single Parents Job Access Program, or maybe

that is not the right terminology—single parent pilot, to use the euphemism. We are sort of in that process right now of trying to, through testing, deal with clients, employers, service providers and the aboriginal community, trying to give greater definition to that program, so that is happening with respect to that program area.

What I was talking about previously was under the Winnipeg Development Agreement. I gather then, the general format is, and even though, particularly this program, there is a track record here in the sense that the federal government says if they are contemplating being part of it, they still want to go out to the community. I would think the drive probably comes from there more so than maybe even ourselves, because, again, this is a program that has been relatively successful in the Manitoba context.

Ms. Friesen: Before the agreement has been concluded then, there is a form of consultation going on initiated by the federal government, or is it a joint program?

Mr. Manness: It is joint and the municipal government.

Ms. Friesen: The municipal government of Winnipeg?

Mr. Manness: Yes.

Ms. Friesen: These are consultations by invitation with, presumably—well, I have not seen them advertised—by people who might be expected to employ single parents?

Mr. Manness: Yes, they have been by invitation.

Ms. Friesen: So these are not open consultations? These are particular client-group consultations?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, the Winnipeg Development Agreement, to which we referred before, will be open. These were trying to reach out again to the four broad areas that I have talked about. An honest effort was made here by levels of government, through invitation, to try to hit all the people who legitimately should have some input.

The Winnipeg Development Agreement, because it is such a higher profile, because indeed at this point I would even say that the areas of

programming are even less definite at this point in time. Of course, we will call into—by way of open address to the public, greater opportunity to give meaningful input.

Ms. Friesen: I am talking specifically now about the single parent Welfare to Work program, and I am again asking questions on the consultation process. As I understand it, it is a joint consultation process which has involved so far employers. Has it involved aboriginal people? Has it involved people who will be in this program, that is single parents? Has there been any consultation with community groups and has there been any opportunity for public input? If there has not, does the minister anticipate any one of those types of consultations?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, that program will not be housed in this department, but the answer to the question is yes, clients were invited to be in attendance and have been trying to determine where this program should go, employers are also invited; service providers, in other words, sports groups in the community and aboriginal representatives.

We have covered jointly—not we, as the province, but we jointly as senior levels of government have tried to cover in an honest fashion all those who would be interested.

Ms. Friesen: How many meetings were held and over what period of time?

Mr. Manness: I cannot answer that question. It is not our program. It is housed in Family Services.

Ms. Friesen: We will ask those questions in Family Services. The minister seems convinced that these have occurred but does not know where, when, how many, and what the results have been. So we will pursue that in Family Services.

Just for the record, I notice the minister has been speaking of "single parent." It does say in the Estimates book, "mothers," and there is a small difference. Is it generally applicable to single parents, or will it be for female parents?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, the early focus will be on single mothers, first-time mothers, teenage mothers, and it still is not in our

line. I mean, the writer here, of course, is trying to indicate the general concept of pilots, and then talks specifically about a pilot which we have been talking about, which, though, is not housed in this department.

Ms. Friesen: So the minister assumes that it is single mothers.

Mr. Manness: The focus will be on single mothers. I mean, exclusively single mothers? I cannot answer that question.

Ms. Friesen: Okay. I want to ask the minister about the decrease in New Careers, which he indicated has gone from, is it \$3 million to \$1 million this year?

Mr. Manness: That is kind of rounding, taking some licence with respect to rounding—\$2.9 to \$1.9.

Ms. Friesen: Under '93-94, I have \$3.045 for New Careers.

Mr. Manness: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, the difference is explained in printed vote versus Adjusted Vote, because some was transferred out obviously to some other line. That is what Adjusted Vote means, that ultimately it is a reconciliation and a trying to lay before the reader comparable programming.

Ms. Friesen: I only have the figures in front of me, so the adjusted figure then that was spent last year was 2.—

(Mr. Deputy Chairperson in the Chair)

Mr. Manness: You are right. The estimate was \$3.046 million. But the adjusted number, to try and make comparable this year's print with last year's was \$2.948 million, and then that was reduced approximately \$1 million to \$1,928,500.

* (2220)

Ms. Friesen: Could the minister then give us an idea of what the impact of that reduction will be?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, we first of all would indicate that we do not see a significant negative impact on this program, certainly not in this year, for the reason that there is certainly a shifting focus from 24-month

programming to 12-month programming. So there will not be immediate impact.

Secondly, we hope and fully expect that there will be increased involvement by outside sources: the federal government, through approaches made through the federal Pathways program; and, indeed, there is again a growing interest in the private sector to try and contribute to this program. So it is on that basis that we feel comfortable in making the claim that the net impact upon clients—I guess what I am saying is that the number of clients will be the same, and, as far as the negative impact, we are hoping that will be offset by additional revenues from outside the province or at least outside the provincial budget.

Ms. Friesen: What commitments does the minister have in hand to replace that \$1 million?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I do not have commitments. What I have, though, is the long-standing history of sharing under this program and a greater awareness of it and how it has delivered some fair results in some areas. We are hopeful that particularly outside employers will see the wisdom of making some contribution to the program.

Ms. Friesen: Could the minister explain the impact of reducing this program from a 24-month to a 12-month program? These particularly are people in this program who have started from a very minimal level, I think probably the lowest level of all the programs. I am speaking in terms of educational levels and employment history. Perhaps the most elementary level of all government programs of this type. So the 24 months have often been seen as one of the great advantages of this program in that it took that long in fact to be able to impart the variety of skills that were needed, from life skills to budgeting, that it brought along the whole family. The concern of people who have been very proud of this program in the past is that the transition from 24 months to 12 months essentially alters the whole potential of success in that program.

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, of all of our programs, I guess what has been found out is that there is a larger client group here that are

underemployed as compared to unemployed, and the changes that we are envisaging, of course, taking that fact into account, will see some more ready acceptance by outside groups and outside funding to be part of this program.

I honestly do not think that, with changing the focus from 24 months to 12 months, we are going to significantly alter some of the good results in this program.

Ms. Friesen: Does the minister mean, then, that in fact what he is doing is changing the admission basis for this to people who will succeed in 12 months as opposed to those who would need 24 months?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, some of the training will be obviously directed towards shorter time. Still the 24-month training I am talking about—and I should correct this for the record—the 24-month training that will still exist, we will contribute to 12 months of that training, and somebody else will have to contribute to the other 12 months, and we fully expect that somebody else will.

Ms. Friesen: Pathways programs apply to aboriginal people. What proportion of people will that be excluding? Again, is the nature of the program changing so that only aboriginal people will be eligible for this?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, we believe, and, of course, we stand to be corrected that 74 percent—60 percent, pardon me, I stand corrected—of the New Careers program is directed towards aboriginals. We sense that there will be greater opportunity in Pathways, that the federal government will want to make contribution indirectly through the Pathways programming.

Ms. Friesen: Does that mean that 30 percent of the people are only going to get 12-month programs?

Mr. Manness: Twelve months that we support.

Ms. Friesen: In fact, for a third of the population, the program has been reduced from 24 months to 12 months.

Mr. Manness: Well, no one can make that categorical statement. It depends on the project. It

depends on what course of study and depends ultimately on who else will come to support.

Ms. Friesen: The negative impact of this, then, is the fact that only 12 months is now available under the provincial program.

Mr. Manness: Under our commitment to funding, yes.

Ms. Friesen: When the minister uses the term "underemployed" as opposed to "unemployed," could he perhaps give me an example of what he is thinking of there?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, when we studied the program a little bit, certainly a significant number of people under this program were employed or employed at the start of the period of study.

* (2230)

Ms. Friesen: I wonder if the minister is only going from last year's statistics when in fact he did change the program, or the previous minister changed the program, so that that was the case, so that employers were looking at upgrading people who were already in their employ. My understanding of the New Careers Program is that when it began, and over the years that it has been in existence, in fact it took people who were not employed, had not been employed. That, to me, does not fit with the term underemployed.

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I have tabled in front of me, under the title New Careers Program, '92-93 Pretraining Employment Income Status, 13 percent had no income, 25 percent were on UIC, 22 percent were on social assistance, 37 percent—72 in total—were employed.

Ms. Friesen: Those are last year's numbers, as I pointed out to the minister when the nature of the program was changed. So is there a longer-term perspective which would give us an idea of what proportion of people on this program were employed?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I have a table before me in '91-92. I can go further back. Under this program in 1991-92, 39 percent were employed.

Ms. Friesen: Do those numbers indicate whether this is full-time or part-time employment? Is this seasonal employment and at what level?

Mr. Manness: Full-time employment.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, when does the minister anticipate that the Pathways agreement will be confirmed?

Mr. Manness: It is on a project-by-project basis. It is up to the host group to make their best case with the federal government, I gather, under that programming. So Mr. Deputy Chairperson, there is no overall umbrella agreement, if that is what the member is alluding to.

Ms. Friesen: Well, it is what I was alluding to because I understood that the minister believed that the viability of this program, the 24-month training, would be possible under those kinds of agreements, but he has none of those kinds of agreements.

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I did not say there was an agreement. I said we would expect clients to use other sources. This was one other source. The federal government-supported source, project by project. The federal government will ultimately determine whether or not they want to be part of this program by way of a decision with respect to the request.

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

Item 4.(g)(2) Other Expenditures \$1,216,700. Same thing as last time.

Ms. Friesen: Yes, I did it again. I made a mistake, and there does again seem to have been an increase, perhaps even larger than the last one in the managerial salary here. I wondered if there is an abstract explanation for this without reference to any individual. For the record, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the managerial salary here, which is one person, has gone from 55.8 to 62.3 this year.

Mr. Manness: Obviously the answer is due totally with respect to the change in individuals and under the Civil Service Commission pay scale the increased requirement to pay the individual in question who is different this year than a year ago.

Ms. Friesen: But usually those kinds of increases would have some relationship to increased responsibilities and/or increased qualifications. Could the minister make, in general, that kind of analysis?

Mr. Manness: We have done a reorganization through this department. Through that the Civil Service Commission determined that there was a reclassification that would be required. That reflects the increase.

Ms. Friesen: Could the minister tell me what the reclassification has been? From what to what, and how are the responsibilities of this section larger than before, for example, the number of people reporting?

Mr. Manness: From a Professional Officer 9 to a Senior Officer 1.

Ms. Friesen: Is that on the basis of the size of the budget, or the number of people reporting, or what is the basis for that transition and classification?

Mr. Manness: Size of organization may be one dimension, but it is the responsibilities that are entailed in assuming this responsibility.

Ms. Friesen: Since I am not familiar with the provincial Civil Service bench-line classifications of that, could the minister tell us what the difference is?

Mr. Manness: No.

Ms. Friesen: Perhaps his deputy could.

Mr. Manness: I guess the criteria should be put probably to the minister in charge of the Civil Service Commission (Mr. Praznik) because he would have staff who could explain totally the difference. I can tell the minister that certainly a senior officer position is one that is filled by way of Order-in-Council. It is the first rank that is filled by way of Executive Council and the cabinet.

Ms. Friesen: Thank you. Finished.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Item (2) Other Expenditures \$1,216,700.

Mr. Lamoureux: Just one very quick question. With all the changes that are occurring, a simple question is that if someone was wanting to get information on employment programs, could you

walk into this one-wicket office, if you like, and pick up a brochure on all the different programs whether it was New Careers, and they went through the different programs that were there and—momentarily, I have it right here—Single Parent Job Access, Gateway, Community-Based Employability program, Welfare to Work, New Careers. Is there a place that some individual who does not necessarily understand the bureaucracy can walk into and say, what is available? Are there some brochures? Is there such an office if that should occur that is in place today?

Mr. Manness: As a one-stop place, no. Probably within the department we have all those pamphlets at certain locations in the department and probably within the regional offices, but this will be the concept under the Employment Development Centre. That will be one stop where it is all laid out, and there will be staff there that are intimate with all the programs. That is where we are trying to go.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Item 4.(g) Employment Development Programs (2) Other Expenditures \$1,216,700—pass; (3) Training Support \$6,710,200—pass; (4) Welfare to Work \$1,000,000—pass.

4.(h) Workforce 2000 and Youth Programs (1) Workforce 2000 (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$1,192,100.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I am interested in discussing the Workforce 2000 program. Perhaps we could start with the Province-Wide Special Courses that have been offered and that the minister plans to offer this year. Could we have an account of that?

Mr. Manness: These are the courses that under Province-Wide Special Courses were offered last year. This year's course offerings are still being developed.

Firstly, statistical process control; secondly, determining training needs—

* (2240)

Ms. Friesen: Do you have on the same list the number of people who attended, and the location?

Mr. Manness: Yes. I will give all the information.

Statistical Process Control: It was a two-day workshop to meet the needs of the electronics and software industries. There were partners WQM and EIAM. The industry participation: Vansco Electronics, Linear Systems Ltd., Unisys Canada, Technical Products International, Northern Telecom. Total, 19 participants.

Secondly, Determining Training Needs: This was a one-day workshop; the partner was CMA, I imagine the Canadian Manufacturers' Association. Industry participation: the health care products association, Simplot Canada, E.H. Price, MRM, Versatech Industries, Moore Business Forms, Temro Division Budd Canada, Ancast Industries, Winpak, Otto Bock. Total, 14 participants.

Technical Writing Workshop: Again, this was partnered with the Canadian Manufacturers' Association, and there was a total of five participants.

Then there was the ISO 9000 Management Course. This was a two-day workshop, and there was a total of nine participants in attendance.

Then there was a Dr. W. Edwards Deming seminar.

An Honourable Member: Oh, yes.

Mr. Manness: The member really seems to be excited about this one. This was a four-day seminar designed to help participants assimilate the principles of Total Quality Management, and there was a total of nine participants.

Then there was the Internal Auditor for Quality Assessment Seminar, and there was a total of 12 participants at this seminar.

Environment Manager Workshop: This was a one-day workshop dealing with ISO environment standards, an information, manufacturing, environmental-process program, and there was a total of 36 participants.

Then there was a course on Six Thinking Hats certification program. Is this not interesting? That is a specialized type of training, and there was one participant at this workshop.

Creativity and Lateral Thinking Conference: There were 90 participants at this one-day seminar;

it too was related to creativity to the Six Thinking Hats concepts.

There was another Six Thinking Hats workshop, and there were 20 participants at this particular one, again, sponsored by the Canadian Manufacturers' Association.

There was a Train the Trainer course in Brandon, and seven participants were there.

There was another Train the Trainer in the area of printing. I do not know where this was held. This was a three-day workshop, and there were 14 participants.

There was then Train the Trainer for Export, and this is still in the development stage. This is for '94-95. This is into the next year.

Then there was Gaining the Competitive Edge in Mexico, and there were seven participants.

So the training, the total number of courses offered was 14, serving 243 participants.

Ms. Friesen: What was the total cost of those programs, the 14 offered for 243 people?

Mr. Manness: Total cost was \$128,000 and Workforce 2000 contributed \$81,000 of that total.

Ms. Friesen: I am just puzzled a little by the Deming seminar. This must be a different one than the one I think that the Continuing Education was involved with at the University of Manitoba, but which also had Workforce 2000 participation. Is that the one? And there were only nine participants? Did they not hire a whole hall in the Convention Centre for this?

Mr. Manness: They probably did, but we only supported nine under Workforce 2000.

Ms. Friesen: So the number of participants then that the minister has read out are the supported participants.

Mr. Manness: Right.

Ms. Friesen: Does the minister have the total attendance at these?

Mr. Manness: It was not our event. We did not host it, and consequently, it was not our responsibility to count the total number in attendance.

Ms. Friesen: Then how do those principles apply to each of the others? How many of the other 13 courses were your events?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, with the exception of the Deming conference, and the Six Hats conferences, the rest were ours.

Ms. Friesen: I know that the Deming one had a number of sponsors. Who were the sponsors for the Thinking Hats conferences?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the Winnipeg Quality Network and the Canadian Manufacturers' Association.

Ms. Friesen: Does the minister anticipate repeating any of those courses next year, this fiscal year?

Mr. Manness: If there is demand and the evaluation has come back that they have been successful, then we will consider replicating some portion. I do not think final plans have all been put in place at this point.

Ms. Friesen: What amount of money is allocated to this portion of Workforce 2000 for this fiscal year?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, whereas last year the figure was \$81,000, this year, we are projecting that possibly \$100,000 will be required to do province-wide special courses.

Ms. Friesen: So far, the minister has indicated that Training the Trainer for Export is one of the ones that is in the process of being developed. Could the minister give me an indication of what else the \$100,000 will be spent on?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, there are no final plans in place yet. In the sense that we develop the curriculum and they have been successful one year, and we sense they will be successful the next year—but that will be determined ultimately by the number of people who come forward and ask to be part of that program. Then we continue to develop new thrusts from year to year, so it is a combination of renewing the old and building the new, and through that, we have set aside \$100,000.

* (2250)

Ms. Friesen: How is that community interest expressed? Who initiates this? Is it, for example, the trainer who indicates—well, perhaps I will let the minister explain.

Here we have \$100,000 that you are asking the Legislature to approve, and you have no courses established, but you say you are waiting for somebody to come and suggest to you what you might do here. How is that process put in place?

Mr. Manness: Well, I am sure the member knows the process. We have consultants within this sphere who continue to dialogue and interact with the private sector and employer groups, and ultimately, they bring back what they hear as to what the requirements are in support of specific training, and they make recommendations accordingly.

Of course, here is an area of funding. If it is not needed, then it will lapse. It will not be spent. It is the way many of the government programs go. I mean, the member says there is no curriculum developed. Well, that is not true. There has been curriculum development in support of the courses offered the year previously. It is developed. It is not throw-away. It is there in place, and will it be needed? In some cases it will be. Today, can I tell the member exactly how many participants are lining up? No, I cannot, but through the year, it will be called upon, and if it is not, it will not be wasted. It will not be spent. It will lapse.

Ms. Friesen: What I am trying to get a sense of is what the demand is there. Again, I go back to that labour force strategy and absence of. We do not know what demands are there in terms of skilled training. We do not have those community committees in place that the Mauro report suggested, and so this is the only ad hoc kind of basis we have of trying to determine what skills are needed or what skills the community and the private sector believes it does need. So I am trying to get a very clear picture of how this is determined.

Now, the minister says that his past curriculum—and, actually, I was not talking about curriculum, I was simply talking about course, but he does say that they were not wasted or thrown

away. Well, I would think that also one would have to argue that much of it had been developed elsewhere, that this is not curriculum developed in Manitoba.

The Six Thinking Hats program, Creative and Lateral Thinking, and the Deming programs are not specifically Manitoba. It is possible that some of the others are, and if they can be used again, will that make sense?

Does the minister have any sense of what kind of demand is out there? He has increased the amount of money this time. There must be a reason for that. I am looking for some more clarity on this.

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, firstly, except for the Deming course and the Six Hats courses, it was locally developed curriculum, and it will have a value. Let me say, if the member says, well, what studies have you got to give any support to the view that there is going to be demand to use this \$100,000, I say to her, it is based on experience. Last year \$81,000 was used, and there is no doubt in our mind that there is going to be a call on a significant portion, if not all of this money, as the consultants are out dialoguing with the industry.

Who is the industry? Well, that is a number of people. That is not just employers; it is also gleaning information from community college assessments, from the EITC—you know, the Economic Innovation Technology Council of the government. It is touching the chamber of commerce; it is meeting with individual businesses. It is trying to be out there and readily identify what it is that is required and move quickly to provide what we can do.

Ms. Friesen: How many consultants are these, and when the minister says consultants, does he mean the trainers, or does he mean his departmental staff?

Mr. Manness: I am talking about my departmental staff.

Ms. Friesen: How many?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, 14 positions; two are vacant presently.

Ms. Friesen: Each of these 14 people is crisscrossing the province, talking to chambers of commerce, talking to communities, and they are going to generate the province-wide courses. Is that correct?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, there is a division of responsibilities. One takes the province as a whole; a group takes sectoral groups. There is another group that deals with special arrangements, dealing one on one with certain companies.

Ms. Friesen: How much private sector money does the government anticipate will be levered by this particular program?

Mr. Manness: Millions.

Ms. Friesen: It was not millions last year. I am talking now specifically on the province-wide special courses. The department put in \$81,000; the private sector put in \$47,000. Is that an acceptable relationship for the minister? Is that what he anticipates in this coming year?

Mr. Manness: The member is talking about the total participation in the special course area of \$128,000, so two dollars levered one. That is a heck of a lot better than before, and across the whole Workforce 2000 program, of course, a dollar levers manifold. I say this is a vast improvement from what we inherited.

Ms. Friesen: Does the minister anticipate an improved performance on that, or does he expect that in this type of course, a two-to-one ratio is appropriate? Does he have any sense of the experience of other types of programs like this?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, because this is very specialized within this very small sliver of the whole Workforce 2000, I do not anticipate two government dollars leaving more than one. But I point out, the program as a whole, Workforce 2000 as a whole, \$1 of Workforce 2000 has levered \$2.77 privately. I mean, let us judge the program on the leveraging on the program as a whole, not slice by slice.

Ms. Friesen: I am trying to get a sense of the different sections of this program. The minister will understand that it has been very difficult to get

any information on this program, and so this is the first opportunity we have had to look at province-wide special courses—[interjection] I would appreciate it if members who are not at the table either joined in the process in the appropriate way or went home. [interjection]

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Order, please. Could I ask the honourable members who want to carry on this discussion to possibly do it at the back of the room or out in the hall?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, would she repeat the question, please? The member for Wolseley is hollering so much at my colleagues for some reason, I did not hear the question.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: The honourable member for Wolseley, to repeat her question, please.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I was not hollering. My tones were quite low, and the minister is well aware of that. In fact, there was not a question. I think we are all suffering from the time and it is one minute to 11.

I will pursue the industry-wide partnerships. Could the minister tell us how that program operates, how it has operated in the last year, and how much is allocated to that program last year and this coming year?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, as the note says, 26 significant levels of activity are contemplated for '94-95. I do not know how many occurred in '93-94. Part of our problem is this program has been so successful, it generates so much obviously high-quality information, we are just bogged down in the success, in our own success. All the numbers of course just keep adding to the pile, and it takes us a while to find them sometimes.

In '93-94, there were 27 sectorial initiatives. We are now forecasting that to drop to 26. The number of employees trained in '93-94 was 2,563. We expect that will increase slightly to 2,614.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Order, please. The hour being eleven o'clock, what is the will of the committee? 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 is dealing with the Estimates for the Department of Health. We are on item 5.(a)(1) page 85 of the Estimates manual.

Would the minister's staff please enter the Chamber.

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Madam Chairperson, just prior to commencing, the member for Crescentwood (Ms. Gray) and I just wanted to seek some direction from the minister.

We are basically targeting tonight to try to finish the Estimates with the exception of the capital that we will come back and deal with at some later date. I understand we will have to do that under Minister's Salary at some later date when it becomes available, but I just want to let the minister know that that is our, kind of, target.

Does the Chair see any problem in moving towards that? We can certainly recess at the end of tonight and then come back to deal with the Minister's Salary, capital plan. Is that agreeable?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): In my discussions with my colleagues in the Chamber here and with the House leader, certainly from my own party, that was satisfactory. The question of the capital program, it is just not going to be available this week, perhaps not even next week, so that makes for a problem. Of course, I would like to have the assurance of my salary, Madam Chairperson, but we face these sorts of uncertainties in this business all the time so I can live with that too.

So if that is okay with my honourable colleagues, I would agree to that approach. It will be up to them obviously of whether we get through the rest of it tonight. I will try not to abuse the time that we have available to us.

Madam Chairperson: Agreed? [agreed]

Mr. Chomiak: Madam Chairperson, just to complete my discourse when we adjourned at five o'clock—[interjection] Well, the minister said, which was longer than his. I do not think so. I went

for ten minutes, and I do admit that was somewhat unusual. I wonder if the minister wanted to comment on some of the more positive aspects I suggested during the course of my discussion.

Mr. McCrae: Madam Chairperson, there is a power higher than that of me and the honourable member at work tonight as we compete with the rains falling on the dome tonight. I will do my best to deal with the positive aspects of what the honourable member had to say.

The most positive one I could remember was his reference to Ontario and to Tim Sale. Everything else was less positive than that. I say that I do not like singling out individuals, but Tim Sale is now I understand a nominated candidate, so he is clearly within the political realm here in Manitoba, and anybody who should suggest that I not make a personal comment ought not also to make personal comments about senior officials in the Department of Health either.

I mean, we are in this business here together, in reference to the Deputy Minister of Health and his salary. When you are being critical of me about referring to Tim Sale, then, you know, those who live in glass houses I guess should not be throwing too many stones.

The other point I make, the honourable member has talked about the by-elections of last fall and that there has been a change of ministers in Manitoba. Well, I should point out that, yes, there were by-elections last fall, I understand that, and I am able to recognize messages that are sent. That is what elections and by-elections are all about, and I am prepared to be very responsive to the people of Manitoba when they express themselves in that way.

On the other hand, at the time that the Minister of Health and the Minister of Justice, as I was then, and a whole lot of other ministers in Manitoba, at the time they were shuffled into new responsibilities, they were the longest-serving ministers in their portfolios in all of Canada. The previous Minister of Health was the senior Minister of Health in Canada. As Minister of Justice, I was the senior Minister of Justice in

Canada, and on down the line. There were 15 ministers whose positions changed.

Contrast that with the situation in Ontario where they were elected, I think, one week before we were, back in September of 1990. They are now on their third minister and their third deputy minister.

* (1910)

Mr. Chomiak: We are in 5.(a) of the appropriations. I wonder if it is appropriate for the minister to provide for us the listing of funding that is being provided to community health centres in the province of Manitoba?

Mr. McCrae: The way the budget is set and what the member has before him is quite a lot like what I have before me in terms of budgeting for hospitals and community health services. So it is not possible for me at this time to break it down like that.

I suppose at some point we can provide information about what a particular health centre got in total or what a hospital got in total, but not at this early stage of the year.

Mr. Chomiak: Can the minister outline therefore the totals for the various hospitals for last year?

Mr. McCrae: What the honourable member is asking may not be unprecedented that it is asked for, but it would be unprecedented if we were to compile and make that information available. I know in general terms, for example, what my local hospital's budget is. Its budget is bigger than the whole City of Brandon. I know that.

I know also that as I look at the total for Hospitals and Community Health Services, and I look at the very bottom of page 83, I see a marginally small decrease in total funding for hospitals and community health centres. The numbers that are on that page are the numbers I have in front of me.

I was looking at page 83 which was the total subappropriation for 21(5)(b) is what that was for. Now I am looking at page 99 where the Hospital line has dropped from \$929,215,400 to \$924,571,700. The total there is a decrease of almost \$5 million for all the hospitals throughout Manitoba, all but Deer Lodge. This line, in terms

of the seven hospitals and the Riverview Hospital and all the other hospitals throughout Manitoba by other standards in Canada, is a relatively modest decrease in funding for hospital operations as we compare this budget with budgets elsewhere.

Of course, in terms of our total budget, we are down I think .2 of 1 percent from what we were in terms of spending last year. If you go back to the last lines we were talking about relating to the Medical Services line in the budget, there is a decrease there of about \$12 million alone. So there is obviously much more money going into the community.

This was the point I was making shortly after the budget when I said, this makes my job easier to do as the Minister of Health, because I can show people now I think better than we have ever been able to show in the past that, yes, while modest sums are being taken from the hospital budgets, we are able to add quite significantly to community health services.

To go hospital by hospital in Manitoba and to say that hospital A is receiving this much less or hospital B is receiving marginally more depending on what it happens to be, I do not think there is much utility in that kind of an exercise.

The honourable member has followed no doubt the discussions with respect to the work restructuring projects at the two major hospitals. He knows what is happening at Seven Oaks. He seems to be fairly plugged in to what is happening at Seven Oaks with respect to improvements to patient care and improvements in services generally, whether you happen to be a patient or the family member of a patient in terms of a total quality approach to the operation of that particular hospital.

The honourable member is aware of the issues where he referred recently to a newspaper article that referred to nurses as hostesses and took some offence at the Seven Oaks Hospital staff and administration working co-operatively to try to create a more appropriate and a more pleasant experience. Hospital stays are not necessarily always 100 percent a pleasant experience, but we should be doing everything we can and it appears

that Seven Oaks is making every effort and ought not to be criticized for that.

As I say, the honourable member's request is not necessarily unprecedented, but it would be unprecedented to lay open for the honourable member the budgets of each and every hospital in Manitoba. They are, after all, autonomously and independently run by boards and administrations throughout the province.

Mr. Chomiak: Madam Chairperson, the reason that I asked for this figure, and I am aware that the figures are more appropriately asked under subappropriation 21.(7)(c), is that under 5.(b) on page 82 it says the Activity Identification for hospitals and community health services is to establish funding support levels.

I wanted to determine what those funding support levels were for the facilities because, as the minister will recall, previously in these Estimates I asked for a copy of the letter that went to facilities concerning their funding reduction over the next three years or their funding levels and that is a very legitimate concern. The minister well knows that many hospitals are having a great difficulty grappling with their budget restraints because the minister also is aware that not only, yes, there is a \$5-million reduction in that line item this year, but last year there was a \$20-million reduction. Cumulatively from year to year that equals a \$45-million reduction over two years to hospitals.

The specific line of questioning—I wanted to determine what that impact will be on the various hospitals, but, clearly, the minister is not going to provide that information.

Can the minister at least give us that information, broken down, for the community health centres?

Mr. McCrae: Similarly, community health centres are run by boards. I do not object if the honourable member wants to go to a board chair somewhere and say, let me have your budget. Let me have all your numbers and everything. I do not mind if he does that, and they will answer in a way they see fit.

* (1920)

The honourable member has suggested that hospitals and facilities in Manitoba are having great difficulty grappling with their budgets. I am not sure what he means by that. We have professional hospital administrators throughout the province running hospital budgets. I do not know what year they did not have great difficulty grappling with budgets. I do not know what year this government or the previous government has not had great difficulty grappling with budgets. That is not new; that is reality here in this country.

There is another way to resolve the great difficulty that some hospitals have in Saskatchewan. The way of resolving it was to close 52 hospitals. We do not propose to resolve our great difficulties that way in Manitoba. We do not propose to resolve our great difficulty by closing a major urban centre like Shaughnessy Hospital in the province of B.C., in Vancouver.

So the honourable member is not telling me something new. I know we all have great difficulty. If we did not address the challenges we face quite seriously and take some considerable effort in arriving at decisions to ensure patient care while doing so with fewer dollars as we face the future—well, you know, those people are paid to do that, and so are we paid, and so is the honourable member paid, to grapple with the great difficulty of attempting to ensure that we have a health care system for the future.

I have been around all over the province and talked to administrators of facilities, and they will acknowledge what the honourable member said, that these are challenging times, but the difference between them and the honourable member is they accept the challenge.

I have not found a hospital administrator who says, there is no end of money, just give us more, as the honourable member seems to suggest we should do. Nobody says that. They say, minister, we recognize the problems that there are, and we are prepared to work with you. Give us some flexibility on Bill 22, for example—which we are doing. Let us make some autonomous decisions to try to reach your objectives, and only if we are satisfied after a very careful review that to meet

your objectives will mean that somehow we are hurting patients, we will tell you that. Then we are going to have that problem to grapple with.

I think that is a reasonable way to proceed. I know they are all having a challenging time, but I do not know when they were not challenged. Even during the '70s and '80s when the money supply was far different than it is today, I do not remember a year went by that somebody did not make some comment about the operation of the Brandon General Hospital or probably any other hospital in the province. Oh, how are we going to manage? Well, we always find out how to manage. We always answer our own question.

That is what Manitobans are all about. We accept challenge, and we sometimes turn it into opportunity. That is exactly what is happening with health renewal in Manitoba. There are very, very solid people all across this province managing hospital budgets, accepting the challenge and actually coming up with improvements. When they do come up with improvements, I hope they will be supported because I certainly will support them.

Mr. Chomiak: Madam Chairperson, even when so-called experts come in and say that, without harming any hospitals, we can cut easily \$65 million out of hospital budgets out of the two urban hospitals with no problem whatsoever and without affecting the quality of care, even after those experts come in and have to leave with their tails between their legs, having failed and having been told from the first instance they would fail miserably at that task, we are still left with the difficulty of attempting to come to grips with the so-called fat that this expert predicted and recommended would be inside our system.

My question to the minister, though, is with respect to the expenditures—and I am looking at, for example, the total salary and benefits of \$35,900,000 on page 83—and the same question would apply to the total expenditures for the hospital budget. Are those totals inclusive or exclusive of Bill 22? Has Bill 22 already been factored in and the savings made from Bill 22 into those particular levels or not? I assume it has been.

Mr. McCrae: Madam Chair, the honourable member referred to a consultant who claimed that \$65 million could easily be cut out of the budget of the two teaching hospitals in Manitoba. I do not remember that, that anybody would say that \$65 million can easily be taken out of a budget. If the honourable member could show me where that was said, I would appreciate that.

If it is felt that \$65 million can easily be taken out of a budget, it is not felt that way by me, and if has not been achieved, maybe it is only because they did not have Michael Decter to help them out. Think about it.

If they had had Michael Decter, it might have been a lot easier to pull \$65 million out of the two teaching hospitals, but, no, Michael Decter left this province some time ago to work with—he was one of the three deputies in Ontario that I referred to a while ago, and he went on to Ontario to close 5,000 beds there and to throw thousands and thousands of people out of work. So anybody who suggests you can take \$1 million out of a \$1-billion hospital budget, who suggests that is easy and fun, they are not going to enjoy my attention very long.

I would like very much to know where someone said \$65 million could easily be pulled out of those hospital budgets. So I will expect the honourable member to get me that information. I know it was projected and set as a target that large sums of money could indeed be realized through restructuring and that was targets set after consulting with the hospitals involved. After the process of involving hundreds and hundreds of nurses and others in the two hospitals it was found \$65 million could not be easily pulled from those budgets. No one is intending to pull that kind of money out of those budgets either.

So what the honourable member is saying, you did not achieve those cuts, so shame on you. You see, that is the Michael Decter approach, and I do not accept the Michael Decter approach. I will not pull \$65 million out of the budgets of those hospitals if it means that patient care is going to be impacted in a negative kind of way. I do not know if Michael Decter actually asked those questions when he pulled all those millions out of budgets in

Ontario, but I have very carefully asked those questions and so have my officials and my colleagues.

We have very, very carefully examined and continue to examine recommendations that come, even after all of those nurses are asking us to accept these recommendations, nurses and others who work on the project improvement teams have decided that those kinds of recommendations can be gone forward with. So they deserve a lot of our attention because we asked nurses and we asked others working in the hospitals for their advice, which is something that we have been urged to do for years.

* (1930)

I do not know who asked whom when it came time to close 42 beds permanently in Brandon General Hospital, or who asked whom when it came time to close 5,000 beds in the province of Ontario, but I know how it was done here. If anybody can show me that you can pull \$65 million easily from two hospitals in Manitoba, I want to know that person's name, but I will bet you it is Michael Decter. I will bet you only Michael Decter is saying that you can pull \$65 million easily.

Now maybe that is why the APM company has hired Michael Decter to run their company, because he thinks it is easy to pull millions of dollars out and he has shown how easy it is to pull millions and millions of dollars out of hospital budgets. You just simply take your ax and your saw and your hatchet and you cut 5,000 beds out of Ontario hospitals. You bludgeon them; you cut whole arms and legs out of your health care system. That is easy if you do not have any regard for the patients. Well, maybe that is where Michael Decter is coming from, maybe it is not, but it certainly is not easy to pull \$65 million. It is not easy to pull \$1 million dollars out of a hospital budget.

An Honourable Member: You sure learned that.

Mr. McCrae: The honourable member from his seat says, you sure learned that. Yes, I know that. I have known that all along, but where was the honourable member for Brandon East (Mr.

Leonard Evans) in 1987 when his government, as he sat around that cabinet table, easily pulled money out of the Brandon General Hospital? He was hiding in his bunker, that is where he was, hiding from the people of Brandon. I was there. I did not see him around, but I was there.

The honourable member asked about the figure of \$35,900,900 and whether that includes a calculation for Bill 22, and the answer is yes.

Mr. Chomiak: Madam Chairperson, my only recommendation is the minister ought to read the Connie Curran contracts. That will make it fairly clear. That will make the point very clear in black and white.

Can we assume therefore that all of the budgets, those that we received for community health centres and those received for hospitals, the total figures are including Bill 22?

Mr. McCrae: Those budgets include 2 percent of the non-nursing part of those facilities' budgets. Now, as I have said, St. Boniface Hospital, for example, feels that it can proceed with that assumption. Obviously, Health Sciences and Grace, as well. I do not know how many, or if other facilities have demonstrated an ability, but those who cannot, all I am saying is, show me why you cannot when we know it can be done here and here and here.

But I also know there is a difference between a hospital and a personal care centre, and I know that there is also a difference between a hospital and a community health centre. We recognize those differences. A small hospital is very different from a big hospital.

I know that there is indeed a difference between these different kinds of facilities. As the member for Crescentwood (Ms. Gray) points out, there is a difference between a big hospital and a little hospital. There is more flexibility.

As we have gone through all this renewal and restructuring and so on, these are things that we have recognized more and more clearly all the time, as have the various agencies and operators of hospitals, boards and administrators and the MHO

and all these people. You know, we do work together.

The honourable member would like the public to think that all we ever do is struggle and quarrel and fight with all of these partners of ours. Well, that is not what we do. That is some people's idea of what the system should be like, always fighting and always winning. Well, you see, we work together, and we all win together. That is the difference in philosophy that I perceive.

I want the honourable member to know that of all these millions—which amounts to coming on close to a billion dollars, 924, nearly \$925 million—\$11,281,300 is the amount that goes to salary increases for people working in hospitals. That is people, for the most part, working under union contract arrangements where they have classifications, and they get raises. Even though nurses have taken a rollback, even though some staff will end up coming under the Bill 22, even after all that is said, the merit increases continue for those who are entitled to them. I just wanted the honourable member to know that—[interjection] Sorry?

Management has had a bit of a rough time, I think, in the last year or so. Some hospitals had 20 percent taken out of their administrative budgets, all hospitals; senior administration 20 percent off last year and management people 10 percent off last year.

That is important, because as I go around the province visiting with nurses, there are a lot of them that did not know about that. They kept saying to me, well, you know, why do you always look to nursing? That is a very, very understandable sort of question. Why do you always look to the line staff to find the savings, because that is the first place you go.

The fact that the government last year insisted on 20 percent from administrators and 10 percent from management levels in our facilities, they, too, again, would be subject to where Bill 22 is being used, and in some places, Bill 22 will apply at those levels again this year.

I just say to the honourable member, and I would like him to write this number down—\$11,281,300 is being added to the salaries of who knows how many hundreds, perhaps thousands of people in the health system this coming year because they are moving to the next step in their classification.

Mr. Chomiak: Madam Chairperson, Seven Oaks Hospital is facing a budget cut of \$1.9 million this year. Given the minister's response, can I assume that the \$1.9-million cut that Seven Oaks is facing this year—does the \$1.9 million also include provision for Bill 22, or are the Bill 22 provisions on top of the \$1.9 million that Seven Oaks Hospital has to downsize this year?

Mr. McCrae: Again, with respect to the individual budget of a particular hospital, I can only respond to the honourable member that Seven Oaks was the recipient of the same request as every other facility, that they find a way, if possible, to find a 2 percent savings in the non-nursing aspects of their budget.

In the Seven Oaks case, they have not, as far as I know, responded to this point as to how they are going to deal with that request. Seven Oaks has shown itself willing and up to challenges in the past. Seven Oaks Hospital has recognized that they have patients in their hospital that do not need to be there, and Seven Oaks has entered into programs to try to see which is the best way to deal with that particular situation, because Seven Oaks, I am sure, is very sensitive to that situation that could arise.

If they had all their beds filled up with people, many of whom could be cared for elsewhere, and a case comes along that really does require, in an emergency kind of way, a hospital bed to be available, instead of being critical of Seven Oaks, I would say, bravo, Seven Oaks. You have made appropriate kinds of changes so that you could have the availability of service for people when that time came when they really, really needed it.

I am watching the developments at Seven Oaks with interest. I am interested in their proposals for wellness concepts and interested in a number of the things that are happening at Seven Oaks Hospital that will provide improved patient care.

Mr. Chomiak: From the minister's response, it appears that the \$1.9-million cut in their budget this year is exclusive of Bill 22. I take it from the minister's response, contrary to my general question—I am trying to determine the effect of Bill 22 when I asked the general question about the \$924-odd million dollars going into hospitals.

* (1940)

I asked if that included Bill 22, and I assumed it did. But I also know that Seven Oaks has been ordered to take a \$1.9-million cut this year. From the minister's previous response, it appears that in addition to that \$1.9 million, they will also have to apply Bill 22. That is what I am trying to determine, whether Bill 22 applies to the \$1.9 million or whether it does not.

Mr. McCrae: I do not accept the honourable member's numbers. I do not know where he got this number of 1.9, but we are not familiar with that particular number, so it is hard for me to be very responsive to a question that we do not accept as being placed accurately. The 1.9, where does he get that number from? Maybe he could table that for us. He has tabled other things for us.

Mr. Chomiak: Madam Chairperson, I am actually going from memory. It might be something around that. The minister knows what the number is because there is a three-year rolling 10 percent cutback to hospital funding in urban hospitals. The minister knows that.

There is a figure to Seven Oaks. They are working desperately to achieve that goal. The minister knows that. My question is simply, does that budgetary cutback include or not include the Bill 22 provision?

Mr. McCrae: I will go back to something I said a little while ago. I am not accepting any numbers that the member is bringing forward here because this is a game that the honourable member has played in the past. I sort of started to get into the game with him and then I decided, no, the honourable member is playing a game that is designed to scare people and not to bring any positive dimension to the discussion. I am not going to play a game that deals with phantom numbers. I am not going to play a game that talks

about targets, because we did that before. The honourable member referred to it himself: how easy it was to find \$65 million. Well, we already know that did not happen.

So I am not going to play this game with the honourable member and confirm or do anything else with numbers that he throws out. The game that he plays is that you set a target and you are criticized for having a target, because if you met that target it is clear what it would mean. It would mean that it would have job impacts.

Now the member for Selkirk is listening carefully because he knows that the job impacts at Selkirk Mental Health Centre are going to be positive. He feels good about that and is there to support the announcements made in Selkirk. Then the next thing that happens is your consultant or your process improvement teams, they come up with suggestions that would call for savings. Then they attack that. For whatever reason I do not know because the suggestions come from the staff at all levels at the hospitals themselves. So that is the next stage in the game plan.

Then when it is clear that all of those suggestions and recommendations that come forward do not equal the initial target, you have failed to achieve that target, and shame on you; you should have been like Michael Dexter and just gone and slashed the hell out of these hospital budgets. That is the next step along the way. So you can see the kind of game that I will not get myself into, Madam Chairperson.

I know that Seven Oaks Hospital, whatever is being asked of them, they will do their utmost to comply, because that is the spirit that we are working in, in this health renewal system. Seven Oaks knows, as well as any other hospital, that we in Manitoba, this government does not want to close down a bunch of hospitals like they do in NDP Saskatchewan and NDP B.C., NDP Ontario. They know that we do not want to do that. I have made that very clear, and they also know that I will not put up with any ideas that will have a negative impact on patients because patients are who I work for. That is who I represent in this place. They know that.

The numbers are all here for the honourable member. He already voted against all these increases for community care. So I assume he will continue to vote against them and then throw in voting against the hospital budgets and all the others, too. He took \$12 million away from those enemies of his, the doctors. He voted against doing that, too. So I am not going to play that game with the honourable member, because I know why he is doing it. It is simply to scare people, and I am not interested in scaring my fellow Manitobans.

Mr. Chomiak: Madam Chairperson, I resent the fact that the minister refers to enemies of doctors and I also resent the fact that the minister implies that what we intend to do is scare tactics. Perhaps if the government was willing to provide real figures and real numbers, we would not be in receipt of the number of leaks that we receive and try to bring it to the public's attention. If the government would only be forthright and deal with matters up front, then perhaps it would not be required to dig—

Point of Order

Mr. McCrae: On a point of order, Madam Chair, the honourable member is suggesting that I am not being up front with him. I think that is a point of order because it is a reflection on—I am not sure what, but I am sure it is against the rules to reflect like that.

I have been very, very open. I have been very open with the honourable member and very open with the public. When the project improvement teams made their recommendations and they did not equal the targets that had been set, I was open with the public and I said, we did not achieve those targets.

The honourable member, is he saying that we should have achieved the targets, because I am telling you—

Madam Chairperson: Order, please. The honourable minister does not have a point of order. It is clearly a dispute over the facts.

* * *

Mr. McCrae: Madam Chair, if I could respond to the honourable member's point then rather than making a point of order.

Madam Chairperson: I believe there was no question from the honourable member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak).

The honourable member for Crescentwood wishes to pose a question.

Ms. Avis Gray (Crescentwood): Madam Chairperson, getting back to the discussion of overall hospital budgets, we had asked the former Minister of Health in last year's Estimates for a list of the hospital budgets. I have subsequently written a letter to the Auditor of the province who then called me back, appreciated my letter and said they were certainly looking at issues such as that.

In subsequent meetings with auditors this year, because they are making an attempt to communicate more closely with all of the MLAs in the Legislature, it certainly was indicated to me that there should be no reason why those types of budgets would not be available to members of this Legislature, given that it is taxpayers' money that we are spending.

Just a simple question, and the minister can correct me if I am wrong, I am assuming then the minister is not prepared to table the individual hospital budgets for '94-95.

Mr. McCrae: Madam Chair, I am not doing that because I cannot. Those budgets are not complete yet, so I cannot. If you go and ask me about 1993-94 then the answer I gave earlier is the one that applies.

Ms. Gray: I am not going to belabour that point, although I hoped that we would have been able to be provided with that information.

The minister refers to Bill 22 and some flexibility that he has given various facilities and personal care homes in terms of coming up with other means of 2 percent reductions other than the salary line. Can he table for us the letter that he sent out to these facilities indicating that change in what they are able to come up with?

* (1950)

Mr. McCrae: Madam Chairperson, it was directed to the member for Kildonan who would not be able to hear me, in any event, unless he read Hansard. So I will just respond to the question put by the honourable member for Crescentwood. I will be making available to her, the letter sent out on May 5, 1994, signed by Mr. DeCock for Mr. Duprey. There is one correction. The letter went out, so it is too late to try to correct it, but the last line of the letter says please submit your proposal to me by May 15. Well, we changed that to May 16 in pen, but the letter had already gone out anyway. The 15 is a Sunday. Actually, it says 15. We will probably hear back—well, we must have heard back from some on Friday previously or some the very next day.

In any event, this is a draft of the letter that went out. The actual letters are like this only they have actual addresses on them and at the bottom it says, the funding reduction to be applied to your facility by the measure is as follows: hospital address, PCH address, outreach address, medical address, total address. The letters were filled in properly for the individual circumstances. So I will ask that this be photocopied and copies made available to my colleagues from Crescentwood and Kildonan.

Ms. Gray: Madam Chairperson, I thank the minister for that information. Now, that letter then went out to all hospital facilities and personal care homes in the province?

Mr. McCrae: That letter went to all hospitals, all personal care homes, all community health centres.

Ms. Gray: I am sure some of the facilities that were writing us letters and the minister letters will appreciate the opportunity to come up with the dollar savings other than in the Salaries line.

I wanted to ask a question in the area of lab services. I am wondering if the minister could tell us, what has happened with the recommendations that came forth in the Bass report?

Mr. McCrae: Madam Chair, the rural lab committee turned its report over to the Provincial Lab Committee.

While I am on my feet, I will respond to another question put earlier by the member for Crescentwood on the issue of personal care home rates. I told her I would make some information available. The information requested regarded the number of personal care home residents paying the maximum residential charge. [interjection] Oh, I am sorry. I apologize. That question, I am told, came to us from the honourable member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak). Yes, it did indeed come from the honourable member for Kildonan.

The following data, and there is not a lot, so it is not going to take a lot of time, includes all individuals who resided in a personal care home from October 1, 1993, to March 31, 1994. The total number of personal care home beds available during this time period was 8,928. Just hold the line one minute. The final number that I will come up with will be 9,915. The reason for the difference is that some people have passed away.

Those paying \$26.50 amount to 55 percent of the total or 5,485 residents; 17 percent of the total or 1,660 paid \$26.60 to \$31; 8 percent of the total or 823 paid \$31.10 to \$36; 4 percent or 382 residents paid \$36.10 up to \$40; 4 percent or 359—obviously, the reason these percentages are as they are is because of rounding or something—individuals paid \$40.10 to \$45.90; 12 percent of the total or 1,206 residents paid \$46. So, as I was saying earlier, the appeal process and the whole criteria in the first place have kept 67 percent below \$31, 67 percent of all residents paying below \$31; and some 28 percent over \$31.

I would just like to say briefly that these per diems include coverage for meals, and, in addition to meals, accommodation, utilities, the activities of daily living in a personal care home, nursing care, medication and support services.

I go back to the numbers that I recited. Again I was looking at the latest batch of statistics regarding appeals, and what I said earlier stands, I think, that there are appeals that are turned down and there are appeals that are successful and there are appeals that come somewhere in between, where there is an adjustment made in the assessment. That results in numbers like the kind

that I have put out, but fully 72 percent of the people still pay \$31 or less and the remaining 28 percent are in the other brackets. So I thought I would share that with the honourable member.

Ms. Gray: Madam Chairperson, we thank the minister for that information. The minister had also mentioned that the Bass report was passed on the Provincial Laboratory report.

* (2000)

I would ask then the minister: When I review the Provincial Laboratory Committee terms of reference and it indicates some eight objectives, I do not see anything specifically related to, looking at the role of private labs, yet that was a specific recommendation in the rural committee's report. I am wondering why that is.

Mr. McCrae: I am not sure what document the member was looking at or if she had the document in front of her, but she said that the Provincial Committee does not have, as one of its Terms of Reference, the issue of looking at the operations of private labs. Is that what she is saying?

I am looking at the Terms of Reference of the Provincial Laboratory Committee, of Matt Jones's committee, and they are, first: "To ensure the provision of quality laboratory services of appropriate and proven value for residents of Manitoba. To conduct these services in a cost-effective and ethical manner."

Next: To develop strategies which promote co-operation between all laboratory facilities, be they institutional, public or private in the pursuit of a whole bunch of other things.

Madam Chairperson, I have not even read all the others, and there may be no further reference to private labs. I do not know until I read it all again. When you are talking about developing strategies that promote co-operation among all these various kinds of laboratory facilities in the pursuit of streamlining operations and consolidating and sharing services and whatever else that it says in these Terms of Reference, I do not think it can be argued that private labs have been left out.

Indeed, we went through a whole discussion about various members of these committees, some

of them having links to private labs and what a terrible, sinister and awful thing that was. I remember the discussions we had. If it is not more specifically spelled out, I am certain it is quite implicit in that part. Certainly, there is no wish not to discuss issues related to private labs, when you consider there are people there who either have an affiliation of one kind or another with the private labs or whatever. The private labs are there; they provide services; and they are part of the continuum.

If it is not stated very, very clearly, as the honourable member suggests, maybe it should have been. I think it is implicit in these Terms of Reference that private labs are part of this study.

Ms. Gray: Madam Chairperson, that has certainly been the concern when I read over the Terms of Reference, and some other individuals as well. Can the minister then tell us, as well as the Terms of Reference, as outlined in the Provincial Laboratory Committee then, will this committee also be specifically looking at the 12 recommendations that were specifically identified by the Bass report?

Mr. McCrae: Yes, it will, Madam Chairperson.

Ms. Gray: One of the concerns that have been brought to my attention is the lab which is equipped at the Deer Lodge Centre, or there is a potential for a lab at the Deer Lodge Centre. Some individuals have expressed concern that at this point it is sitting idle and unused, and they feel that there could be some effectiveness for this type of lab.

Is the committee going to be looking at this aspect at all?

Mr. McCrae: Madam Chairperson, the lab at Deer Lodge was closed a year and a half ago, and the responsibilities, functions transferred to Grace Hospital. The two facilities share those Grace Hospital facilities, according to my understanding.

The Provincial Lab is quite entitled to look at this and any other matters it sees fit in the provision of quality-efficient laboratory services for Manitobans.

Ms. Gray: Objective No. 5 in the terms of reference of the Provincial Laboratory Committee refers to, objectively examine and comment on possible conflict-of-interest issues in the provision of laboratory diagnostic services.

Could the minister explain more fully what the committee will be looking at specifically in terms of the conflict-of-interest issues?

Mr. McCrae: Madam Chair, I think the honourable member—I am not sure what she was referring to, again, but the terms of reference that I have—did I give them to you? No. The terms of reference that I have for the Provincial Laboratory Committee, one of them is to objectively—which is a split infinitive, but that is being picky on my part—examine and comment on possible conflict-of-interest issues in the provision of laboratory diagnostic services. I am not sure what the honourable member's point is when three of the members—[interjection] I am sorry. [interjection] Okay, I will try.

* (2010)

The Provincial Laboratory Committee also has among its members three members that were from the rural laboratory committee. D. Ferrier, G. Hammond and J. McBeath were on the Rural Advisory Committee, as well. So those three members at least would be aware of the type of alleged conflict issues that might appropriately be discussed.

The honourable member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) has been taking quite a lot of criticism in the news of late for some of his allegations about private labs and so on, and because, you see, to him the scent of a conflict on an advisory committee renders everything useless, and I have already said that there may well be people on these committees who have an interest of their own in a private lab. I am quite willing to acknowledge that and I have done so. The fact is, what kind of conflicts are we talking about? Who has them, and in what way does it jeopardize the safe delivery of health services to Manitobans? Those are questions better looked at by organizations like the Provincial Laboratory Committee.

That committee has its terms of reference: to objectively examine and comment on possible conflict-of-interest issues in the provision of laboratory diagnostic services. It says that and that is what they will examine, and there are some very smart people on that particular committee from what I have been told and from what I know of some of them. Those smart people are quite able, just like the honourable member who is also a smart person, to read that term of reference and figure out what it means and what ought to flow from it.

It is not for me to speculate, I do not think, any further what it means.

Ms. Gray: Madam Chairperson, I know the minister is aware that a number of concerns have been raised by people who see what they perceive as differences between the private labs and the publicly owned labs, and the concern has been expressed with individuals who are on this committee who represent some of the private labs that there is a conflict of interest. I think in some ways there is.

However, I guess what I would really wonder is what is the ultimate goal of this particular committee. There has been some mention in the past that, in fact, we would do better to have a publicly funded laboratory system as opposed to private labs. I cannot imagine that this committee would ever come up with that recommendation given the membership that is on that committee. Now I could be wrong.

An Honourable Member: You are probably not wrong.

Ms. Gray: I am probably not wrong.

I guess my real question is—because there is a lot of divisiveness about this particular issue because there really have been a lot of concerns raised. I have received dozens and dozens of letters from individuals on both sides of the issue, not just on one side of the issue. Is there anything that the minister can see doing that would allay some of the concerns that have been expressed by these groups in regard to what this committee is going to be doing?

Mr. McCrae: I will try to say a few words that may or may not help the honourable member, but there are those who will be calling and writing the honourable member, as she said, on both sides of the issue. I know the member for Kildonan only gets letters on one side of the issue because he does not talk about the other letters he gets.

If you look at the terms of reference that you have before you—if you want I can read into the record the terms of reference that I have before me.

Ms. Gray: No, I have the same one as you.

Mr. McCrae: Okay When you look at the committee members, and you remember that these committee members, a number of them are, if not all, professional people who respond and answer to regulatory authority and must do their work within certain standards. If you keep that in mind, I think that should help to some extent.

The honourable member for Concordia, the Leader of the official opposition (Mr. Doer), shouts that some \$30 million is being spent at private labs. So he wants you to assume that because it is private, every single nickel of that \$30 million is fraudulent. That is what the member for Concordia—[interjection] The honourable member for Concordia reminds me that is simply quoted in the Bass report, that there is a concern, right?

An Honourable Member: Quote, skimming the cream.

Mr. McCrae: He says, skimming the cream.

An Honourable Member: And not providing good dollar value, quote.

Mr. McCrae: And not providing good dollar value. Now the honourable member can read the whole Bass report into the record a little later, if that is what he wants to do. But what I am trying to say is that I do not share the view of the member for Concordia and the view of the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) that everything that is private is bad, that everything that is private is tainted and skimming and all the rest of it.

I do not know what is going on in the public sector sometimes, about whether everything that is happening in the public sector is okay. In fact, I

have acknowledged that I do not think it is okay in the public sector. I have said that the Home Care program requires improvement. Our hospitals are not being run efficiently enough, and we have co-operation amongst the hospital people to make them more efficient.

For some reason members of the New Democratic Party, instead of taking the balanced approach that the member for Crescentwood (Ms. Gray) seems to be taking here, the members of the New Democratic Party say it is private, some of it is not unionized so it is bad. Well, I never have nor will I ever accept that kind of narrow, blinkered sort of thinking until, Madam Chairperson, somebody shows me that I should. Nobody has to this date. If there is something wrong with the public system, let us fix it. If there is something wrong with the private system, let us fix that too.

(Mr. Ben Sveinson, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair)

I do not think that there is anything wrong with people involved in the Provincial Laboratory Committee sitting down—there are people here, R. Wally. Who is R. Wally? Oh sure, I know who R. Wally is. My friend tells me he is a Liberal. I did not know that. I thought he was a Conservative. But anyway, Ron Wally who—[interjection] Oh, really? Ron Wally, I do not know what his politics are, as I said. I thought he was a Conservative, but if he is not, all right. He is a union boss, right? So I have to say, well, does he not have a conflict, because his members all pay dues and they need lots of members to pay dues to keep the union operating and so on? But I do not say that. I only say it in response to the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak), because I do not want to go and pick a fight with R. Wally, whether he is a union—

* (2020)

Mr. Chomiak: You are missing the point.

Mr. McCrae: The honourable member says, I am missing the point.

Mr. Chomiak: Do you want me to elaborate?

Mr. McCrae: Well, that is up to the member for Kildonan.

The member for Kildonan wants to elaborate, and right now the honourable member for Crescentwood has the floor, so that is a question she will have to answer, if she wants the honourable member to elaborate. But I do not know, for example, what—we referred to Mr. Wally as being a Liberal, but I do not know what the politics of Mr. Jones are, or Dr. Brooker's, or Dr. Brown's.

An Honourable Member: That is not relevant. Their politics is not relevant.

Mr. McCrae: The member tells me their politics is not relevant, but I never started talking about politics in the first place. How did this come up? The honourable member for Crescentwood brought up the fact that Ron Wally is a Liberal. I still do not know if he is a Liberal. I am going to have to ask him next time I see him, because he will probably tell me that he is a Liberal but he leans towards the Conservatives, because he is a very well-respected person. I respect him, too, and I respect everybody else on this committee.

We have been talking about conflict here, and the member rightly asks, how is this going to be dealt with? I say, we have some very smart people on this committee, and now we even know we have Liberals on this committee, so we know this whole issue of conflict is going to be appropriately addressed.

Besides, the honourable member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak), who wants to help with this discussion here, has to understand that this, again, is a committee that will make recommendations and provide advice, and that if there are changes that the government has anything to do with making, the government will make those changes ultimately and be responsible for them. At that time, if we go and make some kind of decision that is somehow seen by the honourable member for Kildonan to be helpful to the private labs, then he can blame it all on this committee, if he wants, and all these awful people who have an interest in private labs. But there are people here who have interests in public labs. They do their business with the public labs. There are people whose members

work in the public labs and maybe even in the private labs too.

What we have here, Mr. Acting Chairperson, is a red herring disguised as a real issue. It is not a real issue because ultimately the government will take all of these things into account. [interjection] The honourable member for Crescentwood (Ms. Gray) is now the one trying to distract me from this important point I was going to make, and I guess I will just have to let that happen.

I just say, the government will be making decisions ultimately. It will be as a result of advice. We know where the advice is coming from; it is from a whole bunch of people whose interests are spread all over the place. All I am interested in is knowing who they are, what their interests are. Hopefully, in their committee meetings, they will make their position known as to whom they represent, No. 1, whom they may do some business with if they have that kind of a conflict situation—to lay it out.

As I said, in this House we all have biases. Sometimes we have conflicts. When we have a real conflict and it comes to a vote, we do not take part in that vote. That is the way our rules are set.

In fact, we wrote a law that said that is how we should handle our conflicts. Well, you can ask the question, why should you be writing the law about the conflicts of members of the Legislative Assembly, and my answer is, who else are you going to get to write the law about conflicts of members of the Legislative Assembly? You can take some of these arguments to ridiculous lengths, and that is what the honourable member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) and his Leader tried to do, and it was again, for all the wrong reasons. They are trying to protect somebody in my view, and they are not trying to see improvements in the whole laboratory system here in the province of Manitoba.

If we did not want improvements, why do we have all these committees and ask all these busy, busy people to give us advice? We will soon be criticized for that if we are just doing this for the fun of it. These things are being done because we know we need to make improvements in our lab

system, private, public and whatever, but just to assume because it is private—you have to watch those New Democrats, Mr. Acting Chairperson, because whatever is not run publicly, they do not trust.

Meanwhile, they take the liberty daily to sit in their comfortable spots and take pot shots at the public system, too, unless they are the ones running it. You see, you cannot have things all ways all the time. Sometimes decisions have to get made and actions have to be taken.

I hope the honourable member for Crescentwood understands where I am coming from and that I fully understand the make-up of the committee. I can understand terms of reference, too. If the terms are not broad enough or something and the honourable member has a concern, let her put it on the record, and I will pass it on or deal with it.

Ms. Gray: Mr. Acting Chairperson, I am glad that the minister referred to the good people who are on the committee because also with the Bass report, there are some 33 individuals, all who are very qualified, as well.

Just again, to refresh the minister's memory, in the Bass report, that committee of 33 individuals who are representative of individuals across the province of Manitoba specifically made comments about the concern about private laboratories having an adverse effect by an inordinate consumption of health care resources.

Their other comment was and I quote: The cost effectiveness of such expenditures is very questionable, They went on to talk about the Saskatchewan report in '92, the Kilshaw [phonetic] report, when the Conservatives were in power, saying that that report had found that large private labs were not cost effective. Again, it said this committee felt that reducing the profit element and maintaining testing standards was feasible. They felt that this issue was not simply a rural issue and that the large private labs affect all Manitoba residents.

So it was clearly a recommendation that they talked about, these 33 individuals in their committee, and my comment is that I hope that this

report and these recommendations and all the work do not get lost in the Provincial Laboratory Committee, and that these concerns be taken very seriously by the committee and also by the government.

When you look at the Bass report and the committee representation, there are certainly a number of provincial government staff who sat on that, so they certainly have first-hand information which they can pass on to the minister about why this report was drafted the way it was and why these concerns were presented.

So that is my comment: it is that the minister is aware of these two reports, and I hope that the Bass report does not get lost in this new committee report and that those concerns are adequately addressed.

Mr. McCrae: Well, there is not a thing wrong, Mr. Acting Chairperson, with the member for Crescentwood harbouring outstanding concerns because the provincial committee had concerns which it registered in its report and there is no reason for us not to take those concerns seriously. I do. I am not here to protect a system about which there are concerns. I know people in this House who are quite willing to protect things they know are wrong and protect them anyway. I am not going to do that.

I am interested in my constituents and other Manitobans who say, how come we have to have so many tests? How come we have the same test one week and another test the next week? Why is that? When you go to one doctor, you get a test; when you go to another doctor, you get the same test over again. Why does that happen? Very legitimate questions. With the help of the Provincial Laboratory Committee, it is my hope and my expectation that we can make some improvements working together.

My problem with some people's suggestions is that if you leave a whole group out of the discussions, you end up with a war on your hands, which you do not need to have if you bring all the parties around the table. We are told, bring people around the table. Well, I can show you a conflict in almost everybody's point of view around the table.

I am interested in cost-effectiveness. The honourable member tells me that the Bass report singles out private labs for that comment. Fine. I do not have a problem with that if there is a way to improve cost-effectiveness. Surely the committee members are involved not only at the rural level but at the province-wide level; those people are going to be able to find better ways to do things.

* (2030)

We have the co-operation and partnership of organizations like the Manitoba Medical Association, which we did not have previously. I do not think we can say that we had that previously. Today we do, and I think that means that the Manitoba Medical Association is willing to look carefully at all of these services and the appropriateness of them and the cost-effectiveness of them, because we know that we must address cost-effectiveness issues.

I see Dr. Crowson, clearly a Manitoba Medical Association rep. These things are happening because I asked the Manitoba Medical Association to take part in numerous committees. This was before we even arrived at the Manitoba Medical Association agreement. I knew early on that an invitation like that may begin to, well, thaw things out, for want of better words, in terms of getting the medical profession and the government to work more co-operatively together. I am glad to say that to this point I cannot point to any area that there has not been that kind of co-operation with the Manitoba Medical Association. The nursing profession, same idea.

When I talked to the Manitoba Association of Registered Nurses, the Manitoba Association of Licensed Practical Nurses, the Registered Psychiatric Nurses Association of Manitoba, very, very high levels of co-operation, a real sense of working together, putting the needs of patients ahead of our own vested interests which we sometimes have. I do not say that of the nurses anymore than I say that of my own self. I have my own vested interests in all of this as a Minister of Health. Hopefully they will be reflected in the concern for the consumers of health care

throughout this province, and hopefully that is what my conduct will demonstrate.

I certainly am not going to ignore the kind of comments made in the Bass report. I do not think any of the committee members on the Provincial Laboratory Committee are going to pretend those words do not appear in the rural laboratory report.

Ms. Gray: Just as a further question, do individuals on this committee get paid per diems or expenses to sit on this committee?

Mr. McCrae: The arrangement that exists is that the chair receives a per diem. Other members are only remunerated if they are giving up some other income to attend the meetings and, of course, reasonable expenses.

Ms. Gray: What is the per diem of this particular committee? My second question is: Are all these committees that the Department of Health has established, do all of the chairs, unless they are a government staffperson, receive some sort of per diem?

Mr. McCrae: What I say is subject to the application of Bill 22 here. It happened in boards and commissions, too. Bill 22 had an application.

The chairs of the various committees that the honourable member is referring to do receive per diem but only if they, too, are giving up income from their normal source or another source in order to be the chairs of these committees. I do not have the precise amount of the per diem available, but I will make it available to the member.

Mr. Chomiak: We are certainly going to have to agree to disagree with respect to the issues of the labs. The minister will recall that we tabled the Bass report in this Chamber and outlined our concerns concerning the Bass report. Our concerns arose from the recommendations in the Bass report, not from anything we had plucked out of the air or anything that we had taken from a philosophical basis.

The Bass report, in my view, is quite exceptional because it was a government-sponsored report, highly representative. Its recommendations, almost of all reports that I have seen of a government nature, were quite strong and quite

unusual in our viewpoint, which is why and one of the reasons why we raised the concerns.

Quite frankly, I think the minister is wrong with respect to the conflict-of-interest issue. It is not to question the integrity of any of the individuals. The minister has to understand, it is not a question of questioning anyone's integrity or anyone's good will. It is only a question of perception, and, in this area, perception is extremely important.

We believe that the whole conflict issue ought to be taken by an independent—should be looked at independently. Quite frankly, overall, we think, notwithstanding the talent of the people involved in the Provincial Lab Committee, we think it would be far better to have an independent third party examine the issue, similar to what was done—I believe Kilshaw [phonetic], both, did B.C. and Saskatchewan. We think that would be a preferable route.

Quite clearly, there is disagreement in terms of the approach between our viewpoint and that of the minister's, but I am not going to belabour that point insofar as we made most of our recommendations at the time during Question Period.

Unless the minister wants to comment, I was going to move on to another area.

Mr. McCrae: I think the honourable member is right. It is maybe a difference of approach in this regard. I do not think he is questioning anybody's integrity either, and I did not mean to imply that. If I did, I am sorry.

With respect to perception, I suppose that perception of something wrong can really loom larger if there are members who are prepared to try to make it loom that way. There is the approach of asking, as has been done in B.C. or Saskatchewan, one person or two, and I do not know either of the people that the honourable member is talking about in B.C. or Saskatchewan.

An Honourable Member: The same one.

Mr. McCrae: It is the same person who did both? I do not know that person, and I maybe could learn more about that person. But the approach we have used in Manitoba has been to involve lots of

people. Ultimately, government is going to make decisions, but is it not better for government to have, especially when you have the willingness of people to give of their time, their expertise, their effort, their dedication to the whole system, when you have that at your disposal—I think the Manitoba approach is the one that I will argue for. I think we understand we disagree on that point.

Maybe it is that that has other provinces looking at Manitoba and saying: How did you do that? You have done so much better than we have seen elsewhere in the country. Maybe it is because you have included so many people, that you are not seen to be a top-down approach to health care renewal. I guess that is why I will argue for the way we are doing it. Now, the perception of conflict will certainly loom larger, as I say, if the honourable member and his Leader want to handle it that way. But, just as you attack—"attack" is maybe the wrong word—just as you call into question the ability to be fair of the people on the committee of certain persuasion, so must you also call into question, under the same rules, other people on the committee. I did not hear the honourable member say that Ron Wally ought to be thrown out of the committee room. Well, I am not suggesting Ron Wally be thrown out of the committee room either. But, if the honourable member wants to be fair, then let him be fair, and his Leader as well.

* (2040)

With respect to the per diems I referred to a moment ago, the full-day per diem is \$446; the half-day per diem is \$256. Those numbers must be reduced by the extent to which Bill 22 applies.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Acting Chairperson, I am just moving to Emergency Health and Ambulance Services, which is 5.(d). Can the minister indicate whether there have been any significant changes with respect to this particular area? Have there been any changes of a significant nature from last year, short of one manager being eliminated?

Mr. McCrae: With the exception, Mr. Acting Chairperson, of the fact that through the reorganization of our department we are one managerial staff year minus, nothing in the

operations of this branch of any significance has changed in the past year.

Mr. Chomiak: Has there been any change in terms of the funding model of any sorts?

Mr. McCrae: No, Mr. Acting Chairperson, and I want the honourable member to know that part of the reason for the length of some of my answers is that I have put on my Minister of Health hat again and I can see the honourable member is not as well as he ought to be. I am not kidding. Partly to give the honourable member some relief, in about four or five minutes I am going to ask for the indulgence of this committee for some relief of 10 or 15 minutes because a couple of us over here have not had any supper.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Acting Chairperson, perhaps we should just pass through these items, and then we can take a break.

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Sveinsson): 5.(a) Administration (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$636,900—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$117,400—pass.

5.(b) Hospitals and Community Health Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$35,900,900.

Ms. Gray: Mr. Acting Chairperson, I want to ask a question on Community Health Services, the staff years for regional operations. The minister had indicated that there were to be some increases in mental health services. Can the minister indicate in total what the change is in total staff years for regional operations?

Mr. McCrae: Mr. Acting Chairperson, the honourable member made specific reference to mental health workers. A little while ago we had made the point that under the line for Brandon Mental Health Centre, even though it shows until the MHC is closed it will show in the Estimates, staff for BMHC who may very well be in the community. The number I am going to give now has nothing whatever to do with that, but has to do with our mental health field staff. We are increasing this year the number of field staff from 113.1 staff years to 122.36 staff years.

If I could answer this other question, then I would be requesting a 15-minute break so that we

can catch up to where we should be, Mr. Acting Chairperson. This is with respect to the treatment part of the Children's Dental Program. In July and August of 1993, portable dental equipment and consumable supplies were collected from the schools. Fixed dental equipment was left in place unless the school division requested its immediate removal.

Currently, six school divisions have made a formal request to retain equipment. In addition to the fixed equipment, a full dental kit of hand instruments, sterilizer, X-ray unit, et cetera, is also transferred to the division. That is a little further information to what we had last time we discussed this.

If the honourable members agree, Mr. Acting Chair, I would suggest a break till perhaps five after nine.

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Sveinson): Is it the wish of the committee to break till five after nine?

We will resume at five after nine then.

The committee recessed at 8:49 p.m.

After Recess

The committee resumed at 9:08 p.m.

(Madam Chairperson in the Chair)

Madam Chairperson: Will the Committee of Supply please come to order.

Ms. Gray: Madam Chairperson, I am wondering if the minister could indicate to us the total expected savings in this fiscal year, savings by the hospital facilities?

* (2110)

Mr. McCrae: Madam Chairperson, savings, efficiencies, restructuring, whatever you want to call it, we are projecting a decrease of \$4,643,700. That is province-wide. That includes an assumption that we will be able to achieve that 2 percent that we talked about before relating to Bill 22, whether or not Bill 22 is what is used. It takes into account salary increases and conversion to high purity blood products. It takes into account a very large list of different things that go into the

annual operations of the relationship between the Department of Health and all of the various facilities in Manitoba. It may have a slightly different impact in one facility to another because, once we finish our review of staffing guidelines and put that into effect, there are some facilities that will not be affected, I suspect, at all, some who will be a net—"winner" is not the right word but a net gainer, and then others who will have net decreases that will result in them, hopefully, using their vacancy rates appropriately and so on.

All of this is predicated on the presumption and the insistence on the part of myself and the department that patient care not be impacted in a negative way. Interest rates are different from year to year, and we expect that from previous years we might realize some savings in that area. But the bottom line right across the province is a total reduction of \$4,643,700 million.

Ms. Gray: Madam Chairperson, that is the projected savings for this current fiscal year. Can the minister tell us what the actual savings were in the last fiscal year?

Mr. McCrae: No, and that may become available as we complete all of the adjustments and so on that have to be taken into account in finalizing budgets. I am talking budget to budget here where we talk about 4.6. It does not take into account the fact that not everything will, I suspect, work according to plan with respect to our hope to achieve 2 percent, because in some areas we are not going to be able to achieve that, I suspect. So this is a projection only.

No doubt, there will be those who will at the end of the year when the final numbers are available say, well, you did not come in right on the dollar. There will be room there for comment when that happens. It may be similar to the comment that was made with respect to the APM restructuring project where it became apparent that after all the work was done, a \$65-million reduction in two hospitals was not something that was achievable. I would rather come to that conclusion than insist on the achievement of the \$65 million and throw caution to the wind when it comes to the patients

we serve in our hospitals. That is an approach they use elsewhere, and we do not do that here.

Ms. Gray: Madam Chairperson, the minister must have an approximate amount, though, as to how much was saved in the last fiscal year.

Just to speed up this question, the reason I am asking for an approximate amount is that the minister has already put on the record that last year, they redirected \$9 million.

If you redirected \$9 million, one assumes that you had to have saved that. That is why I wanted to know. You seem to be very clear in what you have redirected, so you must have some idea of how much you have saved?

Mr. McCrae: The honourable member is asking for something that approximates. I have to ask her to be cautious with this kind of approach because I will be too.

It is true that we redirected money from hospitals and places in the community, but net all those things, it is safe to say we are in close proximity to what we budgeted for. That could mean a little over or a little under, and I do not know today. I understand that in three weeks' time, we will have a better clarification of that.

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): I just have a number of questions in terms of northern issues. In fact, if it is agreeable to the minister, I could actually ask these questions about Northern Patient Transportation. I also have some concerns about Thompson General Hospital. I can deal with them either separately or at the current point in time. [interjection] Okay. I realize the minister may respond at a later point in time.

In terms of the Thompson General Hospital and the situation generally with the rural hospital facilities, northern hospital facilities, the minister is very aware of what happened last year in terms of the rural hospital guidelines which were introduced in August. There was a great deal of concern that was expressed in many rural and northern communities. In fact, the minister responded to the concerns. We had a meeting in Thompson. It was a community meeting that was very well attended. The minister, to his credit,

attended the meeting and listened to people, and I thank him for doing that. I think it was a very productive meeting.

I know that the minister met with people in other areas of the province, as well. I know he certainly met with other northern facilities in The Pas and Flin Flon and also probably with other rural facilities, as well.

At that time, the cuts were put on hold. In the case of Thompson General Hospital, it would have been 22 positions, 18 hospital beds. It would have been of a similar magnitude in other northern facilities.

I have asked the minister in Question Period for an update in terms of the status of the review. My understanding, and the minister can correct me if I am wrong, is that there has been a committee set up. There have been at least four subcommittees set up to look at specific items related to the rural hospital guidelines. My understanding is that a number of those subcommittees have either met or are in the process currently of meeting.

I would like to get some idea of process because obviously the question I get asked on a regular basis by many of the 5,000 people who have signed the petition which I have been tabling on virtually a daily basis, many of the people who are at the meeting, is what the status of the cuts are. I would very much appreciate an update, if the minister could give me that, as to when we might get some idea of what of those guidelines in August will still be in place, what of the cuts will be permanently put on hold.

In the case of the Thompson General Hospital, as the minister will remember, there were concerns about the emergency ward, intensive care unit, a number of the wards being amalgamated. There have been some restructurings that have taken place internally since that time, Madam Chairperson, and some changes in the hospital related to mental health.

* (2120)

I have said those are very positive moves. I have said it in Thompson. I will say it again on the record. I am not asking in that context; I am asking

in the context of the rural hospital guidelines, the positions, as I said, that were supposed to be cut and the beds.

I point out just for the record that, as the minister heard, the hospital has actually reduced hospital beds by approximately 15 because of its own internal financial pressures over the last number of years, so they have been doing quite a bit in that area. There is some concern in terms of the degree to which some of the cuts have already gone too far—there is considerable debate in the community—and the hospital is currently in the position of having dealt with some of the significant inherent financial problems that were there. To defend the hospital, I think it should be placed on the record a lot of those were because the hospital was providing services that were not necessarily funded.

Case in point, it was with chemotherapy, where there was some question as to whether chemotherapy was being fully funded by Manitoba Health. In fact a local group, Madam Chairperson, the Thompson Hope and Cope Group fought very hard to ensure that the chemotherapy was kept in place, and it is very much to their credit that it was kept in place. In fact, there was an opening just recently of a new chemotherapy room that is still possible because of the fact that allocation was made directly to chemotherapy.

I know the Department of Health was very clear in that in its direction with the hospital. I want to state that on the record too. That was one of the original concerns, and I know the minister may have read some of the petitions which predate the clear statement that was put forward by Manitoba Health and the hospital on chemotherapy.

I want to thank, by the way, Manitoba Health for that on behalf of the people in Thompson. In fact in the Hope and Cope Group, which is a cancer support group, there are a number of people who worked very hard on that. J.C. Perrier, in particular, was very instrumental in that.

My concern is just to get some indication where we are at and when we will get some indication as to the final decisions on the rural hospital guidelines.

Mr. McCrae: I think it is reasonable that the honourable member is getting questions about this issue. It is also reasonable that I give some indication to him so that he can share the information with those who are asking him the questions.

It is true I visited Thompson and if accolades are going one way, they should go the other way, too. The honourable member did indeed play a key role in making sure that there was a successful meeting in Thompson. He played a role, I think a commendable role, in ensuring that the meeting was not a stacked meeting. It was not a meeting that got out of hand. It was a perfectly productive meeting, in my view. So I say that about the part played by the honourable member.

Similarly in Flin Flon, the member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie) was part of the meeting process that I engaged in in Flin Flon. I also met with the hospital board, administration, nursing staff at The Pas and I could go, you know, from Swan River to Dauphin to Ste. Rose and all down that side and all up the other side and, after we have named off 45 communities, that is how many I visited, including Churchill. That was for a purpose. I recommend it for any new Minister of Health that that happen, that you also get your briefings from the department, but that you take lots of time to listen to the care providers and consumers in the various communities in Manitoba.

As a result not of all of those meetings, but very shortly after my appointment, I determined that the staffing guidelines may well be appropriate, but there is just a chance, too, that maybe we could have been pushing the observance of those staffing guidelines more quickly than good hospital practice might have dictated. Therefore, I asked that those guidelines and action taken on them be put on hold, as the famous expression that was then used many times in many other contexts to say that health care reform was on hold. Well, health care reform has not been on hold, as you can tell by many announcements, all of them positive, I suggest, with regard to better health care delivery in Manitoba.

Certainly those staffing guidelines were causing people, patients or would-be patients, staff, communities some concerns that I felt were reasonable to be addressed in a proper way. So I said, we are going to review those staffing guidelines. Well, I have to be very honest and forthright with you and tell you that I thought that could be done relatively quickly in a way we could continue with whatever needed to be done. But there is a little more to it, which I learned, and Mr. Frank DeCock, Associate Deputy Minister of Health, was instructed by me to make sure you consult widely and get a really good picture of which direction we should be going to ensure that patient care was observed as a bottom line.

So, as part of this whole exercise, we have several subcommittees of our guideline advisory committee. The first one I will mention—and this is in no particular order—has to do with administrative and support. There are working groups established as part of that subcommittee dealing with salaried physician program support staff, dealing with business office, dealing with admitting, medical records and switchboard, dealing with physical plant, materials management, laundry, housekeeping and linen, dietary. That is the administrative and support subcommittee of this guideline review committee.

Then there is the diagnostic and therapeutic. Now, that first subcommittee had seven working groups attached to it. This second subcommittee has five, and they deal with pharmacy and social services. They deal with physiotherapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy, speech language pathology. The next subcommittee deals with laboratory imaging, respiratory. The fourth subcommittee—it is a working group—deals with clinical dietitians, and the fifth one deals with aboriginal interpreters.

Then also as part of this guideline review committee, we have nine working groups dealing with nursing and that is medical-surgical pediatric first, deals with obstetrics; psychiatric; special care emergency and observation; extended treatment and juxtaposed personal care; surgery and OR; chemotherapy; hemodialysis; and the ninth one is

discharge planner, in-service staff health and infection control.

Now in all of these committees and subcommittees all dealing with the staffing guideline issue, on all of those we have chairs for each of them. There is representation from the various communities in Manitoba on all of these working groups—not on all, but in the whole scheme of things. We have input by the Manitoba Association of Licensed Practical Nurses. In fact, I see in the one case here the head of the obstetrics nursing subdivision is the president of the MALPN.

We also have represented the Manitoba Association of Registered Nurses, the College of Physicians and Surgeons. MHO members are involved in many of these. I cannot remember the name, but there is a rural consumer group headquartered in Portage. That organization has representation, but the Consumers' Association of Manitoba is also involved in this review.

I think it is fair to say we are taking this extremely seriously, Madam Chairperson. I spent some time last fall trying to assure people that is exactly what we were going to do. We were going to take this seriously. At that time, there was the odd comment flying around, that, you know, we will just wait for the election to be over, the by-elections—no, the federal election, that was it. We were going to wait for the federal election to be over, and then we will just go ahead with our plans, but we still have not gone ahead with those—

* (2130)

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): It was the by-elections and the provincial election. That is what we said, so do not misquote us.

Mr. McCrae: There you go, okay. The honourable Leader of the Opposition says, first there were the by-elections, then the provincial.

The fact is, we still have yet to complete our work. During the months of April and May, there have been meetings of all these various groups dealing with physical plant. That was on April 25. I can go right on through again, but I know there are time constraints, right down to Friday, the 3rd

day of June, which is the aboriginal interpreter and the nursing groups completion meeting. There is a whole stack of them. Then on the 13th, there is a nursing advisory meeting and the 14th, a nursing advisory meeting. This is into June now. At that point, we expect that we will have a preliminary report from this guideline advisory committee. So we are consulting extremely widely, broadly, and hearing from the people who, I think everybody agrees, have a knowledge.

Ultimately, I do not know exactly what we are going to find, but I am advised that some hospitals in Manitoba have been abiding by these guidelines all along. Some have, over the years, allowed their staffing complement to inch up and up and up to the point where it does become unfair to some communities to have a patient-staff ratio quite a lot higher in other communities, and it does need to be addressed. I think any fair-minded person would agree with that. The honourable member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) has asked about process. I think that kind of covers process.

Northern hospitals especially and people who work in them made it clear to me that in their view, acuity of patients' conditions is at higher levels than elsewhere. We have data bases that can show us whether that is the case or not the case. We also have differently configured buildings which I am satisfied is a factor here, because if you just look in the hallways of some hospitals and compare with the hallways of others, or those who are on several levels as opposed to one, there are differences that can have an impact on the staff requirements to make sure patients are kept safely.

Depending on your ratio of long-term care people—the member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie) said there were a number of those in the Flin Flon area. Well, they do not require the heavier staff-to-patient ratio as you will require in an acute care situation. All of those things, I need to be satisfied, have been taken into account before we insist on the staffing guidelines.

In the meantime, time is passing and we recognize that. We cannot allow this to go on forever. One of the fortunate things about the passage of time is that hospitals are also able to

manage their staff complements so that if we can use the intervening time to assist in making sure that any job disruption or position reduction should happen as a result of this review, that maybe there will not be people in those positions because of the passage of time. That is something else that just is a by-product of this pause or this hold.

I just want to underline that there is very significant northern representation on all of these committees, so that the honourable member can report that as well. He has talked about a number of other items respecting Thompson. He has acknowledged some positive changes and some concern areas as well regarding emergency and intensive care and then, on the other side, mental health service, improvements in obstetrics and things like that.

I do not know whether we need to call one positive and one negative anymore, because as long as we are looking after the patient and we put that as our bottom line, and we treat our employees sensitively and with some compassion, remembering the kinds of communities they come from—in Thompson, for example, there are not a whole lot of part-time people, as I understand it, so the flexibility is not quite the same as it might be in some other larger southern communities. There is not that much flexibility in any of the smaller communities because there is only so much of a labour market to draw from and only so much of a labour market to put to work.

I think the honourable member referred to some beds being closed, but that was an internal hospital thing, he pointed out. I remind him, too, that some beds are going to get opened for mental health service delivery. In the history of the Thompson hospital, the honourable member will not deny and he will agree that the Thompson hospital is a regional centre. There are some parallels between Brandon and Thompson. They are not all perfectly appropriate, but Brandon is a regional centre. It provides services to—[interjection] Brandon hospitals provide services far and wide and so does Thompson. I recognize—[interjection]

Now, you are No. 3. [interjection] Right. I recognize the strategic location of Thompson and

the services provided out of the Thompson General Hospital. We are even looking at—and we have already done so—discussions with the University of Manitoba, the medical school, with respect to the use of Thompson as an affiliate teaching hospital.

These things make sense to me because you only have to visit Thompson once or twice, and I have done it a few more times than that, to know that the people who live in that area are committed to their community and they are committed to continuing to deliver service to people from far and wide. If you understand a little bit about the North, you do come from far and wide to Thompson for services that you need.

So I think in a realistic world, in a time of renewal of health care, some of it driven by the absolute necessity to do so because of budgetary considerations and some of it just because it makes plain good sense, we are trying very hard to work in a phased way and in a very careful way, bringing as many Manitobans as is practicable into the discussions, so that hopefully—not hopefully—I fully expect that we will in the future be delivering higher quality care to people in the North out of that Thompson General Hospital because of its, as I said, strategic location.

Now, the honourable member mentioned something about chemotherapy, and I did not catch that part of the question.

Mr. Ashton: Madam Chairperson, in terms of chemotherapy, it was the fact that that had been resolved. The department made it clear to the hospital that it wished to see the level of chemotherapy maintained, and that it was presumed to be a funded service. There was some dispute back and forth with the hospital. So that has been resolved.

The reference I made was the fact that the original petition was concerned about the hospital beds that I mentioned before and also the positions that are being cut and chemotherapy. The chemotherapy part has been resolved. The other matter is being dealt with by the process the minister talked about.

I just want to briefly deal with a couple of other items. I want to just indicate that I appreciate the information from the minister. I will be continuing to raise it, Madam Chairperson, in the same way that I have done since this arose. I think the minister will find a lot of similarities to Brandon in the sense that the minister and I disagree on a lot of issues. We may disagree on a lot of health care issues, but I am sure he finds the same in his community. A lot of the people were distributing the petitions.

We do not agree on our politics. Some of us do. It was a real grassroots, nonpartisan petition, because we are all concerned. It is our community hospital. It is our community's hospital, and I want to emphasize that because there was significant concern from every community in northern Manitoba that is served by the Thompson General Hospital, and there are a considerable number. So it is a major concern.

I have said on the record in Thompson, and I said it at the meeting, and I will say it again, that if there are positive developments, I will give credit where credit is due. Mental health, going back even to the previous minister—and I must admit, I probably agree with the previous minister a lot less than I would even agree with the current minister, and even then, we have quite a few issues of disagreement, but mental health is one area we have supported in terms of the process taking place. I support it as critic, and I want to state that the allocation of the beds to Thompson is long overdue.

I just want to deal very briefly with a couple of areas that I hope the minister will look at in terms of the future situation in terms of northern health care, because there are a number of problems that actually arose out of that meeting which I thought were indicative of the fact we need to look at the North as a whole in terms of a lot of the issues. One is the lack of co-ordination between communities, particularly aboriginal communities.

We have the medical services system which deals with treaty communities. We have Northern Affairs communities that have very limited health care services, and you end up with a dilemma there

in the Northern Affairs communities because of the \$50 user fee for northern patient transportation. There are people in those communities now who are not accessing health care in Thompson. They are having to think twice before they go, because there are not physicians who go into the communities. In the treaty communities, there are physicians who are sent out by medical services.

* (2140)

I have written to the minister, and I would like to ask publicly again for the department to be looking at co-ordinating services into Northern Affairs communities, physician services to ensure that people can access even the most basic physician services in their own community. Most Northern Affairs communities, there is often nothing more than a nursing station. So that is the first issue I want to put on the agenda in terms of co-ordination.

The second is co-ordination with medical services, because I believe there is a lack of an aboriginal health care strategy. Some of it has come up in terms of the question with hospitals early discharge. Hospitals that deal with their concerns on budgeting are looking at early discharge.

It creates major problems when you are discharging people in the remote communities where you have travel problems, where you have lack of sewer and water and when you do not have the support services such as home care available. So I believe there has to be co-ordination with medical services, as well, between the province and medical services, so there are those particular issues.

A further issue arises in terms of transportation, whether it be northern patient transportation or ambulance itself. In terms of northern patient transportation, I mentioned the \$50 user fee. It is still a major concern. It is creating a lot of problems particularly in remote northern communities but also in communities such as Thompson. I have seen people who were unemployed who have to go to Winnipeg. A lot of uncertainty is whether they have to pay the \$50 or not. I believe the minister should look at that.

I believe also, and I would recommend to the minister that northern patient transportation be reviewed, period. It was brought in by the Schreyer government, it was a major plus for northern communities, but there were a lot of difficulties with it. There were a lot of areas that are not covered that perhaps should be, and there are people in very difficult circumstances who are not able to get coverage.

I have a case that I am approaching the minister on. I will not deal with it now because I want to give the minister the opportunity to deal with it directly first, so I will give him that information privately. But it is indicative of that. It is a case involving a woman who was not able to go as an escort for her husband who is suffering from cancer and has to come to Winnipeg for treatment. So there are lots of concerns in that area.

In terms of the aeromedical transport, I would like to ask again what the latest status of that is, because there are problems. A significant concern in a lot of remote communities is the length of dispatch time. I have recently written to the minister in that regard. You have waits of up to three hours in communities that are 40 air miles from Thompson. People are quite concerned about the process that is put in place. The previous minister had the review put in place. There is a lot of concern about the follow-up in terms of that particular review.

Another issue that is a concern in northern Manitoba was raised by the member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie) in his own area, and it is a concern in Thompson, the need for personal care home spaces. There is a significant number of geriatric patients that do not really require hospital care, require a personal care home, and there just is not a personal care facility in Thompson.

I recently looked at the demographics, and we are rapidly approaching the point where we do have that level of demographics to support a personal care home when you account for the surrounding communities. One of the concerns is that people leave Thompson. They leave because they know at some point in time they might need a

personal care home so they leave before that happens. That happened in my own family.

What happens is, it becomes a self-fulfilling prophesy. You do not have enough elderly people in the census to have a personal care home, and when you start getting close to it those people leave. We have a lot of people retiring early from INCO right now, and we are concerned as a community to maintain as many people as possible in Thompson. One of the key factors people say, if I need a personal care home in 10 or 15 years where am I going to go?

So there are a lot of overall structural issues that I would urge the minister to look at. I have corresponded on a number of them, but I think also that he will find some that relate to some of the other issues he is dealing with. Northern patient transportation is a good example.

If you tie in improved physician services you improve the regional facility in Thompson, you save on northern patient transportation. So some of them actually can save money elsewhere in the system.

It is the same thing in terms of personal care homes. If people are properly placed in a personal care facility, and not using up scarce hospital beds, you do not run into some of the budgetary pressures you have seen in place in Thompson.

So I would urge that we not only focus on the rural hospital guidelines, and I, by the way, believe that many of the guidelines will be shown not to be applicable, particularly in northern communities, particularly in Thompson with acuity of care and the fact that staffing ratios in Thompson are already below the average in terms of many of the boards, but in a lot of cases, I think you have to go beyond strictly just focusing on the immediate problem, which were the rural hospital guidelines, the impact it would have, and look structurally, and I am quite willing to sit down with the minister. The citizens' group that we have is quite willing to sit down.

We have a lot of ideas on how health care can be improved in northern Manitoba, and quite apart from any political differences we might have,

including on health care policy, and I admit that those are in place, I am available, and the committee in Thompson is available to raise these concerns. If the minister wishes to return to Thompson, perhaps to discuss the more long-term concerns, that can be arranged at any time.

Thank you, Madam Chairperson, for the opportunity to put these issues on the record.

Mr. McCrae: Madam Chairperson, the honourable member is achieving two objectives, and both of them are laudable. One of them is to place on the record and ask questions about health concerns in his region, but the other is to assist his colleague, the critic for Health, through a time when not only yesterday but today, later on in the day, he is experiencing some problems, I think, with his own health. I think that is laudable that the member for Thompson would help out in that way, because I—even though the member for Kildonan and I sometimes, in a very animated way, disagree with each other, we both care about the health of each other and our fellow citizens.

Madam Chairperson, I do not want to get as far down the road as the honourable member for Thompson in terms of speculation on the work being done by all of those people whom I referred to who are working on the staffing guidelines. I know if I were an opposition member and that was my hospital, that I would take that approach too. I think I would. I would probably have this irresistible urge to say, yes, but my hospital needs more and more. And that is perfectly understandable.

Mr. Doer: It is our hospital.

Mr. McCrae: Well, he is referring to it as his hospital in the sense that it is in his constituency. Of course, it is my hospital too. If I get hurt on my next visit to Thompson in such a way that I need hospital care, I am going to want to be there at that hospital, and that day it will be my hospital too. So I agree with the honourable Leader of the Opposition on that point.

But I do say, let us not get carried away with our speculation about what the outcome of these discussions and deliberations will be. We are asking the best minds, who should be looking at

these things, to look at them. Let us let them do that. Then let us have the courage to act on the advice that we are given, and let us avoid the thrill that we might get for being critical of a government that follows the advice that it is given. [interjection] No, of course not.

The honourable member talked about lack of co-ordination between aboriginal communities and the rest of the province. I have to acknowledge some frustration on my own part about these jurisdictional things. This goes back for years and years and years for me. Long before I ever got into politics, I was frustrated by the treatment that aboriginal people received. Not that it was better or worse, but that it was so different from that received by other Canadians.

I still do not think it is right, and I say again, I commend the federal minister on trying to make a difference. I hope he succeeds. Many have failed before him, including some of us in this room who tried in various ways to make a difference and just have not been able to succeed on these jurisdictional issues. So I remain frustrated but remain willing to try to be part of the solution rather than a continuation of the problem.

Those co-ordination things are better known by people who live in those communities than me. We are dealing with a government, when it is dealing with medical services branch, that, no matter what its stripe, is distant from us and here where I believe that the federal Manitoba First Nations' effort—I hope it bears fruit and I hope it will be a good model for the rest of the country. But I hope some people will have the courage to take some risk, because if nobody ever takes a risk about change, we will never make change, and that is worse than doing nothing, because it is absolutely deplorable the way it is now.

Without being more specific than that, I think the resolution of some of those things will sure make the member's job and my job easier when it comes to discussing health care in reserve communities and amongst aboriginal neighbouring communities and so on.

* (2150)

Those are not easy issues for me, and they are not all my fault, although if I do not try hard enough, then it will be my fault. But those are not all my fault. I do not know whose fault they are. That is the trouble. Nobody does. We can blame the federal government if we want, but it is not going to make any difference. We know that, from over 125 years of experience, blaming the federal government has not really gone any distance whatever in alleviating the inequities that clearly, in my mind and in many other people's minds, exist.

But I continue to challenge the federal government, I continue to challenge aboriginal leadership, I continue to challenge my own colleagues in this House and in the government not to let all of these jurisdictional problems get in the way of some progress that we can realistically make. So I am hearing what the member says, and I will use whatever powers of persuasion I have to try to make improvements.

With respect to the aeromedical transport issues, I will just put something on the record here for the honourable member. On February 1, Manitoba Health introduced a standard for licensing basic air ambulances. The standard was developed as a result of a broad public and professional consultation process.

Following introduction of the standard, a number of groups such as the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, the Central Air Carriers Association and the Medical Services Branch of Health Canada expressed some concern with the proposed air ambulance licensing process and standards. In response to these concerns, Manitoba Health is establishing a committee under the chairmanship of Dr. Brian Postl to review outstanding issues arising from the implementation of an air ambulance licensing process.

I have been involved in some meetings on this, and I got the sense that some people felt that their point of view had not been taken into account by previous processes. Maybe they were taken into account, but a decision was arrived at that did not suit them. In any event, I have undertaken to

ensure that people who have remaining concerns have another—or first, be it whichever it is—chance to air their concerns and grievances.

The proposed medical standards and basic medical equipment schedules have been forwarded to the standards committee at the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Manitoba for review and any suggestions they may have for improvement. The stakeholders in the air ambulance field have been invited to appoint a representative to the Air Ambulance Licensing Review Committee.

There are some who say, well, these things take time, and they do. However, I tend to think sometimes if you just, in the interests of making a quick decision, walk over the concerns that legitimate players have, that is not the right answer. This has been some time in the resolution, but I am hoping that one more go-around will give us an opportunity to make the right decisions. Even then, there might be people disappointed, but at least we are not going to have people suggesting that the process left them out. I am not going to support that. So we have been asking the stakeholders to invite representatives to the Air Ambulance Licensing Review Committee.

The honourable member ought to remember a couple of things we have learned, as a result of having the Manitoba Centre for Health Policy and Evaluation, about northern Manitoba. While it is true that the health status of northerners is not at the level of the health status of southern Manitobans, that is something that our studies, if we did not already know it, reveal.

It is true that those people use the system more than those whose health status is better, but what is interesting is that the centre has told us that those people have access to our system and use the system as much as other people do. So what the centre has said is that people who require health services get those health services, but it is clear that there is much more inconvenience involved because of distance.

There is, in my view, as in the view of the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton), too much of this business of travel to southern Manitoba. For

that reason, when I first was answering the member for Thompson I forgot to mention that we have a psychiatric upgrade program, maybe that is the wrong word, but it is a program that trains general practitioners in psychiatric matters, and I think in the first class of six or seven physicians, one was from Thompson. So there is going to be a psychiatrist in Thompson, I know too, but in addition there will be a general practitioner who will have enhanced psychiatric training. How many people? I do not know today. But how many people over the years have had to fly or take a bus or whatever to get all the way to southern Manitoba to access some mental health services? Well, we expect with the full range of services we will be providing in Thompson that will not happen anymore.

That falls into line with what the honourable member said, but it also falls into line with what I am saying, which is that not more service is needed. As the honourable member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) knows, psychiatric acute services have been cut back in Winnipeg, but that is to make for a more equitable system of mental health delivery services throughout the province.

That is when I lose the honourable member's attention when I start talking about that, but what Thompson gained used to be in Winnipeg, but the people from Thompson were going to Winnipeg to access. That makes no sense to me, so we have placed it in Thompson. The only trouble is then the member for Kildonan gets after us for changes in the acute system in the Winnipeg hospitals. [interjection] Well, the honourable member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) benefits, and his constituents, but there is a perception that the people in Winnipeg do not even though they are getting improved and community-based mental health services. So you cannot win, I suppose, sometimes on these issues, but all I ask is for some reason from my honourable friends opposite.

What I am saying, and I am hoping my honourable friends will come around to, I know if they were in government they would end up agreeing quite quickly, that not more, we do not need more, we need better, we need different

quality, we need community based as opposed to the extent that we have had hospital-based services.

The last thing I say to the honourable member for Thompson is to remember that the existence of the Burntwood health region, which we expect to be part of our regionalized health system where you are going to have people from all over the region taking part in decision making to improve health service delivery in the Thompson area, that will be a very significant improvement in terms of more local autonomy, more regional and local decision making than in the past.

I hope this government is in office for a good long time so we can continue the work of improving health services in northern Manitoba.

Mr. Doer: I am glad to see the minister come up for air there for a minute—two minutes of questions and quite a long time for answers.

I have a question pursuant to the minister's 45-facility tour that he talked about earlier in his recommendation that any new Minister of Health engage in the same kind of in-service direct contact with health care facilities.

I had the occasion to visit a number of facilities over the last number of months, but I did have—in particular, I want to talk about the Shoal Lake-Strathclair citizens' health care centre committee and the Shoal Lake facilities. Now, I know the government has not tabled its capital estimates to date. I suspect they have a fairly good idea of what they are going to have in those capital estimates. I was very impressed, with, first of all, the work of the voluntary committee, the volunteers in the Shoal Lake community and the health centre committee that they had formed. I was also very impressed with the cost-saving measures they had taken in their own health care facility. They had closed some resources in dietary and administrative resources, and they had made some savings, so that, in fact, as I understand it, they were 2 percent over the global budget before they even issued the staffing guideline that was put in review.

* (2200)

They feel, and I have been persuaded by looking at the demographics and the traffic patterns in that community, that they have a strong case to be made for consideration under the capital budget of health care. They have a proposal, as I understand it, to proceed with a small hospital and to have it adjacent to the personal care facility. The hospital would have 14 beds; it would have a medical clinic; space for community health services, which I think is consistent with the government's plan; and the 20-bed addition to the personal care homes. It would all be attached to the present site, the 40-bed facility, and it would have cognitively impaired programs for the surrounding communities, which, again, given other decisions government has made in other departments, seems to me to make a lot of sense. They feel that this would save operational money because of the one physical plant; presently there is more than that. They would not be duplicating any of the departments of laundry, housekeeping. They would share equipment; they would have a reduction of their on-call personnel. They feel that these savings would result in about \$150,000 in operating savings. They feel it also is consistent with good patient care, being under one roof.

This facility, as I understand it, was built in stages from 1930 on. They have had some renovations over the years, but they are facing a major need of renovations dealing with heating and plumbing and the roof. They feel it is justified to proceed. As I have mentioned, they have got the demographics, which I have reviewed; I am sure the department has. They also have the highways; Highway 16 and three major highways actually have junctions close to the community. An accreditation team, according to the community, has found the aging buildings in their survey in 1988, 1990 and again 1992. There was a concern raised by the accreditation board. Shoal Lake was commended for its continuing efforts to replace the present acute care facility. The minister is aware of this, I know, because he did meet with this board. Their efforts to replace the facility were stalled with a letter from the minister, the Manitoba Health, stating all projects were on hold due to the health reform, but they feel that there have been

other construction projects in the province that have proceeded notwithstanding this freeze on projects.

So I met with the mayor; I met with many members of the community; I met with volunteers in the community. I know the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) has met with those people. They felt that he was sympathetic to their views. I would like to know, will the government be proceeding with this proposal that has been made on behalf of the citizens of Shoal Lake and Strathclair? What is the status of that project in what seems to me to be a very reasonable proposal to deal with both aging facilities and changing demographics in a much more comprehensive way, which includes health facilities for the community as well as institutional health care?

Mr. McCrae: As the honourable Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer) put the case forward this evening, it certainly brought back my own visit to Shoal Lake and to many, many other communities, 45 of them, but I do not know if I visited 45 facilities. In some communities I simply met with nurses in a hall or something like that, but I do not want to mislead the member. There were lots of visits to facilities, too, and I had the privilege of holding babies and visiting patients. Holding babies is always—I guess it is a nice thing for any politician—but I always get very emotional when it comes to those babies because of our own experience in our family. The honourable member no doubt knows about those experiences.

The visit I had in Shoal Lake brought forward the issues that the honourable member has brought forward. There is also, I am sure, in Shoal Lake a recognition about the realities of capital budgets and the needs to look at the needs throughout the province, and the honourable member knows all about that, too. I commend him for bringing forward the concerns that were made known to him on his visit to Shoal Lake. Unfortunately, for me, I have the job of making the decisions for the whole province. No doubt the Shoal Lake project is something that is in the capital planning of the department, and I guess it is a question of when these things will happen. That is the burning issue at this particular time.

Our capital budget will be coming out. I do not know if the honourable Leader knows about it, but we have agreed amongst us that because it is not quite available, we will probably move on after tonight to other areas of Estimates and return to the capital budget at a later date, at which time we will unveil our plans for this year.

Interesting though to note, I believe that our capital budget bottom line is up from the previous year which says a lot about—is it not? Have I got that wrong? I thought I had it right. I am thinking about our whole budget for the province. Our capital budget as a province is up, is what I should have—

An Honourable Member: In Health or as a province?

Mr. McCrae: For the province. We are up over a billion—[interjection] Well, the honourable member will find out more about—

An Honourable Member: Well, you made a statement. Is that correct or not?

Mr. McCrae: I am sorry?

An Honourable Member: You made a statement that the capital budget in Health was up over last year. Is that true?

Mr. McCrae: I referred to something else.

I say to the honourable member, the budget for the province of Manitoba, including all of the capital expenditures of government and the hydro and telephone, is up over \$1 billion, so that if I made some other comment that sounded like something else, the honourable member can make of it what he pleases. The capital budget of the Department of Health will be coming forward in due course.

I do say to the honourable member that it is better, the approach that we take to rural health and health delivery throughout the province. The one that we take is a better one than we see elsewhere, and that is important, and it is very relevant. It is not good enough to say, oh yes, but let us just talk about Manitoba and all of our problems. Well, we are not without problems in Manitoba. We acknowledge that, but those problems are in a better position to be solved with the approaches we

are taking than the approaches taken in other jurisdictions.

I only say that to make a comparison, not to be critical of the other jurisdictions. I am not critical of Saskatchewan. I am only critical of some aspects of Ontario. When they made a decision that they had to reduce their hospital boards and close hospitals and so on, those were decisions that needed to be made in Saskatchewan for reasons that are well known to everybody, that those decisions had to be made.

Now, I am just saying that to use that by comparison, we are not doing that in Manitoba. Shoal Lake is not losing its hospital. That is not what is happening. Shoal Lake is looking at a future and plans, and the Department of Health is working on those plans with them. The other option is to go around closing a lot of hospitals in rural Manitoba. We are not doing that. So I want the honourable member and the people from Shoal Lake to know what I say here is exactly what I would say in Shoal Lake, and that is, that is not the course we have chosen.

There is one hospital, and that is the Brandon Mental Health Centre, and we are doing that in a phased way. We are doing that with the co-operation of, I think, everybody around. I hear very little in the way of difference in terms of the policy behind that move. We are working with the Manitoba Government Employees' Union to take full account of the service provided over the years by the staff there and trying to make sure that they are properly employed after all is said and done. We hope that the job impact at Brandon Mental Health Centre will be minimal, compared to the number of people who actually work there.

That is what I say to the honourable member and I say to the people in Shoal Lake too, that we will continue to work with them and make sure that the health needs of the people of Shoal Lake are met.

* (2210)

Mr. Doer: Madam Chairperson, I think the minister, when he reads Hansard, will see and will read it as well tomorrow that he basically stated that the capital budget in Health was up over last year, but we know that the budget—

Mr. McCrae: It may or may not be, but that will—a point of order, Madam Chairperson.

Point of Order

Mr. McCrae: Whatever the honourable member heard me say, I will make it very clear today: The capital budget for the Department of Health may or may not be up or down from last year. That is hardly the point. Are we meeting the needs of the people out there? That is the real point.

Madam Chairperson: Order, please. The honourable Minister of Health does not have a point of order. It is clearly a dispute over the facts.

Mr. Doer: Well, that is why I will read Hansard and not even dispute the facts. Of course, it was the Minister of Health who made the statement. I did not ask him whether it was up or down over the last year or so. If he argues now that that is not relevant to the issue of patient care, he is arguing against his own statement that he started off with on the question of Shoal Lake.

The minister mentioned Saskatchewan and said that we are not going to do it like they did in Saskatchewan. I mean, the minister knows that the amount of facilities built through a period of time in Saskatchewan and the demographics and utilization rate of those facilities—it was dramatically different than what has happened in Manitoba over the last, I would suggest, 10 or 12 years. I believe that, if anybody had watched, not government material coming out of Saskatchewan, but had witnessed the W5 show investigation of what happened in Saskatchewan, where the average patient stay or average patient per hospital was one or two per facility—I think we are talking different demographics and utilization rates and different capital investments over the years than what has gone on in Manitoba.

I do not believe that we have got to the situation—I do not think we expanded to the degree that Saskatchewan did, and we also have not suffered the loss of population in the last 10 years of over 100,000 people as Saskatchewan has. We went up in population in the 1980s. We are now stagnant in the last three or four years, but

there is a totally different—you know, I think we have to be respectful of demographic changes and aging population.

I would just ask the government to review this project on its merit. There is a concern that some projects will be reviewed on their merit, and some will be reviewed with additional sensitivity to their merit. This community feels that some communities are equal in terms of the so-called freeze, and some communities are more equal than others and are getting projects approved.

We believe that the project is worthy of merit. They have already, as I said, saved 2 percent of their budget. They feel they can save an additional \$150,000 per year in operating costs, which is part of the goal of transition in health, and I think we all agree with that. I would just like the minister to look at this proposal and give it consideration.

The minister said it is in the capital mix. We do not know where that is. Is it a tabled proposal? Is it an approved proposal? Is it approved for architectural drawings? Is it approved for capital down the road? I was involved in one year of capital expenditure decisions myself and found it quite interesting to watch the way these projects were approved based on recommendations from the Health Services Commission. I know the last hospital we approved was in Steinbach, I think, if I recall correctly, because I was asked to go out there and speak.

So I just ask the minister to look at that, and look at the proposal from the volunteers in the community. I think they are well intended, and I think they have done their homework both in terms of health care utilization, health care costs and future projections. I think that on all three scores they seem to me have really thought it out, and I would ask the minister to continue.

Finally, we think that their capital budget has gone up in the '94-95 year from \$62 million to \$65 million. So maybe our argument was senseless.

Mr. McCrae: Let us both be very clear of what we were talking about. I will, if the honourable member will. I was referring to our Expenditures Related to Capital, which are printed on page 119 of the supplementary information. That is what I

was referring to. He is right; it has gone from \$62.4 million to \$65.5 million. It has to do with principal repayments on the hospital and PCH Program, and it has to do with equipment purchases and depreciation. So let us be clear and not play too many little games with each other. It does not really take us that far down the road.

The honourable member did refer to hospitals in Saskatchewan being built. I have heard that argument, and I have repeated this story repeatedly, over and over. When I was in Selkirk on federal election night for 4 hours and 45 minutes, the honourable member knew the results long before I did; I was meeting with nurses that night, and the nurses in Selkirk said things like, why are you rebuilding the hospital in a neighbouring community? I responded by referring to the patients being taken care of in that hospital in the neighbouring community, and the nurses and others working in that hospital, and I said, how can you say that? Can you say that to the faces of the nurses who work in that neighbouring hospital or to the faces of the patients who got comfort and help in the neighbouring hospital?

I say the same thing to the member, remember what I said. I was not being critical of Saskatchewan, just calling attention to another way of going about health reform. I say, of those 52 hospitals—I saw W5 too. I made tapes available to the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) and the member for Crescentwood (Ms. Gray) of that W5 program, and it was not to call attention to the Saskatchewan situation anymore than it was to the physician situation in Canada, where we have, according to that program, far more physicians today than we need to have a healthy country. So I say, before you go into the background and defend the Saskatchewan thing, I am not going to do either, one way or the other on that point.

I just say, if you are saying that hospital did not need to be built, well, let us pick a hospital in Manitoba that has a low occupancy rate and close it and tell the people there that you should not have had your hospital in the first place.

It makes a difference to me because, you see, whether you are a Manitoban or a resident of

Saskatchewan, the message is the same. We have varying occupancy rates in Manitoba, some quite low by comparison to others. Is the honourable member going to suggest which ones we shut down in Manitoba? No, he is not.

I will bet you he would think twice if he had the opportunity to close hospitals. He would probably think twice, maybe three times, before he went ahead and did it. The only thing the honourable member leaves open to us is that approach, because he has not laid out his particular policy for health care. He has just said, you cannot do it your way. I will be glad to defend the Ontario experience, he said that, but just do not do anything.

That is not good enough. You see, the people of Manitoba are going to say to the Leader of the NDP, they are going to say, you have to do better than just criticize. You have to come up with an alternative if you want to be the Premier of this province or if you want to be even considered for the job. They are going to say that to the honourable member.

I am sort of saying, well, why do you not get on with it now, because you have something before you. We are in government over here, and you have our policy. You can criticize and take those pot shots and do all those things, but at some point, somebody is going to judge you and say, oh, yes, well, maybe he has a point about the government and maybe he does not. However, what would he do?

We keep waiting for that. I mean, you talked about utilization of those Saskatchewan hospitals. I can show you relatively low utilization rates in places in Manitoba, too, but low as they may be, the people in those hospitals like to know that hospital is there when they need it. The nurses and staff in those hospitals like to have their jobs, and I am doing my darndest to save as many of those jobs as I can. I would like the honourable member to support me when I try to do that.

He says, review the Shoal Lake proposal on its merits. That is exactly what we have been doing, and that is why that proposal has not been dismissed. It is part of our consideration. It is in the

program. The honourable member wants us to move it along. I do not blame him for saying that but take what he says in context with everything else he says, too. When he says hospitals in Saskatchewan are not needed so go ahead and shut them down, that is defensible. I do not know if it is defensible, because if it is not defensible to close hospital beds in Winnipeg, where we know we can do it safely—and the honourable member wants to criticize us and support the MNU for their ad campaigns and the MGEU for their ad campaigns. Let the honourable Leader of the Opposition be very, very forthright as we discuss these things and talk about the whole story.

* (2220)

Indeed, I will review that and all the other capital projects on their merits. Believe me, there are a lot of them with a lot of merit in this province. I have tried to make as much time as I could available, and I am sure the honourable member did too when he visited Shoal Lake, because he appears to have a pretty good understanding of what is going on there.

Mr. Doer: Yes, I just think the minister should know that we do not believe the hospital system in Manitoba has been overbuilt. We clearly do not believe the situation in Manitoba is anywhere equivalent to the situation in Saskatchewan.

I would just look at the basic 100,000 difference population erosion that took place under the Devine government compared to the growth in population—these are Stats Canada numbers, Census Canada numbers—in Manitoba. The population of Manitoba grew in the '80s. They grew about 7,000 to 8,000 per year, right from '81 to about '89. It leveled off in '90, '91. It grew about 2,500 in '92.

We are having an average of about a 1,400-people increase population in Manitoba now, which is basically stagnant growth, but it is different than Saskatchewan, in terms of losing upwards to 100,000, which is really a shame for western Canada. I hope that Saskatchewan is able to turn it around. I hope this Western Premiers' meeting is successful in starting to get an economic strategy for the farm and prairie

producers in western Canada. I am hoping that we can get a co-ordinated approach to deal with the new federal government when they come back in July with their proposals on agricultural support, rural diversification.

Let not the government lecture anybody about advertising. He is sitting with the king of advertisers right now, the Lotteries minister, a half-a-million-dollar ad campaign. Maybe if times were tough that money could be spent on nurses and hospitals and health care.

I think the public, if you were to take a referendum and ask whether you would want that money being spent to promote the Progressive Conservative Party of Manitoba, including pictures of the Minister of Health himself in his own local newspaper, by coincidence, The Brandon Sun, paid for by the Minister of Lotteries (Mr. Ernst), whether they would rather have that money go directly into advertising or—

Point of Order

Hon. Jim Ernst (Government House Leader): Madam Chairperson, the Leader of the Opposition is putting all kinds of incorrect and misleading information on the record here.

First of all, the minister is not doing anything, the Progressive Conservative Party is not doing anything. The Manitoba Lotteries corporation is running an ad campaign.

The Manitoba Lotteries corporation is a Crown corporation that is running an ad campaign no different in context than, for instance, the Manitoba Hydro runs or the Manitoba Telephone System. The Manitoba Telephone System, quite frankly, runs more ads than anybody, so let not the Leader of the Opposition put on the record—

Madam Chairperson: Order, please. The honourable government House leader does not have a point of order. It is clearly a dispute over the facts.

* * *

Mr. Doer: Yes, I am glad the minister feels so defensive that he had to rise in his place and not have a point of order.

I would suggest to the members opposite that if they were to ask their own constituents, if the former Minister of Health and the present Minister of Health and the Minister of Lotteries were to ask their own constituents whether they would prefer to have that lottery money going directly to patients and patient care and nurses in our health care system rather than having it go to ads—
[interjection]

The Minister of Lotteries says that the Manitoba Telephone System advertises. The last time I looked, the Manitoba Telephone System was in a competitive environment and was making tremendous profits or surplus money from long distance. The last time I looked, the Manitoba Lotteries commission had no competitors, except for the Sisters of Charity and all those other organizations the Conservatives have almost put out of business.

I just wanted to ask some questions about Shoal Lake. I will leave it. There are lots of other questions to be raised on health care. I thank the minister for considering the question I did raise. Thank you.

Mr. McCrae: I will resist the opportunity to respond at this time to the Leader of the Opposition because I sense we might be about to pass something.

Madam Chairperson: Item 5.(b) Hospitals and Community Health Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$35,900,900—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$6,652,500—pass.

5.(c) Laboratory and Imaging Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$13,887,000—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$9,683,300—pass.

5.(d) Emergency Health and Ambulance Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$1,011,300—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$3,151,700—pass.

5.(e) Capital Construction (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$539,800.

Point of Order

Ms. Gray: On a point of order, Madam Chairperson, I think we had previous agreement in

the committee this evening that we would not pass this but defer it to the end.

Madam Chairperson: Thank you. I apologize.

* * *

Madam Chairperson: We will stop with the completion of passing up to 5.(d).

Item 6. Insured Benefits.

Ms. Gray: Madam Chairperson, I think the Minister of Health is fairly clear on some of our concerns that we have raised over the last couple of months in regard to the Pharmacare program and the increasing deductibles and some of the hardships that we feel some of these changes have made to individuals.

I recall that the minister, in his beginning statements, when we started the Estimates made a comment—I do not know if I have the quote here—that he did not want to see any—

Madam Chairperson: Order, please. I have just been advised by the Clerk that I think there may be a misunderstanding in terms of (e) Capital Construction. This is not the capital item line in the budget that I understood you would be deferring. It consists of a whole resolution itself, which is 9.(a) and (b).

I am just wondering if there would be reconsideration perhaps to pass this line or really is it the intent of the committee to defer passing this? Pass.

5.(e) Capital Construction (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$539,800—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$226,600—pass.

Resolution 21.5: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$71,807,400 for Health, Health Services, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1995.

I thank the committee for their co-operation.

Ms. Gray: Madam Chairperson, thank you for that clarification.

The minister had said in the beginning of the Estimates, in his introductory remarks, that he did not want to see any situations where individuals would have to re-use supplies or medical

equipment or medicines and that it would create a hardship.

I recall those comments from the minister because I know of situations where individuals, people who are disabled or people who have diseases such as diabetes feel that the increases in the deductibles in the Pharmacare program in fact are causing them hardships. They feel they need to, in some cases, re-use their needles more than once, re-use some of the other things. They feel they are not testing their blood, in the case of diabetes, as often as they should.

My question to the minister would be: If there are situations such as this, what would these individuals do in terms of trying to get their problems addressed so that in fact they are not jeopardizing their own health because of these changes to the Pharmacare program, and not only jeopardizing their own health, but risking their health and perhaps even ending up in hospital in the case of diabetes? If you do not manage and control your diabetes very well, you can end up in hospital, which certainly costs the health care system more dollars.

I am wondering if the minister could comment on what the suggestion would be to these individuals who are raising these issues with us in terms of what do they do about the financial difficulties they are in.

* (2230)

Mr. McCrae: By the way, Madam Chair, I claim for another occasion an opportunity to respond to the last things that the Leader of the New Democratic Party had to say, because he put it as a statement as opposed to a question. Then I wanted to respond and honourable members were going to pass some resolutions so I put off the opportunity, but he talked about things like populations, and I do not know what that had to do with this discussion.

He talked about advertising, and I undertake to show to the honourable member for Concordia (Mr. Doer) the kind of full-page ads being taken out in the Vancouver newspapers, the Victoria newspapers, signed, your Premier, Mike Harcourt, an open letter to the citizens of B.C. about forestry.

This man has been, in his own view, I think, badly misunderstood recently, so he had to do a lot of clarifying. In order to clarify everything, he takes out full-page ads in the Vancouver and Victoria papers.

Of course, if I had more time we could go back to the policy of the New Democrats right here in Manitoba where the Leader of the Opposition himself, when he was the president of the Manitoba Government Employees' Union, referred to all those people who work for the government in its advertising branch, called them all a bunch of apple polishers and was so down on that. Here he stands tonight to complain about Lotteries advertising when people say to me over and over again, why do you not spend some of that Lotteries on Health.

I have two legal-size single-spaced pages here of all of the Lotteries dollars spent on health in Manitoba. The member for Concordia would have you believe, Madam Chairperson—although I do not think you are quite that gullible—that somehow all of this spending is being done to aggrandize government and all of that and our Lotteries monies are not being used appropriately. Well, there is a whole other story which, when I am asked the appropriate question, maybe I will get a chance to answer it.

The honourable member for Crescentwood (Ms. Gray) made a reference to re-using, and I think I might have said that in the context of a discussion about ostomy supplies and I was not interested in seeing people overusing or re-using ostomy supplies. But it would not matter. If it is not the right thing to do, I would be concerned about it, okay. So I would like that to be understood.

The honourable member's question about Pharmacare does not really make a lot of sense. Let me explain why. We have a Pharmacare program whose benefits measure up basically to the benefits elsewhere. In fact, in some places it is absolutely impossible; the deductible is so high that you might as well not even have a program. In all the provinces east of Manitoba, there is no Pharmacare at all if you are under the age of 65 and so on and so on. I have said all these things before. I know

the honourable member is critical of an increase in deductibles and an increase in co-payments, but I want to ensure that we have a Pharmacare program that will be usable by the general public in the future.

With the way costs have been going it was necessary for government to make those decisions. Some day if it ever should happen that the honourable member has the opportunity to be in charge of these things, she will know these decisions are not easy decisions to make. They are not fun. They are not pleasant, but they also are the kinds of decisions that will make sure the life of our Pharmacare program is much longer.

If there is any question about our commitment to Pharmacare, then I answer DPIN. Look at what we are bringing in with our automated card system. We want to ensure that what Pharmacare program we have—and I am still proud that we have one and one that is worth talking about—we are going to be able to provide instant rebates, we are going to make it safer and make it better. There will be better outcomes that we can demonstrate as a result of the DPIN. That DPIN is evidence of our commitment to the future of that program, Madam Chairperson. I want desperately to ensure we have these kinds of programs and not just enjoy them for this generation and leave nothing for future generations.

When the honourable member raises these questions she does the same thing, unfortunately, as Tim Sale did. When Tim Sale made the point that all my numbers were wrong, well excuse me, all his numbers were wrong, and I was able to demonstrate that on a previous occasion.

The cost is driven not totally by huge greedy multinational drug companies. Cost is an issue with Pharmacare. It is not the only issue. The biggest issue is the increase in the number of prescriptions. You can talk about an aging population, and it is true that is going to have an impact on the number of prescriptions, but there is also a use of our health system here that needs to be addressed too, and we cannot ignore that.

That is why the DPIN system will be a safer system and it will look after abuse and it will look

after unintentional misuse too. I call it unintentional misuse because lots of people and their physicians are not always aware they are misusing the system. They are not always aware because they do not have an information database that they can key into and get information in a way that will help avoid this unintentional misuse. So I hope I have answered the member's questions about Pharnacare.

Ms. Gray: No, you have not answered the question. There are individuals out there, regardless of what is going on in another province, whether there are programs or not, there are individuals out there who are, perhaps we can call them part of the working poor who are not being subsidized through social assistance, who have to pay full costs for any Chemstrips in the case of diabetics, or swabs, needles, et cetera.

In fact, there is a support group of nine diabetics and they are saying that because of the costs they have to put out, that people are re-using needles, that some of these individuals are not using alcohol swabs when they are checking their blood after every meal. Chemstrips, which one uses to check your blood, tend to be very expensive anyway, and they are concerned that some of those individuals will be taking risks and not properly looking after themselves because of having to make cash outlays.

My question to the minister is: In the case of these individuals, what can be done to assist these people so that they are receiving adequate care by doing what they are supposed to, which is managing their diabetes very well? In order to do that they need things such as Chemstrips. They need to have re-usable needles that they use only once. They need to have alcohol swabs, et cetera.

Mr. McCrae: I guess if we had a score card going the honourable member would be winning because she is right. I did not answer that part of her question. I will do that now.

I think the honourable member is wrong on this point, because I understand the Life Saving Drug Program to be available in the circumstances described by the honourable member. I have asked

staff to obtain, if they can, information that shows the growth of that Life Saving Drug Program.

The working poor are entitled to apply for benefits under the Life Saving Drug Program. The Life Saving Drug Program criteria are the issue of the nature of the illness and the issue of the ability to finance the supplies and drugs you need.

I think that is the answer to the honourable member's concern, the Life Saving Drug Program.

If the honourable member knows people or knows of people who are in the circumstances she has described, I would like her to encourage them to approach the department for assistance under that program or have the member advocate on their behalf, whatever. I do not want people to be in that kind of circumstance she has described. [interjection]

* (2240)

Just before I get to that, there is an increase, by the way, this fiscal year for the Life Saving Drug Program of \$300,000. The number of people enrolled in that program since '91-92 has expanded as follows: In 1991-92 there were 1,911 people enrolled; in 1992-93 there were 2,142 enrolled; in '93-94, projected because not all the numbers are in yet, 2,304. For '94-95, we project 3,000. That is another nearly 700 from the '93-94 projected, and '95-96, projected 3,600. So you can see the growth of that program, and I can only answer the part about the strips and the needles and things in this way.

I had a meeting with a pharmacist who wanted to raise an issue about the Life Saving Drug Program with me. He brought me a large bag of drugs, needles, definitely needles were in that package, and paraphernalia of various kinds, inhalers and stuff like that, that was left over from a Life Saving Drug Program recipient who had passed away. This was left over. All of those items were in that bag. On the basis of that, I am saying that things like syringes and inhalers and things are covered under that program.

Here are the actual dollars committed to the Life Saving Drug Program over the last few years. Rather than give you every year, unless you want

every year, I can talk about the last six years. From 1988-89, the actual expenditure was \$ 1,336,300, and '93-94, we have an actual for the dollars, but we do not seem to have one for the number of people. We have an actual number for the dollars here of 3,150,000—oh, I am sorry. [interjection] Yes, I see—the actuals for 1993-94 are projected as per the December cash flow, so that is a projected actual for '93-94 of \$3,150,300.

I do not know how many percentage points that is, but it looks like about 100 percent or more growth in the expenditures under that program over those six years. I have to—I lost what I was going to say. It must be getting late. I will stop at that point.

Ms. Gray: Madam Chairperson, I am sure this individual will not mind me using her name, because I believe she has written to the Minister of Health. Sandra Sloan is a woman who lives in the north part of the city of Winnipeg and, in fact, she also was interviewed in the Winnipeg Sun about a year and a half ago when the first increases in Pharmacare came about. So this person is known to the department. Would not the department have referred her to the Life Saving Drug Program at that time if, in fact, she was eligible? That is my first question.

The second question is: for a single individual, what is the income limit in order to be eligible for the Life Saving Drug Program?

Mr. McCrae: That income test, or whatever you want to call it, is very low at the kinds of level of social assistance. Besides that, it is flexible enough. I know the name the honourable member has used. I will make it a point to review that file further.

Here is where it gets difficult. The honourable member may well be able, from where she sits, to take a position that this person's eligibility is clear. Maybe it is, maybe it is not. I do not know. I said I will review that file further.

If somebody says it is hard on them, I can believe that, but for everyone who says that a policy creates some kind of difficulty they did not have before, does that mean government should respond in a way that the honourable member's

question seems to suggest that we should? That is what got us into all this trouble in the first place. I am trying to be very sensitive to the concerns of Sandra Sloan and will continue to be. It may be that we did not direct her to the Life Saving Drug Program and should have. It may be that we did and she does not qualify under that program, but 3,000 other people did.

You have to look at it in that kind of a context. Somebody who has a particularly difficult time has all my sympathy and the honourable member's too. I fully accept that. There are some things we can do and some things we cannot do. If Sandra Sloan's situation is such that she is so poor that she cannot manage, then she should make that point to us and show us.

Unfortunately, in government, we have to say "show us," because if you do not say "show us," you know darn well that people will come along and say, well, since I do not have to show you, I want the money or I want the program anyway. So I hope the member would agree, that is a reasonable thing. Certainly I will review this particular file again.

Ms. Gray: Madam Chairperson, I would hope the minister would review that file, but I also look at those individuals who may be on the borderline of not being able to receive support through the Life Saving Drug Program and still having to pay higher deductibles through the Pharmacare program. I guess it is a matter of priorities and where the department or where the government in general spends its monies.

When you look at these individuals, if we can give them a better quality of life in the community and prevent hospitalization, perhaps that is more important than advertising in every paper in Manitoba about how wonderful the Lotteries Corporation is.

I know that is a different department, but I think when governments have to look at how they spend their dollars and the priorities, I would rather see some of these individuals have a quality of life and be able to function independently in the community, which is what they want to do and not have to utilize the health care system.

Probably the Sandra Sloans of the world are the people who will, in the end, survive and will fight. It is also the people who, unlike her—and again we have received some calls: You know, Mrs. Jones who lives down the street and is 83 years of age, and the deductible has gone up a little bit and she feels that, well, maybe she just cannot quite afford to go and renew that prescription as soon as she should or as often as she should. Those are the individuals that we get concerned about who may slip through the system and over a period of time end up costing the system more because they have had to present at emergency or have had to end up in hospital.

I know it is a difficult decision to decide where government should spend their dollars. I would think that the studies would show that the old idea of an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure, and some dollars spent in this area might be worthwhile in terms of keeping people in the community.

I appreciate the fact that the minister is going to look into that situation. I will talk to Sandra again as well and get some more details because there are other individuals as well that she is aware of. She has concerns about the extra added costs; she also happens to be a disabled person and just the whole plethora of issues related to Handi-Transit and her whole independence. So it is like one more burden and one more thing that is creating stresses on her life. As I say, she is a survivor and will do very well.

An Honourable Member: Is she young, a former secretary?

* (2250)

Ms. Gray: Sandra is certainly under 65. Yes, I think she is a former secretary.

I would hope that the minister may even want to sit down with Sandra and her group and just hear about some of the issues that might assist him when he is looking at changes to programs and what should go on.

Mr. McCrae: I think I know the person the honourable member is talking about. I believe I have visited with her myself. I believe she lives

somewhere in the Maples. I have had the opportunity to chat with her and to receive her mail.

As I say, I will review her file. If the honourable member wants to get more information, that is fine, but we will also look at it from this end.

There are two points here in addition to what the honourable member has said about a stitch in time or an ounce of prevention and all of those things. She also referred to the advertising dollars spent to advertise lotteries—for some other way. It was a bit of a cheap shot, I think, because all—

Ms. Gray: No, I am serious.

Mr. McCrae: Okay, serious. I am serious then, too.

All the dollars raised by the Liberal lottery run out of this Legislature, then maybe the honourable member—I challenge her to place the profits from that in some kind of a trust for some charity. I will do the same thing. It is a question of— [interjection] I do not think it is a question of amount. It is a question of the principle of the thing.

The honourable member is telling me that she agrees with the NDP that the Lotteries Corporation should not be advertising its activities. I am saying, if you feel that strongly about it, then take your own lottery that has been the subject of some comment around here and take your profits and put your money where your mouth is. That is what I say.

Off that, I had to respond because I did not feel it was an appropriate thing.

While we are talking about lotteries, I would like to advertise that lotteries dollars are being spent on the Manitoba Health Services Development Fund. Look at all these programs. The minute I do that, somebody is going to be critical. In fact, I think one of the ads that is out there does show a preadmission program that one of the hospitals, St. Boniface Hospital is engaged in. I suppose the NDP are critical of that too.

You see there are a lot of positive things going on. Unfortunately, governments have these problems. Mike Harcourt in B.C. thinks there are

positive things going on in the forest industry. Maybe there are. I am not as close to that situation as Mike Harcourt, but he feels so strongly about it that he puts in these ads.

I remember the geese, was it not the Mulroney geese or the Trudeau geese. I cannot remember whose geese it was that were flying over the skies advertising what a wonderful country we had. I think it was in '82, and they were the Trudeau geese. The land was strong. I remember Robert Stanfield or somebody saying, yes, the land is strong in spite of Pierre Trudeau.

Let us not get too high and mighty about these things, any of us. I think that the people who tell me, why do you not spend those lottery dollars on health, they do not know that we are. I get calls: Thanks for putting that ad in because I did not know about that. It is about time people in Manitoba did know what exactly their lottery dollars are being used for—the 65 percent of those video lottery terminal profits going to pay for health, education and social services by means of buying down the deficit. That is what that deficit is. It is an expression of the priorities of Manitobans.

What have been the priorities of Manitobans over the years—health, education and social services. That is what we borrowed all the money for. So it is appropriate that gambling dollars be used to buy down that budget. I think it is appropriate that those dollars also be used for rural and urban development as they are being done through the REDI and the Winnipeg program and then the 10 percent that goes directly to the municipalities. They have made a strong case, and they are getting 10 percent of those revenues.

In addition, we have all these other things: the projects in process funded by the Manitoba Health Services Development Fund; additional care and support for the Mental Health Demonstration Project; Ambulatory Cardiovascular Education Program—oh, my goodness, that is in the Brandon General Hospital; oh, that is okay, that is in an NDP riding, the Brandon General Hospital, so I guess it is all right; Integrated Service Delivery project at Mount Carmel Clinic; Prostitutes and

Other Women for Equal Rights; Psychiatric Nursing Education Feasibility Study, Registered Psychiatric Nurses Association of Manitoba, that was their study; Rural Youth Intervention Strategy of the Alcoholism Foundation of Manitoba.

I just wish that clock was not going so fast because there are so many things here, valuable items funded through lottery dollars. All the gambling dollars that flow from the casino down the street go to the Health Services Development Fund, which is all the gambling dollars flowing to health initiatives, and there are other initiatives and other departments as well.

The last thing I will leave with the honourable member who really should not have said what she said about the advertising of the lotteries, because I know that, if she had the opportunity, she knows she would have to do the same thing, just as other governments have to sometimes get a message to the public. Governments, Crown corporations, whatever it happens to be, there are times when it is necessary to get a message—[interjection] The member now wants to know how much money was spent, and I guess it is a question for another minister.

But I say, how many dollars did the Liberal lottery raise, the one that was run out of this Legislature? [interjection] You see, it just goes on and on when you get into that kind of discussion.

Anyway I will change the subject and just remind the honourable member when it comes to medicalization, which is apparently a word—there is also another word “overmedicalization.” That happens, too, and we know that people get sick when that happens and they end up in hospital. Sometimes they die when those things happen.

I am happy that we are addressing issues like that through our Drug Products Information Network. We are going to provide better levels of protection for the people. We are not being Big Brother; we are providing a safer service for people. Yes, we are being Big Brother when it comes to abusers. We are going to try and put an end to abuse, and I think there is lots of support for that.

Mr. Chomiak: Madam Chairperson, I thank the member for Crescentwood (Ms. Gray) for letting me get in on this discussion, and I think we will have a chance to discuss the Lotteries when we get to item 10, but I do have a constituent who regularly phones me who has made a very, I think, interesting observation with respect to the Lotteries ads and they do apply to the whole health care field.

He says, yes, the government ought to be advertising those lotteries, but the advertisement should be to prevent people from participating in lotteries. They should be saying about the dangers of lotteries, and that would save a lot more dollars in the long run. I think it makes for an interesting—a lot of sense.

Mr. McCrae: Would they run that in The Pas?

Mr. Chomiak: Well, probably. Is it eleven o'clock yet? Let us shut it down. Well, we are

going to be here tomorrow, looks like. I have a few more questions, and I know the member for Crescentwood (Ms. Gray) has a few more questions. So, as valiantly as we tried, I think we will probably be here tomorrow to finalize.

Actually, if I were in better shape, I would say, let us just extend it and get it done, but I actually do not think I could probably continue much longer.

An Honourable Member: Committee rise.

Madam Chairperson: Committee rise? As previously agreed, the hour being 11 p.m., committee rise. Call in the Speaker.

IN SESSION

Madam Deputy Speaker (Louise Dacquay): The hour being after 11 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. tomorrow (Thursday).

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

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