



First Session - Thirty-Sixth Legislature

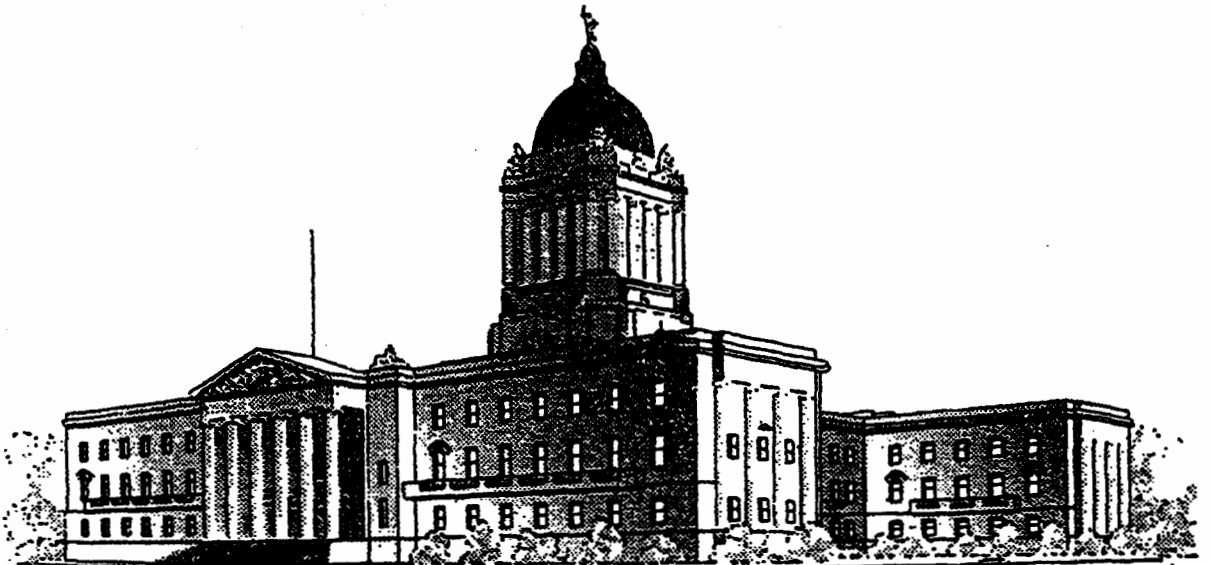
of the

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(Hansard)

*Published under the
authority of
The Honourable Louise M. Dacquay
Speaker*



MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Sixth Legislature

Members, Constituencies and Political Affiliation

<u>Name</u>	<u>Constituency</u>	<u>Party</u>
ASHTON, Steve	Thompson	N.D.P.
BARRETT, Becky	Wellington	N.D.P.
CERILLI, Marianne	Radisson	N.D.P.
CHOMIAK, Dave	Kildonan	N.D.P.
CUMMINGS, Glen, Hon.	Ste. Rose	P.C.
DACQUAY, Louise, Hon.	Seine River	P.C.
DERKACH, Leonard, Hon.	Roblin-Russell	P.C.
DEWAR, Gregory	Selkirk	N.D.P.
DOER, Gary	Concordia	N.D.P.
DOWNEY, James, Hon.	Arthur-Virden	P.C.
DRIEDGER, Albert, Hon.	Steinbach	P.C.
DYCK, Peter	Pembina	P.C.
ENNS, Harry, Hon.	Lakeside	P.C.
ERNST, Jim, Hon.	Charleswood	P.C.
EVANS, Clif	Interlake	N.D.P.
EVANS, Leonard S.	Brandon East	N.D.P.
FILMON, Gary, Hon.	Tuxedo	P.C.
FINDLAY, Glen, Hon.	Springfield	P.C.
FRIESEN, Jean	Wolseley	N.D.P.
GAUDRY, Neil	St. Boniface	Lib.
GILLESHAMMER, Harold, Hon.	Minnedosa	P.C.
HELWER, Edward	Gimli	P.C.
HICKES, George	Point Douglas	N.D.P.
JENNISSEN, Gerard	Flin Flon	N.D.P.
KOWALSKI, Gary	The Maples	Lib.
LAMOUREUX, Kevin	Inkster	Lib.
LATHLIN, Oscar	The Pas	N.D.P.
LAURENDEAU, Marcel	St. Norbert	P.C.
MACKINTOSH, Gord	St. Johns	N.D.P.
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	N.D.P.
MARTINDALE, Doug	Burrows	N.D.P.
McALPINE, Gerry	Sturgeon Creek	P.C.
McCRAE, James, Hon.	Brandon West	P.C.
McGIFFORD, Diane	Osborne	N.D.P.
McINTOSH, Linda, Hon.	Assiniboia	P.C.
MIHYCHUK, MaryAnn	St. James	N.D.P.
MITCHELSON, Bonnie, Hon.	River East	P.C.
NEWMAN, David	Riel	P.C.
PALLISTER, Brian, Hon.	Portage la Prairie	P.C.
PENNER, Jack	Emerson	P.C.
PITURA, Frank	Morris	P.C.
PRAZNIK, Darren, Hon.	Lac du Bonnet	P.C.
RADCLIFFE, Mike	River Heights	P.C.
REID, Daryl	Transcona	N.D.P.
REIMER, Jack, Hon.	Niakwa	P.C.
RENDER, Shirley	St. Vital	P.C.
ROBINSON, Eric	Rupertsland	N.D.P.
ROCAN, Denis	Gladstone	P.C.
SALE, Tim	Crescentwood	N.D.P.
SANTOS, Conrad	Broadway	N.D.P.
STEFANSON, Eric, Hon.	Kirkfield Park	P.C.
STRUTHERS, Stan	Dauphin	N.D.P.
SVEINSON, Ben	La Verendrye	P.C.
TOEWS, Vic, Hon.	Rossmere	P.C.
TWEED, Mervin	Turtle Mountain	P.C.
VODREY, Rosemary, Hon.	Fort Garry	P.C.
WOWCHUK, Rosann	Swan River	N.D.P.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Friday, June 9, 1995

The House met at 10 a.m.

Introduction of Guests

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING REPORTS BY
STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Committee of Supply

Mr. Marcel Laurendeau (Chairperson of Committees): Madam Speaker, the Committee of Supply has adopted certain resolutions, directs me to report the same and asks leave to sit again.

I move, seconded by the honourable member for Emerson (Mr. Penner), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Harold Gilleshammer (Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship): Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure to table the Annual Report for the A.E. McKenzie Co. Ltd. for the year ending October 31, 1994.

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to table the report for the six months ended April 30, 1995, for Manitoba Public Insurance.

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Rural Development): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure for me today to table the Annual Report for the Surface Rights Board.

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister charged with the administration of The Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Act): Madam Speaker, I would like to table the Manitoba Public Insurance Annual Report for 1994.

Madam Speaker: Prior to Oral Questions, I would like to draw the attention of all members to the Speaker's Gallery, where we have with us today His Excellency Dr. Papanliotis, Ambassador of Greece to Canada.

On behalf of all honourable members, I welcome you.

Also seated in the public gallery, we have twenty-seven Grade 7 students from Winnipeg Beach School. These students are under the direction of Mr. Larry Moore, and this school is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Gimli (Mr. Helwer).

On behalf of all honourable members, I welcome you this morning.

* (1005)

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Winnipeg Jets
Public Shares

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): My question is to the acting Premier.

On the 29th of May, the government indicated in this Chamber that the public shares would be 36 percent. On June 1 in the Premier's (Mr. Filmon) Estimates and on June 2 in Question Period, they indicated that the shares had been reduced to 18 percent, 9 percent from the province and the city. This week, Madam Speaker, they, again, reversed their position on that and indicated that the shares would be worth 36 percent. Today, it is reported that a proposal will be made to the current owners of the hockey team and that the shares will be reduced to 24 percent.

I would like to ask the acting Premier, will he table today to the members of this Legislature the total proposal, in writing, in this Chamber, and can he

indicate today, clearly, the specific percentage amount that our shares will be worth in this proposal?

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Finance): As we have consistently indicated to this House, if and when any agreements are concluded and any agreements that we are signatory to on behalf of the province of Manitoba, we will be making available. We will be sharing not only with this Legislature, but we will be sharing with Manitobans.

In terms of the issue of the current ownership by the public sector, by the City of Winnipeg and the Province of Manitoba, the estimated current value of the shares owned by the governments is approximately \$30 million. In terms of any new entity being created, that is the value being attached to the current ownership.

What will happen is that this \$30 million will become part of a total equity pool, which will involve equity being contributed by the current owners to a certain extent and equity being generated by people putting forward money towards this initiative, Madam Speaker.

Once that final total pool of money is determined, our \$30 million will form a proportion of the amount, and it is estimated that this will be in the vicinity of between 20 and 25 percent, probably about 23 or 24 percent.

Winnipeg Jets/Arena Contract Tabling Request

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): The minister has confirmed in his last sentence that we have, in fact, reduced the public shares from 36 percent to 24 percent, contrary to what the government said in this House on three occasions this week, including the Estimates of the Minister of Finance.

Madam Speaker, I find it rather contemptuous of this Legislature that the government would not table, before any announcements are made to this Legislature, the proposal from the provincial government on the proposal to the private owners.

Why will the government not table the proposal in this Legislature, given the fact that we are paying \$37

million for the arena, four times the promise the Premier (Mr. Filmon) made in the election? We are reducing our public shares. We do not have a plan to deal with the \$17-million shortfall in the arena. We are giving away concessions. We are giving away parking, Madam Speaker.

Will the government now table today to the shareholders of this Legislature, the members of this Legislature, the full specific plan in writing, including the plan to make up the 17 percent shortfall on the Winnipeg Arena?

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, first, I want to correct the Leader of the Opposition. There is absolutely no contradiction to any remarks I made during the Estimates process over the course of the last week. What we are saying here today is entirely consistent with everything that was said during the Estimates process.

I have already outlined for the Leader of the Opposition what is currently taking place, and I have already outlined and committed that any agreements, if concluded, if entered into by the Province of Manitoba, will be made public, Madam Speaker.

Winnipeg Jets Operating Loss Agreement

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): I think it is very, very wrong for the government not to make the whole proposal public in this Legislature. I think it is very, very unfair to the people of Manitoba, given the fact that you promised \$10 million would be the limit.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. I would remind the Leader of the official opposition, this is not a time for debate. This is Question Period.

Mr. Doer: Madam Speaker, I would like to ask the government, given the fact that they promised also to cancel the operating loss agreement by May 1, 1995, an operating loss agreement that was signed by the Premier (Mr. Filmon) and the former mayor of the City of Winnipeg, what is their contingency plan to fulfill that election promise of cancelling the operating loss agreement by May 1, which the Minister of Finance

stated in the media before the election and the Premier stated during the election time?

What is their contingency plan to cancel the operating loss agreement if the present owners of the team refuse the so-called proposal, that we do not know about, refuse to accept that proposal?

* (1010)

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, I think what we all should do is wait the outcome of the next day or so.

An official offer did go over late yesterday from the new private-sector investors to the current owners of the hockey team, an offer between those two parties. I believe the new private-sector investors will be providing more details of that offer later this morning.

Everybody has been working towards concluding an agreement here in Manitoba, and as the Leader of the Opposition knows full well, part of that agreement would include the governments no longer being responsible for future operating losses starting immediately with the closing of the agreement, Madam Speaker.

Winnipeg Jets Public Shares

Mr. Tim Sale (Crescentwood): Madam Speaker, the trust of Manitobans has been sadly abused over the past six weeks by this government.

A \$10-million promise has ballooned to a \$37-million commitment. Subsidies have been sought from charitable status for donations. A site is being fast-tracked without adequate time for an environmental impact assessment.

A \$140-million project will not be tendered, and, now, this morning, the Minister of Finance is confirming that a further subsidy has been pumped into this deal. The minister appears to have confirmed that the shares of the public will be worth about 24 percent, he says.

Is the minister then saying that the value of this team today is \$130 million, Madam Speaker? Is that what he is telling this House?

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, I do not accept any of the preamble of the member for Crescentwood whatsoever. It is riddled with inaccuracies.

In terms of the value of the Winnipeg Jets hockey team today, I think most are agreeing that the value of that team is somewhere in the \$80-million to \$90-million value, based on a recent sale in the NHL of another Canadian franchise and based on discussions that the current owners have had with prospective purchasers of the Winnipeg Jets hockey team.

That has been the valuation of the hockey team. That has been the basis of determining the valuation of the public-sector shares today, and that has been the basis of the valuation of any residual that the current private owners have in any future organization, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Sale: Madam Speaker, I would like the honourable member to do a little bit of arithmetic.

Would the Minister of Finance confirm that 24 percent times \$30 million is \$120 million? That is the team value according to this minister today.

Mr. Stefanson: Madam Speaker, I do not need any lessons in arithmetic from the member for Crescentwood, I assure you. I think he should understand any investment in any business venture.

What is happening is everybody is getting credit for the equity that they are bringing to the new organization. The public is bringing equity in terms of current ownership. The existing private owners are bringing some equity in terms of some residual ownership they have, and the public is bringing equity by contributing ultimately, probably, approximately \$80 million of cash towards saving the Jets and keeping them here in Winnipeg.

Mr. Sale: Madam Speaker, will the minister then confirm, based on his immediate past comments, that

there has just been a further subsidy of approximately \$12 million sunk into this deal by virtue of new public-sector equity invested?

Mr. Stefanson: Not at all, Madam Speaker, because what the member for Crescentwood fails to recognize, and I know it is what he wants to see happen, is the only way that equity is realized is if the team is sold. That is the only way that the public will realize any equity, is if the team is sold.

I know they support selling the team, seeing it relocate to the United States and leave our province. That is the NDP position.

That has not been the position of this government. We are working towards a long-term solution. We are working with the support of thousands of Manitobans towards a long-term solution, and that will continue to be the path that we will follow.

* (1015)

Workforce 2000 Tourism Employees

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): Madam Speaker, according to the recent newsletter of the Tourism Industry Association of Winnipeg, Workforce 2000 has a limited time offer of a \$50-a-head signing bonus to tourism employers who enroll their staff in a Workforce 2000 certificate program.

I would like to ask the Minister of Education, why has her government chosen to cut women's programs in community colleges, ACCESS programs, New Careers, and yet has to pay employers to fill up the seats in this program?

Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Education and Training): Madam Speaker, there are several points being addressed in that particular question, some of them not correct, and I think it is important for the record that they be corrected.

I indicate to the member, first of all, that one in five members of the workforce has received training through Workforce 2000 in Manitoba. That is not an

insignificant number, and it is of very great benefit to the province. I am surprised that she does not support those people receiving training to be able to advance in their workplace.

Having said that she does not recognize the benefit of on-site training in the workforce, I should indicate that there have been no cutbacks to women's programs at Keewatin Community College that have been the result of anything done by this government.

The member for The Pas (Mr. Lathlin) yesterday raised a question, taken as notice by the Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Mitchelson), that implied that a private sponsorship program that had finished the amount of funds it had was somehow being cut by this government, a totally inaccurate statement.

Incentive Plans

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): Madam Speaker, can the minister tell us whether such incentive programs, signing bonuses, rebates or other incentives, exist elsewhere in the Workforce 2000 program?

Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Education and Training): Madam Speaker, I thank the member for the question. It is a question, I believe, that would be properly placed during the course of Estimates of expenditures, which we are in right now. Yesterday, in fact, it was indicated to the member that we would have information available on the detailed specifics of Workforce 2000 which we will provide to her. She has written to request detailed information on Workforce 2000. I have a letter in the mail to her with those specifics, which she should receive today or Monday.

We have a broad general overview that can be provided here. That is to say that the program Workforce 2000 has done an incredibly good job of training people in the workforce to become updated, to be relevant, to give incentives to industry, to be partners with education in terms of providing training that the taxpayers would otherwise have to foot or that would be foregone.

So I can provide specific details in Estimates. I would be pleased to do that today.

Grants/Program List

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): Madam Speaker, could the minister make a commitment to the House that in that letter, which she has written to me, will be the full annual listing of Workforce 2000 grants, which she knows I requested on December 19, 1994, again on May 12, 1995, and again in the House earlier this week? Will it be the full listing of the grants and programs?

Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Education and Training): Madam Speaker, I believe I just answered that question by indicating that I have responded to her letter with a listing of all of the grants in response to the question that she asked in her letter, and that is in the interdepartmental mail right now. She should have it today or Monday.

It is a lot of work for the staff to compile. It takes them time. They have done that for me to provide to her. When she gets it, if there is anything about it she would like further detail on, we will again go to the time and the trouble of opening the computers and pulling everything out for her. I am pleased to do that.

* (1020)

Keewatin Community College Women's Sponsorship Program

Ms. Diane McGifford (Osborne): Madam Speaker, my questions are for the Minister responsible for the Status of Women.

Several times this week, my colleagues have expressed concerns about cuts to KCC. Yesterday, the member for The Pas (Mr. Lathlin) questioned the Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Mitchelson) about the end of the women's sponsorship program at KCC.

We are concerned about the nine single-parent women whose educations have been terminated and about the 16 children whom these women share among them. Does the Minister responsible for the Status of Women have a solution for these women and their educational and personal futures?

Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Education and Training): Madam Speaker, it is important for the member to note, and for all members on the opposite side of the House to note, that the government has not cut any Education and Training programs for women at Keewatin Community College. There was a private sponsorship that came from the Limestone Training Agency, and the funding in that has now completed. It is now empty of funds.

We encourage private sponsoring groups to do this type of endowment, this type of sponsorship. We appreciate it when they do, but we cannot force them to provide this kind of funding.

What I do say, Madam Speaker, and I think it is the second part to the answer that is very important to note, is that our support for community colleges is extremely good. We have increased funding to community colleges far above the percentage that their budgets indicate they require. As a result, student enrollment is up, and more access to these courses is available.

Ms. McGifford: Madam Speaker, my second question is also for the Minister responsible for the Status of Women.

Will the minister intercede with her colleagues on behalf of the Keewatin Community College women and perhaps propose a grandfather clause which would protect their educations?

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister responsible for the Status of Women): Thank you very much, Madam Speaker, and the member—[interjection]

Madam Speaker: Order, please. I am certain that the opposition would like to hear the response, given they asked the question.

Point of Order

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Madam Speaker, I believe you will hear that there was heckling coming from both sides.

Madam Speaker: The honourable Leader of the official opposition makes a valid point, and, indeed, I

heard most of the noise, regrettably, from my left ear, but I would ask for the co-operation of all honourable members in ensuring that a response is heard.

* * *

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Speaker, I am happy to go over with the member the number of incentives, the number of programs which this government has put in place to support women in Manitoba.

However, as the Minister of Education has announced, program decisions are made by the community colleges which are run by independent boards. They are also made as a result of grants which are received from the federal government or from outside agencies.

So, Madam Speaker, this government continues to look to support the position of women in Manitoba.

I point again to the Training for Tomorrows Scholarship which this government instituted, which was instituted from the Women's Directorate, to support women in programs in which labour market forecasts indicate there will be jobs at the end, and, in fact, jobs which should support women economically in a secure way.

Ms. McGifford: My third question is also for the Minister responsible for the Status of Women.

What specific action or specific advice could the minister give to these specific individual women whose careers and personal lives have been threatened by these cuts?

Mrs. Vodrey: Certainly, if people's educational careers have been interrupted, that would be a concern, obviously, to those women, and I am sure that she has recommended, as I would recommend, that they approach the college and find out if there is some interim possibilities with the college or if there is some way they can work with the college to complete their studies or perhaps with the community.

*(1025)

Pharmacare Betaseron

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): I am sure all members of the House are aware of the fact that multiple sclerosis is almost in epidemic proportions in Manitoba. It has one of the highest incidences of multiple sclerosis in the entire world.

Last July, I wrote to the Minister of Health asking why the government was not funding the use of the drug betaseron that has been proved to be very effective in alleviating the symptoms of multiple sclerosis. Can the minister, today, explain to this House why the government is not funding the use of betaseron to multiple sclerosis victims?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, the situation with betaseron is similar to the situation with other experimental drugs whose trials have either not been completed or which have not yet been approved by the Canadian federal authority.

Because betaseron is a drug, as opposed to a nutritional supplement like Lorenzo's Oil, we are not able, at this time, to offer the same assistance. We would like very much to do so upon being satisfied that betaseron is as efficacious as the honourable member suggests. There may have been, as part of the trials, indications that this is so.

If the trials prove that is true, then we would address the honourable member's question. We want to avoid potential dangers of the kind that arose with respect to the drug thalidomide, for example.

Mr. Chomiak: I have written numerous letters to the minister on this matter, and I would like to ask him today, will the minister explain why, last December, in one of his replies to me on this issue, he said that the provinces asked that the Canadian Co-ordinating Council for Health Technology undergo pharmaceutical evaluation of this product—last December.

Can the minister explain whether or not that evaluation has been conducted and completed, because

apparently in December that was the reason the drug was not being funded.

Mr. McCrae: If that had been done and the result had been positive, I would assume the federal drug authority would have taken action by now.

Provinces right across the country would, I expect, respond in the same way I would. Should that approval come, then we would be addressing the honourable member's question more positively.

Mr. Chomiak: My final supplementary: Will the minister undertake today to contact federal officials to try to determine where the snag is in the system and perhaps come back with a time line and time frame, so people who are victims of multiple sclerosis will have some idea as to when they can receive funding for this drug.

Mr. McCrae: I think the honourable member's suggestion is a good one. I suspect that that is being done across the country by ensuring authorities across the country with respect to this particular drug.

I have said I would not want to have any delays that would be bureaucratic in nature, but I think that it is appropriate that these trials be conducted and that we not just rely, as the honourable members suggests, on American decisions to make ours here in Canada.

Quebec Referendum Manitoba Position

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Deputy Premier. As we all know, a coalition has been formed in the province of Quebec for the sole purpose of breaking Canada up. I am sure all of us here recognize the importance of Canada staying together. My question to the Deputy Premier is, what is going to be the role of the Manitoba government in ensuring that Canada is, in fact, going to be staying together in the upcoming fall referendum in Quebec?

Hon. James Downey (Deputy Premier): Madam Speaker, I thank the member for Inkster for that question.

I can assure the member for Inkster that I believe that this government—and I hope the members of the opposition, as I could say that I believe the majority of Manitobans—desperately believes in Canada.

We are very proud of our country, and we will do everything that we can to maintain the country that we know as Canada.

* (1030)

All-Party Agreement

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to hear that.

I would ask the Deputy Premier, would the government then, given the comments, entertain the passing of an all-party resolution to indicate to the people of Quebec that the people of Manitoba want Quebec to remain a part of this Confederation?

Would the Deputy Premier give the government's consent to see the passage of this resolution before we break for summer?

Hon. James Downey (Deputy Premier): Madam Speaker, as the member knows, there is a process by which agreements and activities between parties take place. We have government House leaders who, I am sure, would entertain that.

I as one member of a government and an individual would have no difficulty in recommending to my House leader and to my caucus colleagues that we could proceed on that basis, and I think it would clearly send a message as to Manitoba's position.

Mr. Lamoureux: I am wondering if the Deputy Premier would make the commitment in terms of getting a representative from all three political parties to sit down, work out a resolution, all three political parties inside the Chamber, and come up with a resolution which all of us could find would be passable before summer.

Would he make that commitment to an all-party gesture?

Mr. Downey: Madam Speaker, the commitment that I will make is that this government and this party will do everything we can to keep Canada united. Our House leader, who is responsible for activities in this House, I am sure will take the question that he has heard and advance it appropriately.

Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Prevention Strategy

Mr. Eric Robinson (Rupert'sland): Madam Speaker, yesterday, I had the opportunity of taking part in a workshop on fetal alcohol syndrome in Churchill. I understand there was a similar workshop in Thompson.

My question is for the Minister of Health. Fetal alcohol syndrome is a tragic, preventable situation which deserves a concentrated approach from the provincial government. Given the social and economic consequences of FAS, is the minister prepared to increase educational outreach efforts in this area by increasing counselling and preventative measures?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, our child health strategy includes partnership between my department and the Family Services department and others. It has also been the subject of some pretty important discussion between the honourable member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) and I in the course of the Estimates process.

I think it is becoming very, very clear, if it has not been for sometime, that fetal alcohol syndrome is a very, very serious matter, especially in places like Manitoba and Saskatchewan. Our child health strategy also includes consideration of matters related to prenatal and neonatal care. It is a very important time in the life of a child and its mother at the time when the child is being carried. I appreciate the honourable member raising the question. As we continue to move forward with child health strategy initiatives, I fully expect to be dealing with the FAS issue.

Warning Labels

Mr. Eric Robinson (Rupert'sland): Madam Speaker, I would like to ask the minister whether or not he would recommend now to his government to proceed

with warning labels on liquor bottles as a preventative measure.

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, that question, too, arose yesterday, and I undertook to consult my colleagues about the matter to see if that is, indeed, a measure that we could use and whether it would achieve the desired results.

Prevention Strategy

Mr. Eric Robinson (Rupert'sland): I would like to ask the minister a final question on FAS, whether he feels, as I do, that there should be stronger action in dealing with the syndrome, becoming more proactive in assisting caregivers and social workers and also people in education in dealing with this very severe problem.

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): The honourable member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) has very wisely urged that same approach in our dealings with health care professionals throughout the province, public health nurses, doctors' offices, in regard to this and one or two other important matters relating to the health of Manitoba children.

We will take what the honourable member has said as representation and discuss it further within the department to see if there are ways we can step up our education programs.

Immigrants Information Confidentiality

Mr. George Hickes (Point Douglas): Madam Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship.

We have learned today that a new computer program is threatening the confidential treatment of some immigrants to our province. Workers at the Manitoba International Centre are being required to input highly confidential information obtained during interviews with their clients for use by the federal government.

My question to the minister is, did the provincial government have any input into the decisions to change

the rules regarding the gathering of this confidential information?

Hon. Harold Gillehammer (Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship): The short answer to that is no.

The issue is being raised at a federal conference that is currently taking place in the city of Winnipeg where we have officials from my department. We have been in touch with the federal ministry to further get a better understanding of this issue.

Mr. Hickes: Will the minister ensure when they have that meeting with the federal government that immigrants to Manitoba are treated with respect, and will he ensure that they feel comfortable going to the government for assistance?

Mr. Gillehammer: I can assure the member and this House that we are making every effort to treat immigrants to Manitoba with respect.

Our department has become much more proactive in trying to sell Manitoba abroad and to provide settlement service here within the province.

Mr. Hickes: Can the minister assure immigrants to our province that this kind of confidential information will not be required at the provincial level as a requirement before receiving provincial assistance of any kind?

Mr. Gillehammer: I can assure the member that our department works very proactively with immigration groups within the province to provide settlement services, and we will continue to do that at a very high level.

Housing Starts Decline

Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East): Madam Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Finance.

One important indicator of our economic health is housing starts. In the mid-1980s, we realized in Manitoba between 6,000 and 7,000 housing starts per year, but, regrettably, between 1988 and '94, our urban

housing starts declined by 63 percent, and we were down to about 1,700 last year.

Now, in the first five months of this year, we have declined by a further 41 percent from the same period last year, and we may be down to around only 1,000 starts for the year 1995.

So I would like to ask the Minister of Finance, can he explain why housing demand has declined so drastically in the province of Manitoba?

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, I do encourage the member to look in some detail at the statistics, because last year in 1994, housing starts throughout all of Manitoba increased by some 30 percent—the best performance in all of Canada.

In fact, our performance in housing starts over the last three years has outperformed the national average all three years, so I hope he will take the time to look at these housing starts, and I certainly would also welcome a question from him on today's job stats.

Mr. Leonard Evans: Will the minister acknowledge that this weakening demand for new housing starts is a reflection of a relatively weak population growth which, in turn, results from the continuing heavy exodus from Manitoba, the continuing heavy exodus of people to other provinces?

* (1040)

Mr. Stefanson: Madam Speaker, I do not accept that for a minute, and I encourage the member to look at the job stats that were just released today that show in Manitoba today, there are 14,000 more Manitobans working than a year ago.

Manitoba's unemployment rate of 7.4 percent is the second-lowest unemployment rate in all of Canada. We have had job increases in Manitoba for five months in a row. No other province in Canada can match that.

There are 11,000 more people that are off of the unemployment list. Again, that is amongst the best performance in all of Canada. Winnipeg's unemployment rate today is at 7.6 percent, tied for the

lowest in all of Canada, and our youth unemployment rate today is 10.1 percent, the lowest in all of Canada.

Mr. Leonard Evans: I thought I asked a question about housing.

Madam Speaker, will this minister undertake to do a comprehensive analysis of the reasons for the current disturbing low level of housing starts in this province and make it available to this Legislature?

Mr. Stefanson: Madam Speaker, I know the member started with housing starts, and I have outlined very clearly for him how Manitoba has compared in a relative sense on housing starts—amongst the best in Canada over the last three years.

Obviously, part of his question was related to the overall economy of Manitoba. I have shown him today what the job stats are as of this morning, the tremendous performance of Manitoba in a relative sense, so we certainly have a lot to be proud of in terms of how Manitoba's economy is performing, not only in housing starts, but with the outstanding job performance, having the best record in Canada in so many areas, Madam Speaker.

I do not think I need to repeat those numbers again, although I know members of this House would love to hear the strong performance of Manitoba's job stats today.

Public Housing Insect Eradication Policy

Ms. Marianne Cerilli (Radisson): Madam Speaker, yesterday, the Minister of Housing agreed that the infestation problem on Young Street needed more extensive treatment since, as he knows, it has been an ongoing problem since 1993.

Can the minister today confirm that this entire apartment building will be sprayed as part of a long-term treatment plan, and will the minister apply the same program to spray apartment buildings also experiencing long-term problems, so that we can ensure this is not going to be a recurring problem for all these tenants?

Hon. Jack Reimer (Minister of Housing): Madam Speaker, as indicated yesterday regarding the infestation at that particular location, the complaint was filed.

There was action taken, and the indication was sent to the department that if there is a problem in that building, they are to seek out the infestation, the nesting, if you want to call it that, of the cockroaches and eradicate it in that particular building.

Ms. Cerilli: Madam Speaker, the minister did not answer the question. Since the minister did not answer the question, will he now confirm that this same program for long-term treatment, spraying more than just the dwelling that lodged the complaint, will occur in all apartments or properties where there are long-term infestation problems? Will the program that has been applied here be applied throughout the province?

Mr. Reimer: Madam Speaker, I can reiterate to the member that if there is a problem that has been identified within that complex or any complex that the Manitoba Housing Authority has jurisdiction on, the problem will be analyzed. It will be looked after, and an action plan will be put into place.

Ms. Cerilli: Similarly, I want to ask the question for the Minister responsible for the Residential Tenancies Branch. Will he ensure that private accommodations where there is a long-term infestation problem will have the same kind of treatment, where rather than just spraying the dwelling that lodges the complaint, the associated common areas as well as nearby apartment suites will also have treatment?

Hon. Jim Ernst (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Madam Speaker, I can advise the member for Radisson that should problems occur in any Residential Tenancies building in Manitoba, that the Residential Tenancies Branch will take action.

Natural Gas Leaks Public Safety

Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona): Madam Speaker, in 1993, natural gas from a ruptured gas line migrated back into a Portage Avenue mall, resulting in a massive

explosion and fire. Video tapes last week showed that except for a stroke of luck, a similar situation could have occurred involving residential housing in Winnipeg. Now we learn that gas leaks were discovered at several schools in Winnipeg.

My question is for the Minister responsible for Workplace Safety and Health. Can the Minister responsible for Workplace Safety and Health tell the House why it took so long, over two hours, Madam Speaker, for Centra Gas replacement workers to shut off the gas service for the affected housing in Winnipeg on June 1, putting at risk the homes and the families?

Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Labour): Madam Speaker, members of my department are continually looking at the situation, ensuring that the safety of members of the public, their children, continues. The government department will continue to make those efforts to ensure that the public and its safety are not compromised.

Madam Speaker: Time for Oral Questions has expired.

NONPOLITICAL STATEMENTS

Hon. James Downey (Deputy Premier): Madam Speaker, I wonder if I may have leave to make a nonpolitical statement.

Madam Speaker: Does the honourable Deputy Premier have leave to make a nonpolitical statement? [agreed]

Mr. Downey: Madam Speaker, I would first of all like to thank members for allowing me the opportunity to extend to the new government in Ontario, Premier Mike Harris and the people who were elected, congratulations.

I have not—

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Gord Mackintosh (St. Johns): Madam Speaker, I suppose we could have told by the gleam in the eye of

the Deputy Premier as he stood up that this was a phoney—

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Mackintosh: Madam Speaker, there is a long-standing tradition in this House of asking for non—

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Point of Order

Mr. Mackintosh: A point of order, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. The honourable member for St. Johns did not indicate he was on his feet for a point of order.

Some Honourable Members: Yes, he did.

Mr. Mackintosh: Several times, Madam Speaker, I indicated that.

Madam Speaker: I apologize. I did not hear the honourable member state that he was on his feet on a point of order, and I had already stopped the honourable Deputy Premier on the fact that I started to listen very carefully to his words. I am in the process of warning the Deputy Premier that, indeed, in my opinion, his remarks are not acceptable because they are not a nonpolitical statement.

Point of Order

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): On a new point of order, I would ask the Speaker to review Hansard, and I believe the Speaker recognized the member for St. Johns on a point of order.

Madam Speaker: On the Leader of the official opposition's point of order, I do not recollect recognizing the honourable member for St. Johns, because I did not see him on his feet.

Prior to my speaking to the Clerk however, I will indeed check Hansard to ascertain whether he was on his feet and bring a ruling back on the point of order.

* (1050)

Mr. Downey: Madam Speaker, on a point of order—[interjection]

Madam Speaker: Order, please. I am trying to clarify whether the Deputy Premier is on his feet on the same point of order, and I would appreciate it if the honourable member for St. Johns would afford me that co-operation to hear the Deputy Premier.

Mr. Downey: Madam Speaker, on a point of order, it was not my intention to make a nonpolitical statement into a political statement. I was not given the opportunity. If you were to check Hansard, I would believe that I have not made any reference to any politics and did not intend to and would not intend to. It is merely a recognition of an event that took place—

Madam Speaker: Order, please. I had already ruled that I felt the comments were not appropriate as a nonpolitical statement.

Canada Volunteer Award

Ms. Marianne Cerilli (Radisson): May I have leave to make a nonpolitical statement?

Madam Speaker: Does the honourable member for Radisson have leave to make a nonpolitical statement? [agreed]

Ms. Cerilli: Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the volunteer work of Ziggy Dykstra, a resident of Transcona, who is receiving the Canada Volunteer Medal Award and I understand is also going to receive a certificate from the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae). He is being recognized for his many volunteer activities, many of those co-ordinated through his position with the Amalgamated Transit Union where he is the public relations committee chairperson. He has done fundraising campaigns for the city of Winnipeg, raising thousands of dollars for charities such as the Shriner's Hospital, the Variety Club, the CNIB. It was the CNIB that nominated him for this award.

Ziggy has been referenced as the pied piper of volunteers. I think his approach and good humour are

exemplified when in accepting the award he accepted it on behalf of everyone who says, yes, when he calls them to help. I am familiar with Mr. Dykstra's work in his volunteer efforts with the Park City West Community Club, where he again has organized to raise thousands of dollars, particularly through bingo nights. I have participated calling all-night bingo and at the pancake breakfast there, and he is a driving force that brings it all together.

I want to wish him well in his trip to Ottawa and extend the congratulations on behalf of the entire community that benefits from the work of this extraordinary citizen. Thank you.

Ag Expo - Morris, Manitoba

Mr. Frank Pitura (Morris): Madam Speaker, I request leave to make a nonpolitical statement.

Madam Speaker: Does the honourable member for Morris have leave to make a nonpolitical statement? [agreed]

Mr. Pitura: Madam Speaker, over the last three days, Manitoba's largest indoor and outdoor agricultural trade show, Ag Expo, was held in Morris. This show, in its seventh year, is put on by a group of dedicated volunteers headed up by Bonnie Hagborg in association with the Valley Agricultural Society. The Valley Agricultural Society is celebrating its 100th birthday this year.

This agricultural trade show is dedicated to providing Manitoba farmers with leading-edge technology, and is also committed to exploring new value-added and diversification opportunities for Manitoba farmers.

I would like to take this opportunity to offer congratulations, on behalf of all members of this Assembly, to this faithful group of volunteers for putting on yet another successful show.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Hon. Jim Ernst (Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, would you call for second reading of Bill 9 followed by Bill 11.

SECOND READINGS

Bill 9—The Wills Amendment Act

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings), that Bill 9, The Wills Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les testaments, now be read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Speaker, I am pleased to move the second reading of The Wills Amendment Act. Although the bill makes only a small change to the English version of Section 23, its effect of making sure that the wishes of the makers of wills are not defeated by technicalities is very important.

As honourable members know, The Wills Act sets out the requirements for a valid will. A holograph will, one that is entirely in the maker's own handwriting and signed by the maker, is valid in Manitoba. However, formal wills with typewritten text are more commonly made. The Wills Act sets out a number of very specific formal requirements for the execution of these wills. For example, the signature of the maker of the will must be witnessed by two persons who must also sign the will in the presence of each other and in the presence of the maker.

At common law, the failure to comply with even one of the formal requirements of The Wills Act had the effect of invalidating the entire will. This was so even where it was perfectly clear that the document in question accurately represented the intentions of the person who made it.

In 1980, the Manitoba Law Reform Commission recommended that this be changed. It recommended that the courts be given the power to waive those sorts of technical errors and to give effect to wills where errors can be made in complying with the formal execution requirements of The Wills Act, so long as the court was convinced that the document represented the true testamentary intentions of the maker. The

commission argued that the technical rules of form should not be allowed to defeat the substance and the clear wishes of the will makers.

In 1983, the Legislature adopted the recommendations of the Manitoba Law Reform Commission with the enactment of Section 23 of The Wills Act. Manitoba thus became the first jurisdiction in North America to give the courts the power to waive technical errors. Since that time, Saskatchewan has adopted a similar measure and the Uniform Law Conference of Canada has recommended a similar provision to all of Canada's provinces and territories.

The Manitoba Court of Appeal recently interpreted Section 23 of The Wills Act in a way which narrows the discretion of the courts to overcome technical errors. The court held that it could recognize a will containing errors in the execution formalities only if the maker of the will had substantially complied with those requirements. In other words, the testator must get most of the execution requirements right and make a mistake in only a few of them. Only in these circumstances, the court said, could it use the power to waive Section 23.

The Manitoba Law Reform Commission reviewed this decision of the Court of Appeal and noted that Section 23 of The Wills Act was intended to have a broader effect. It should not matter whether the maker of a will has failed to meet only one of the execution requirements of The Wills Act or whether that person has failed to meet all of those requirements.

What is important is whether, considering all of the circumstances, the document represents the true testamentarian intention of the maker of the will. Therefore, the purpose of this amendment is to restore to Section 23 of The Wills Act a broad and generous scope, and it allows courts to truly do justice.

* (1100)

Mr. Gord Mackintosh (St. Johns): I move, seconded by the member for Broadway (Mr. Santos), that debate be now adjourned.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 11—The Trustee Amendment Act

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I move, seconded by the Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings), that Bill 11, The Trustee Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les fiduciaires, now be read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Mrs. Vodrey: I am pleased to move the second reading of The Trustee Act. This bill adopts a recommendation of the Manitoba Law Reform Commission, that in the absence of direction from the trust instrument, a trustee who holds money or property on behalf of beneficiaries should be allowed to consider nonfinancial criteria when formulating investment policy or when making an investment decision provided that the trustee always meets the usual standard of prudence that is expected of trustees.

A trust can rise in a number of different circumstances. For example, it may rise where an executor holds and invests money for a number of years on behalf of infant beneficiaries of a will; a trustee pension plan is an example of a trust with many more beneficiaries. No matter the size of the trust, every trustee has an obligation to obtain the best financial return possible for his or her beneficiaries. Unless the document creating the trust permits it, it may be argued that considering nonfinancial criteria could be a breach of the trustee's duties for which the trustee could be sued.

However, as honourable members know, it has become increasingly common in recent years for some investors to consider nonfinancial or ethical criteria while making their investment decisions. Such criteria are often of social, religious, environmental or other philosophical nature. These investors may not want their money to be used to advance purposes with which they disagree philosophically, or, alternatively, they may see investment as a tool to implement a special purpose which they wish to promote.

Ethical investment can pose problems in a trust situation. Can a trustee consider such nonfinancial

factors? The answer is clear if the document setting up the trust covers the issue; however, the answer is not at all clear if the document is silent. Neither the general law of trust prevailing in Manitoba nor our Trustee Act answers these questions.

Continued uncertainty in this area is undesirable because of the increasingly significant sums of money invested in trustee funds and the equally increasing and legitimate concerns of both trustees and beneficiaries concerning the investment use of these funds. The proliferation of ethical investment funds in Canada highlights the growing general concern with issues of this nature.

This amendment to The Trustee Act recommended by the Manitoba Law Reform Commission will balance recognition of the use of nonfinancial criteria with restraints to prevent unreasonable financial detriment. Where a trust instrument is silent concerning the use of nonfinancial criteria, its trustee should not be under a legal disability to consider nonfinancial criteria. Of course, the predominant goal should remain the securing of a reasonable return.

A trustee who uses nonfinancial criteria should continue to be obliged to meet the usual standards of prudence. This moderate approach is designed to remove the present uncertainty and clarify the acceptability of considering ethical and other nonfinancial considerations while preserving the primary obligation to maximize financial benefit to the beneficiaries of this trust.

Mr. Gord Mackintosh (St. Johns): I move, seconded by the member for Broadway (Mr. Santos), that debate be adjourned.

Motion agreed to.

House Business

Hon. Jim Ernst (Government House Leader): I move, seconded by the Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship (Mr. Gilleshammer), that Madam Speaker do now leave the Chair and the House resolve itself into a committee to consider of the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty.

Motion agreed to, and the House resolved itself into a committee to consider of the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty, with the honourable member for La Verendrye (Mr. Sveinson) in the Chair for the Department of Industry, Trade and Tourism; the honourable member for Sturgeon Creek (Mr. McAlpine) in the Chair for the Department of Education and Training; and the honourable member for St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau) in the Chair for the Department of Health.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY (Concurrent Sections)

INDUSTRY, TRADE AND TOURISM

Mr. Deputy Chairperson (Ben Sveinson): Order, please. Will the Committee of Supply please come to order. This morning this section of the Committee of Supply meeting in Room 254 will resume consideration of the Estimates of the Department of Industry, Trade and Tourism. When the committee last sat it had been considering item 1.(b)(1) on page 97 of the Estimates book and on page 13 of the yellow supplement book.

Hon. James Downey (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism): Just a comment, it is appropriate that I introduce the deputy minister, Mr. Fred Sutherland, who has joined us in Estimates today.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): I want to continue on with some questions with respect to capital and ask the minister what this government has done over the years to try to make capital dollars available for small business.

Mr. Downey: Mr. Chairman, I think it would be repetitious if I said what I said yesterday. I think we debated that fairly extensively, however, I will try to keep it brief. We have put several programs in place both directly under the Industry, Trade and Tourism, plus we have developed a capital pool fund known as Vision Capital Fund which is also a mechanism available and the Crocus Fund which has also been made available to provide capital.

There are programs which we will go through as we go through the line by line which are identified within

the department, as I have indicated. We also have, as I said, had a task force in place which recommended some other actions that they would like to see taken place. Basically, that is it at this particular time.

Mr. Lamoureux: I have a few questions and the Deputy Premier will have to bear with me if, in fact, some of them seem to be somewhat repetitive. To go through some of those funds that the Deputy Premier has made reference to both yesterday and today, the Grow Bonds Fund is, from what I understand, in terms of a rural program, more of a rural program than in terms of within the city. Is that correct?

Mr. Downey: It would be more appropriate to ask the questions on Grow Bonds under the department which they report to and that is the Department of Rural Development.

Mr. Lamoureux: I know the minister had indicated yesterday that Grow Bonds, and he talked about this in terms of making the availability of capital dollars—I do think it is an appropriate thing to ask the minister for the simple reason is that we have some programs that are in rural Manitoba, whether it is REDI, the Grow Bonds, and I am curious as to what programs the government has that are within the city of Winnipeg that allow individuals who would be interested in investing in the city of Winnipeg the same opportunities as other programs that are offered to rural Manitobans.

* (1110)

Mr. Downey: At this particular time, the rural Grow Bond program does not apply to the city of Winnipeg. We have other programs that I have referred to that are listed in the departmental Estimates, like the Manitoba Industrial Opportunities Program, Manitoba Industrial Recruitment Initiative, and they report directly to this department. The small business support program, which is a loan guarantee program up to \$10,000, also applies to the city of Winnipeg. I think that basically is it.

Mr. Lamoureux: I understand the Grow Bond Program is something in which, for example, rural Manitobans, if they want to invest money into the rural

communities, can filter money into the rural Grow Bonds. That, then, allows rural entrepreneurs access to these dollars. I believe there are different criteria, if you will, different forms of applications that would be made. For example, I would trust that the Industrial Opportunities division, capaled Business Start programs, these are all programs, no doubt, also available to rural Manitobans. What I am asking the minister, is the government looking at the possibility of a program similar to the rural Grow Bond Program for the city of Winnipeg?

Mr. Downey: I can appreciate what I am taking and interpreting from the member's questioning, that he is supportive of the Grow Bond Program, and is actually advocating that program now be made available to the city of Winnipeg. Is that a correct understanding?

Mr. Lamoureux: The Liberal Party has always been supportive of the Grow Bond Program. The minister, I am sure, is fully aware of that. What I am suggesting is that it is a good idea, and I think that good ideas, where they can be expanded, should be expanded. It does not mean that you have to open up this particular program for the city of Winnipeg. It does mean, however, that the government could be considering looking at a program similar to the rural Grow Bond Program for the city of Winnipeg. Would he not concur with those remarks?

Mr. Downey: I thank the member for his endorsement of the rural Grow Bond Program, and I will certainly take as notice his request for a similar program for the city of Winnipeg.

Mr. Lamoureux: I am wondering if the minister—is this the first time in which he has felt that there could be a need for a program of this nature for Winnipeg entrepreneurs, if I may, and individuals that live in Winnipeg that would be prepared to invest in their communities? Is this the first time? I believe that to be the case.

Mr. Downey: First of all, I should make a clarification. The people of Winnipeg are not denied the opportunity to invest in Grow Bond programs, so I want to make that clear on the record. I have not had, either from the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce,

and/or any representative group, an official acknowledgment that they would like to, on their behalf, see that introduced into the city.

I do not believe the capital markets task force dealt with that subject, and I cannot recall whether or not there was a recommendation in that report as to whether or not they wanted to see it applied to the city of Winnipeg.

Again, what I have said to the member was, it is a principle that I think is one that is sound. It has demonstrated in other jurisdictions that it has worked. It is working in rural Manitoba. Again, I accept the recommendations from the member for Inkster as a potential possibility of considering it for the city of Winnipeg.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Chairperson, ultimately I do believe that in fact this is a very unique program. It is being made available to rural entrepreneurs and businesses, and I think that there are many benefits to this particular program. That is one of the reasons why I believe a program of this similar nature might do well within the city of Winnipeg.

I wanted to comment with respect to some of the industries, and yesterday I made note of a number of the different industries that the Deputy Premier made reference to, in particular, furniture, farm machinery, aerospace, garment, agri-foods, calling centres, telecommunications, computer services, tourism, printers, if you will. Does the Deputy Premier actually have access to a list of what the different industries are or classifications of industries?

Mr. Downey: I wonder if the member could make the question more clear.

Mr. Lamoureux: Can the minister provide for the committee members a listing of the different types of industries in the province of Manitoba?

Mr. Downey: Yes.

Mr. Lamoureux: I appreciate the offer of the minister. I would hope that we would be able to anticipate seeing that in the relatively not too distant

future. We will see in terms of what form it takes.

I am wondering if the minister can indicate what sorts of approaches the government takes dealing with industries in terms of trying to take down trade barriers. I want to use one specific example, that of course being busing. We do have a very significant busing industry, bus manufacturing industry, in the province. There have always been concerns with respect to the Province of Quebec and us not being able to gain access to that particular market. Can the Minister of Industry and Trade indicate what sort of actions the government takes on the industry's behalf?

Mr. Downey: First of all, this government, this ministry, previous ministers in this ministry, the Premier (Mr. Filmon), have been very strong advocates of making sure Canada has an internal trade agreement which is as open as possible to make sure that capital, people, services, can move freely within Canada, so that our government policy has clearly been stated and will continue to be stated to the point of which we have played an active role with the federal government in co-chairing the internal trade agreement. So we do not say specifically any one industry. We are saying we are trying to broaden it and make sure that all industries in Manitoba have an open access to the activities going on throughout Canada.

The member makes specific reference to the bus industry. I recently communicated, or the government recently communicated, to the Premier of Ontario, the premier who is still there, who I did not get a chance earlier today to acknowledge. What I would put on the record here is that we on behalf of the bus industry in Manitoba have tried to say to them, let us not just let Ontario bid for Ontario buses, and we did communicate to them our position on a recent tendering activity.

Mr. Lamoureux: Can the minister indicate whether or not over the last seven years that there has been any headway made with respect to that particular industry?

* (1120)

Mr. Downey: In general terms I have to say yes. We have seen some extremely good successes with New Flyer buses, which are marketing into the United

States. They have particularly good success with the most modern technology in transit buses available in the world, with a low-level bus for making it easier for handicapped or older people to enter the bus at street level without having to climb stairs. It is a technology that I am not aware of anywhere else in the world, and we are marketing that bus very heavily in the United States. Manitoba Motor Coach Industries, as well, has had some major successes and has recently signed a contract to sell buses to Taiwan. So the bus industry in Manitoba, we believe, has been moving along very aggressively.

Another assistance to the bus industry is we have assisted all other manufacturing industries—a move made by this government, which the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) voted against—and that was the removal of the 7 percent sales tax on electricity used in the manufacturing industry. That is a major initiative. To remove a 7 percent sales tax off of that type of activity gave them a major shot in the arm. I am just disappointed the member for Inkster did not support it when it was presented to the Legislature.

Mr. Lamoureux: There are a lot of good reasons why I could ultimately argue I did not support a budget that did not provide training dollars that are necessary for businesses that are out there, and, unfortunately, the Deputy Premier and I will never agree in terms of the voting patterns that we have taken over the years.

Would the Deputy Premier then say that the busing industry as an industry has a very prosperous future in the province of Manitoba? The reason why I ask that is Motor Coach, for example—and the Deputy Premier made reference to it—was opening up additional plants. I believe there was going to be, I had heard, at least up to two other plants that were being opened. I know for sure one, and there was some concern in terms of the one being opened, I believe it was in Mexico, that it was going to have an impact on the busing manufacturing industry here. Would he comment on that future of that particular industry?

Mr. Downey: Yes, to the best of my knowledge, Mr. Chairman, I think the bus industry, as all other manufacturing industries with the tax regime, again

with the removal of the sales tax off of the electricity, I think augurs very well.

I guess one of the further supporting evidence of that actually taking place are the job statistics that came out today, where it clearly indicated the numbers of jobs in the manufacturing sector continue to rise, up 5,000 more jobs this year over last year. Again, a tremendous growth in manufacturing employment. Specifically about the bus industry, I am not aware of anything that would be negatively affecting them. We do have Motor Coach Industries, which has a plant in North Dakota which adds American content, which is part of the trade agreement basically and puts American content to it.

Again, New Flyer is one which, with their new technology and the activities that are being carried out there, I think the future augurs well for them and also for Motor Coach Industries.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Chairperson, I am wondering, you know, one could actually go through the many different industries there and listen for some sort of response from the government in terms of this government's opinion on that specific industry.

At times, I think that there is a need to get some sort of an idea on how government feels. I can recall the whole debates, many of the debates with respect to the garment industry during free trade, which the Deputy Premier had made reference to yesterday. There was a lot of skepticism, believing that the garment industry would suffer dramatically with respect to free trade.

Actually, it has done considerably well. When I look at the economy, I think that there are no doubt some industries that have, in all likelihood, better growth potential than other industries. I think that the training that is made available, providing a trained workforce, you have to look in terms of what the future demands of the economy are going to be.

Now having said that, I would imagine, even though we would like to believe all industries are doing well in the province, are there industries which the Deputy Premier or this government feels will be able to excel

above the average, above the norm over the next number of years?

Mr. Downey: It is our intent, Mr. Chairman, with the taxation policies and the policies of this government that all industries will be able to excel over the next many years. That I think is demonstrated by the, again, job statistics which are out today. I think it is indicated in the export numbers which we talked about yesterday in the opening statement.

I think it again is accepted by the people of Manitoba with the mandate which they gave this government to carry on the governing of this province for another five years.

Mr. Lamoureux: I appreciate the words from the Deputy Premier but I am wondering, is he not of the opinion that there are some industries that hold the potential of greater growth than other industries?

Mr. Downey: Yes.

Mr. Lamoureux: Could the Deputy Premier enlighten us as to which ones he feels do have that greater potential?

Mr. Downey: Yes.

Mr. Lamoureux: Okay, would the Deputy Premier then tell the committee which types of industries?

Mr. Downey: I thought I had already done that, Mr. Chairman, in yesterday's opening comments, but I will reiterate for the member.

I think we have certainly identified the telemarketing, the whole area of the communications industry as it relates to call centre activities, again a major growth centre, a new initiative; the whole transportation sector and the area related to transportation with the trucking industry; the plans for the development of an airport cargo centre, again, major activity; the whole industrial sector, as it relates to manufacturing furniture, farm machinery. Again, the mining sector is one which I referred to yesterday, major growth; the agriculture sector and the ag food processing industry, one in

which we have seen and I believe will continue to see tremendous growth.

Again, the garment industry is one which I have referred to, major opportunities and growth. We are now exporting product to Asia. Who would ever have believed we would make garments here and export them to Asia? That is, in fact, taking place. There is the whole area of machinery manufacturing. Tourism is one where we have seen tremendous growth and have targeted to try and see the industry double by the year 2000.

Mr. Chairman, I would put it in this context for the member. I do not see an industry that is going to do badly. I just see some that are going to do better than others, and he has asked me to identify them. I have tried to do that. The whole pharmaceutical industry, one which has seen tremendous growth. We have gone to over \$200 million in sales of pharmaceutical product. The companies have gone from a handful in 1984 to well in excess of 100 companies in that industry.

I can go on for most of today, Mr. Chairman, but I do not want to take up the time of the committee in telling the member about all the positive news stories in Manitoba. I do not want to do that.

Mr. Lamoureux: Actually, Mr. Chairperson, I am sure if the Deputy Premier wanted to, he could probably get it done in a fairly short time span in terms of those businesses or the potential for growth out in the different communities.

I would ask the Deputy Premier, does the government feel that, in fact, given the industries that you have just listed, that we are providing a workforce with the skills to be able to meet the demands in the future from those areas where we expect to see exceptional growth?

* (1130)

Mr. Downey: Mr. Chairman, that is always an ongoing challenge for industry and for government, and again, the member said the reason he voted against a 7 percent reduction in the sales tax is because he

would have seen that money maybe better spent in training programs.

I look at it this way, Mr. Chairman. I believe by giving the companies the opportunity to have that money themselves, they would participate more readily in a training program which they would spend some money on, and so it would not be a direct call on taxpayers to hire people to put training programs in place.

Having said that, there are two particular industries which we have been working very aggressively with to try and make sure they have—and I say two that come to mind—people who are available, and one of them is the garment industry.

For several months now, we have been meeting with them. There are training programs that are being put in place with government support through the Department of Education and Training to make sure there are people available. They have two requests.

The garment industries say they want more immigration, immigration opened up, so they can bring in more immigrant workers for the industry, because they have had tremendous satisfaction with the work skills that those people bring to their industry, but also they ask for training activity. We have agreed and are working with them.

Another area that there have been requests and we have been working with them—again, questions would be better asked under the Department of Education and Training for specifics, but I can talk in general terms, and that is in the transportation sector. There continually needs to be support for the transportation sector.

Let me say another policy change that I think reflects this government's thinking and business was the fact that we changed the three community colleges into a governance system where it is made up of a lot of private-sector people not directly involved with the Department of Education, again trying to reflect the needs of our business community as it relates to the training of people. That is the overall policy direction that this government is giving, so that we can have

people equipped to meet the needs of the businesses in our society.

I am troubled, and I say that I think the numbers today coming out of the employment stats are extremely helpful, and they confirm what we believed was the right way to go. This is demonstrating that we are having people getting equipped to take on the jobs that are out there.

I, for some time now, have had people come forward and say, if we could only employ more people, we would, in fact, expand our business or do certain things, but the availability of people, at the same time that you see unemployment numbers where they are, there is something not being brought together properly. The member is shaking his head in a positive way. If he has some ideas and thoughts, I think it would be helpful.

My colleague the minister responsible for Family Services (Mrs. Mitchelson), I believe in the programs that she is working on with the federal government will be helpful in making sure there are more available people in the workforce. I will make reference to the member for Crescentwood (Mr. Sale) and his comments yesterday that during his campaign, he was meeting a lot of people who were unemployed and could not find work, and he was distressed by it. I am distressed by it, as well, to hear these kinds of comments.

I guess the question is, is it lack of jobs or is it lack of specific jobs that the member is referring to? Is it lack of people having opportunities for retraining?

To me, that is what we have to do in our society. We have to make sure people are retrained. Jobs will change, people change, businesses change. We are in a very fast-changing society. We are no longer in a situation where you enter the workforce as an individual—and I could use it in the industry which I come from, the farm community.

If you were not prepared to retrain and upgrade as it related to the running of farm equipment today, particularly as we see diversification of agriculture taking place, then we would not be able to satisfy the

international market opportunities that are out there. We would all be running combines, and no one would be learning how to run sugar beet operations and/or potato operations. There is a need for training activity which we believe is being met to an acceptable level. Never enough, but, again, we believe that is what has happened with the policies that we have put in place.

Again, I will refer to not my numbers but to the numbers that came out on employment stats. We believe our policies are working, and we believe that the mandate that we were given on the 25th of April was a further endorsement that the people of Manitoba accept the fact that they are working.

Mr. Lamoureux: I am not necessarily prepared to accept the fact that they are working.

I would ask the Deputy Premier, how many jobs does he believe are out there right now in the garment industry that could be filled if we had the individuals to fill them?

Mr. Downey: I am a little reluctant to put that number on the table because I do not want—I would say it is in the range of greater than 500.

I will further clarify my comment. In talking to the garment industry, they have said to me—they have not talked a lot publicly about it, but I will say it is in excess of 500 unless it has changed in the last month. That is a nice package of jobs. Now, one would say, what is the level? What are the type of working conditions? I think I would invite anyone to visit some of the modern garment factories in the province. They are not, in my estimation, that bad. The ones I visited are reasonable looking places to work. That is my own personal feeling about it.

Mr. Lamoureux: Like the minister, I, too, have had opportunity to visit garment factories in the past, even one during the last election. The reason why I ask that, I want to spend a bit of time talking about the garment industry.

You know, I asked questions similar to this a few years back to whomever was the minister at the time. I cannot recall. I think it was Mr. Ernst who was the

minister. We talked about numbers. If we had the skilled workforce or if we had the people to fill those jobs, how many people are we talking about? At that time, the number that was being thrown about was in and around 600. You know, this is years that have lapsed since I asked those particular questions.

The Deputy Premier indicated that over the last couple of months they have been working to try to resolve this issue. That is what it will say in Hansard. It could have been the last few months, but this is an issue that has been there ever since, virtually, I was first elected.

There are alternatives for us to be looking at, and I do not believe the government has been addressing this particular industry. I do not want to claim to know the details of all the different industries that are out there, but I have a fairly good idea about this particular industry. I believe that ultimately by not filling—the Deputy Premier made reference to, it is a good sum of jobs, 500 jobs.

Let us take the lower number of 500 jobs, if you will. That is a lot of tax dollars that could be coming into government. It is a significant and direct input that would have had in terms of the provincial GDP—and by not filling those jobs we are losing out tremendously. I do not believe that is the only industry in itself that has jobs that are available if in fact they had the skilled workforce.

When I posed the question to a couple of business people regarding—well, why is it then if it is just a question of training, why do you not just hire someone, train the individual and then you can fill that position. It was articulated to me, not by one, by at least a couple of individual business people that the primary reason is because of productivity. It is by far in their best interest to leave a position go vacant in many cases until they can hire someone with the experience.

Why do we not see government making that connection. If government is not prepared—again, I am only going to concentrate on the garment industry—to have the trained workforce or to assist in the training of the workforce in a more significant fashion, then why does it not do what we did in the early '70s where we

actually had the Fashion Institute that went to foreign lands, concentrated primarily in Asia. I believe they also went to the West Indies, but I am not sure of that.

There was a concentrated effort at filling the jobs with skilled workers from foreign lands. The Deputy Premier, in other capacities, is fully aware that there is an opportunity to be had in terms of an attempt to negotiate a bilateral immigration agreement between us and the national government. I would assume that the national government would be very co-operative in trying to meet the demands of the local Manitoba economy in terms of trying to garner the skilled workforce, if that is what is necessary, in order to fill those jobs.

Ultimately, if we are not filling those jobs, we are losing out. The economy is losing out. Each one of those jobs is an additional income which has tremendous spin-offs, from the purchasing of material to homes, and I do not need to go through the whole story with the Deputy Premier.

I question the Deputy Premier when he says, look, our government is wonderful—under 7 percent—and he tries to put some words in my mouth, and I will try to refrain from putting words in his mouth if he attempts to refrain from putting words in my mouth. The Premier did say that government policies have been working. How can we say government policies have been working when we look at an industry, such as the garment industry? This government has failed, and it has failed miserably. It has not addressed the needs and the demands of this particular industry. We have not seen any serious attempt by this government to address the garment industry.

The bottom-line question is, when is this government really going to address the issue of the garment industry in the province of Manitoba?

* (1140)

Mr. Downey: I will try and be short and brief, Mr. Chairman, and to the point. The member does not need to give me or this government a lecture on how effective we are. We supported the Free Trade Agreement which, at that particular time, prior to the

introduction of it, the member who is speaking, the member for Inkster and his party were adamantly opposed to the Free Trade Agreement based on the fact that the garment industry was going to shrivel up and die. I had more confidence in the garment industry. We had more confidence in the garment industry than he did. He was prepared to accept that that was going to take place. Now he is coming, berating the government because we have a tremendous number of job opportunities in the garment industry and says that we are not doing enough about it.

I maybe made an incorrect statement a few minutes ago when I said, working on the training activities for the last period of time. There have been training programs working with the industry over the last number of years. We have again tried to accelerate the numbers that are going into that program through discussions with the Department of Education. It is not a matter of not having one, it is a matter of trying to accelerate as we have seen more jobs. We are seeing opportunities for more than 500 people, probably closer to a thousand would be the proper figure. That is because of growth in the industry.

I can mention a couple of programs which we have been involved with, where there have been 150 jobs created in the garment industry because of government programs. These are new jobs with an expanding industry, so it is a growing industry. It is expanding. We are developing training programs.

There is another concern that has been brought to our attention, and that is, how effective are we in making sure that people who are either capable and/or available but are, for some other reasons, not finding themselves wanting to get into the industry? I think we have to. I have said this to the garment industry, and I will say it as committee. I think we have to be more aggressive in not only providing the initiatives that were talked about in training, we are going to be more aggressive in telling people what a positive industry it is, and that has not been done.

The member is not sitting here today saying, look, we have great opportunities and we should all be working on it. He is sitting here saying the government is not doing enough. I think the industry should be

complimented on what they have done to grow and expand. It is a matter of a growth period at which opportunities are being developed. We all have to put our shoulder to the wheel and make sure people know about those opportunities.

I am actually pleased. I am sitting here pleased that the member is saying that we have to do more to make sure people get into that industry. I am pleased with that. I am also pleased that when he now stands up and says we have to do something more for job creation, we have this number of opportunities that are being demonstrated for people who feel that they would like to work in that industry. That is always critical. People have to feel comfortable. They have to feel that they can fulfill their daily needs through that kind of job. The point is, the jobs are there.

Mr. Lamoureux: The people that deserve the congratulations are in fact the business people and, most importantly, the workers that are in fact within that industry currently. The government has not risen to the challenge that the industry has put forward. The industry is what has been successful in creating more jobs than this government or the population can offer in terms of a workforce, from what we are being told from industry reps, from what the Deputy Premier is saying himself, that we are not meeting the demands of the potential for growth in this particular industry.

The Deputy Premier makes reference that he has had some programs through education and training and so forth. It could even be through things like Workforce 2000, no doubt, but the bottom line is that we have not been able to resolve a major industry's requirement of providing skills and individuals that would be prepared to work within that industry.

Knowing many people who work within the garment industry and the efforts that they put in and how commendable it is, I am wondering if the minister is now at least prepared, in order to address this particular situation head-on, to look at some sort of immigration agreement of sorts that would see representatives from Manitoba, possibly from the Fashion Institute, or from some of the local union reps possibly, going down to see if in fact we can recruit some of the individuals with the skills so that we can see some of these jobs

being filled on the short term? If he is not prepared to look into that sort of action, then attempt to indicate to us what it is then you are going to do to try to fill those jobs in the short term.

Mr. Downey: As I have indicated, Mr. Chairman, we have been working with the industry very closely over the past years, months, probably more aggressively this last while, to make sure that Manitobans can find a job in the garment industry. I am sitting here today with, what I would consider, a pretty good problem to have on our hands. We have just had Statistics Canada report the second best unemployment rate in all of Canada, increased numbers in manufacturing jobs in a very substantive way, a thousand more people working this month over last month. Again, youth unemployment is the lowest in all of Canada. Our numbers are here in hard form with the jobs that are out there, with 523,000 people working in Manitoba.

We are also hearing the member say, well, we have not done enough to make sure people are fitting in those jobs. I am telling him, we are working very aggressively to do that. This is not the only industry, so it tells me that we could even have a lower unemployment rate, that we can even drive our economy harder and stronger with the opportunities that are there. I am pleased with that situation, that we have that kind of opportunity for people to go to work in. Again, it would be a lot more difficult, sitting here taking criticism from the opposition, if we did not have up to a thousand jobs in the garment industry to fill, if we did not have jobs in the transportation industry to fill, if we did not have jobs in all these other areas to fill.

So I sit here today trying to keep a smile from being on my face all the time because I am really pleased with the numbers we have and the opportunities we have for jobs in Manitoba for people who could work in that industry. As I said, though, and I qualify it, everybody does not work in the garment industry. Everybody does not want to work in these certain industries, but at least there are some opportunities there. How can we work and be more effective? Well, I am certainly working very closely with the garment people. This is not the first time I have heard about the garment industry's concern from the member for

Inkster. We have been, as I said, for months been working very aggressively with them to try and satisfy the need, and we will continue to do so.

Mr. Lamoureux: The Deputy Premier is quite happy in the sense that he says, well, look, we should not be complaining. After all, we are doing so well in terms of unemployment statistics relatively compared to the rest of the country. One could argue that, yes, we should be happy for that, but we should also be sad for the fact that maybe this particular minister does not want to see the economy expand.

If, in fact, the unemployment rates are low and we have the opportunity to expand the economy in a more serious fashion by taking stronger action today so that during a business cycle we have more jobs and more things that we are able to work with, to generate additional revenues for different sorts of programming, in particular, training programs and so forth, if we took a look at just those 500—I do not want to use a thousand. I want to stick to the low, and that is what I did a few years ago when I talked about the 500 jobs within the garment industry. How many tax dollars are being lost by not having those jobs filled?

If those tax dollars were made available because those jobs were filled, maybe then what we could be doing is we could provide training programs for the individuals that are on unemployment insurance or even for those individuals that have given up hope and their unemployment insurance has run out or have decided to withdraw from the workforce because they felt that it was bleak, or possibly even keep more Manitobans in the province by using some of those tax dollars that these 500 jobs would generate in terms of providing additional training for what else but the other areas that are in need of skills, other industries that need skills.

* (1150)

So, yes, I am pleased that their unemployment is considerably lower than the rest of Canada, but I am not pleased with the government's reaction to the whole question of providing a skilled workforce for the jobs that are empty, that need to be filled today, because you are missing out on opportunities. If we do not fill those

jobs, you could see those jobs go elsewhere, ultimately, and that would be somewhat sad to see.

Again, the minister does not, I guess, have to answer the question specifically, but is the minister prepared to look at the possibility of having again the Fashion Institute or some organization go abroad, with both the provincial and national governments' consent, to try to address the demands of this particular industry?

Mr. Downey: Am I taking it that the member for Inkster is saying he wants to import people to take the jobs of people who are here, to take jobs away from them? Is that what he is suggesting?

I am not clear on it, because it seems to me the first effort should be put forward to training and making sure Manitobans and Canadians have that work opportunity. We are doing that, and I have said it again, through training programs and through working with the Fashion Institute.

I can tell him that I want to see this economy grow and expand, and we have demonstrated that, particularly in the manufacturing sector, by removing the sales tax off of electricity. He voted against that. I voted for it. We have also put in some tax-incentive measures for businesses to grow and expand. He voted against it. I voted for it.

Mr. Chairman, there is another point I should make as it relates to industry and the development of people in that industry. There are apprenticeship programs, which I believe are very important and a way in which people develop and grow their workforce. I believe, with some of the monies that those industries have left with them, it is an opportunity for them to do that, to develop apprenticeship-type programs and pay people for on-the-job training. That is a principle and a philosophy which I strongly believe in, that workforce training on the job is extremely important.

If you allow the industry, if you do not continually strangle it with taxes and overburden of costs that government impose on them, they have a little more flexibility to do that and they can be competitive. They can hire people, and they can train them in the workforce.

There is no one wants to see this economy grow any better than I do. All I am saying again is we have demonstrated, the numbers are demonstrated, that industries are growing and expanding in this province. We are seeing opportunities that are waiting for people. We are talking about industries that are waiting for people. Now, if we have to develop and train more, again, I have said we are working with the Fashion Institute. We have departmental people on a regular basis working with them to develop and to try to make sure this workforce is available to them.

These are not the only problems that the industry has, but I can tell you it is a very, very—pardon the pun—close-knit industry, and it is very much an industry that has, I think, grown as the opportunities have availed themselves.

Again, we will do our utmost to make sure that people are available to them, and if they, in their recommendations, want us to do other things, they will be considered.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Chairperson, from the onset I would say that I disagree adamantly with what the minister was saying at the beginning of his remarks with respect to immigrants taking jobs or potential jobs away from other Manitobans. The Deputy Premier should be fully aware that—in particular, of all the industries we are talking about the garment industry—we would likely not have a garment industry of any significance if it were not for the immigrants. [interjection]

No, you did not say you did not want immigrants, but you implied that or the immigrants could take the jobs away from the workforce of the people that are here currently. Hansard will show that through.

The question to the Deputy Premier is, is he prepared to entertain with respect to the garment industry allowing a fashion institute or some mechanism for immigrants to fill some of those jobs in order to meet the demand from the industry?

Mr. Downey: I think, again, the member is trying to put something on the record that I did not say or imply something that I did not say. I fully appreciate the

contribution that the immigrant people have made to the garment industry. Without question, there are a lot of people who have emigrated to this country who make up a large percentage of the workforce.

Yes, I am supportive of immigrant people coming to this country and taking and helping the industry grow. Instead of taking it out of context, I wish he would have listened to what I said. I believe we have to make sure that those available Manitobans who are capable and can be trained to meet the demands should be a priority which we all work on. I do not have any problem with new, additional people coming in. It is a matter of being on balance.

Let us face it, it is an opportunity for growth and expansion. We want that. It is a matter of making sure, as I said—and put it in proper context—that Manitobans that are available and capable have those job opportunities as well as, on balance, making it available for new additional immigrant workers. That is I think key to the future growth of this country and this province.

Mr. Lamoureux: Can the Deputy Premier indicate what new programs? Because apparently the other programs have not necessarily been meeting the demand to fill those positions. How does the Deputy Premier assure the industry that the training that is going to be necessary for individuals to acquire the skills from within the province of Manitoba are going to be given the opportunity to acquire those skills so that they can get jobs from that particular industry?

Mr. Downey: I do not think the member understands that the number of jobs in the garment sector today are greater than they were two years ago, greater than they are today. The industry is growing. Jobs are being fulfilled. People are filling those jobs and at the same time the opportunities. The industry is out promoting itself and growing and developing because we come from a position—where he and his party oppose free trade. With free trade it is turned around to what was anticipated.

The garment industry did not wither and die as was projected. The garment industry went the opposite way. They dug in and they said, we can do it right here

for Manitoba. They are now marketing into Asia and all over the world, right from here in Manitoba. It has been a growth industry.

Do we have enough people to satisfy them today? No, we do not. Will there be a continual need for people? I believe there will. If the member does not understand that, I do not think I have time in this lifetime to explain it to him. As an industry grows, you need people; you need availability of them. That is what is happening.

Mr. Lamoureux: Can the minister indicate the number of garment industry jobs that are there today?

Mr. Downey: Pardon me?

Mr. Lamoureux: How many garment industry jobs are there today?

Mr. Downey: I will take that question as notice and get it for the member.

Mr. Lamoureux: I would appreciate that. I would also appreciate if in fact you would go back over the last few years and get an idea in terms of just how that industry has grown and compare that to the demands of the industry, because the demands, as I can recall, at least for the last four or five years, have been for 500-plus positions that have not been filled. So the government can say whatever it wants, the bottom line is that the positions are not being filled.

The minister also made reference to transportation as a great potential for growth. There are a number of jobs that are there today, but again are not necessarily being filled. I am wondering if the Deputy Premier can elaborate on that.

Mr. Downey: No.

Mr. Lamoureux: Does the Deputy Premier not know about the industry? Is that why he is saying no?

Mr. Downey: Again, Mr. Chairman, I am being repetitive. We have programs in place working with the trucking industry. We have a program in place to train 200 long-range truck drivers.

Mr. Lamoureux: The Deputy Premier made reference with respect to the garment industry that there are between 500 to 1,000 jobs that are potentially out there to be filled. Can the Deputy Premier give us an indication with respect to this industry?

* (1200)

Mr. Downey: It is my understanding—I do not have any recent numbers, but I believe they are greater than what are available in the garment industry.

Mr. Lamoureux: I do not necessarily have the same sort of background with respect to transportation industry. Can the minister give some sort of indication as to when this potential for growth has been there in the sense of whether we have required or had these jobs available for the last year, two years, three years? When did the government realize that there was a severe shortage of skills for filling these jobs?

Mr. Downey: Mr. Chairman, again it is another growth industry, the whole transportation sector, as your economy grows and the demands grow for services provided by the trucking industry.

I think the other thing the member has to observe is there has been some shifting in the transportation sector to more road transportation. This is specifically what we are talking about, long-range truck drivers. Again, we are the home for the majority of the major trucking companies in all of Canada. That is eight out of 13 or seven out of 14. We are in a position of having—and thank goodness we are, because it is a tremendous base for us. It has been growing and expanding over the last few years.

Again, as I have indicated, we have got a program in place. We have had not too many months ago a letter from an individual, from a company, their company had demand for some 200 people in western Canada which Manitoba would be a part of.

So it cannot get any more specific. I would have to do a direct call around to each of them to find out specifically, but I know the trend has been for greater demand of people in that sector. The numbers which I am going by from memory probably would be greater

than what was available in the garment sector for a need for people.

Mr. Lamoureux: I was wanting to go into alternative forms of training, if you will, but prior to that I appreciate when the Deputy Premier makes reference to, look, we have industries and those industries have been growing, so that is at least in part the reason why those jobs are there right now.

I can recall, and I will take the manufacturing sector for example, I do not have the latest, I know the Deputy Premier has the latest stats out with reference to it, but I believe when I was first elected the manufacturing industry was somewhere around 61,000. Can the minister give an indication on what our manufacturing industry or sector is at right now for full-time employment?

Mr. Downey: Again, I will get that information for the member.

Mr. Lamoureux: I appreciate the offer of information that is going to be provided for me. I would hope and trust that it would be coming some time in the not too distant future.

With respect to training and retraining, the government does have, through different departments, different forms of programs such as the Workforce 2000. One of the ideas that we have felt would be a good direction for the province to take is more of an apprenticeship type starting right at the high school level or at Grade 9 or S1, if you like.

I am wondering if the minister feels that his department has any role to play with apprenticeship beginning at the Grade 9 level?

Mr. Downey: I think what my responsibilities are to work to make sure industries have a satisfactory pool of workforce available to them. The questions he is asking, I think, would be more appropriately asked in the Department of Education and Training, which would be the appropriate place.

What I am saying is we are, through general government policy, trying to make sure that we have

people trained, people educated to do the jobs that are out there that our economy and our policies have helped create the demands for.

Mr. Lamoureux: So from this minister's perspective, the department does not necessarily have a role to play with respect to providing apprenticeship or ensuring that apprenticeship to Grade 9 level is there?

Mr. Downey: I think I made a general policy statement as to what I believe, and that is, I am supportive of apprenticeship programs. I think it is an excellent way.

On-the-job training is an absolute essential to provide quality people for jobs that they will be carrying out on a longer term.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Chairperson, allow me to give an example. Let us say a Grade 10 high school student would work part time at a local business maybe doing lathe work or something of that nature on a half-time basis and for the other half time he is in the classroom. So when, ultimately, this particular individual graduates from high school, he has the skills to meet the demands of a skilled workforce and he also has the experience.

I would suggest that that is one of the things which the Department of Industry and Trade should definitely be interested in. I would ask for the Deputy Premier just to comment on that.

Mr. Downey: I am interested in it.

Mr. Lamoureux: I am glad to hear he is interested in it. Now would he tell me to what degree? Does he believe that we should be moving in that direction? Is he prepared to sit down with, for example, the Minister of Education to ensure that a program of this nature would be instituted?

Mr. Downey: Mr. Chairman, the concept, the principle of apprenticeship I have spoken to several times. Yes, I believe it is a proper way to go, it is an excellent way to train people, and I am prepared to sit down and discuss apprenticeship programs with the Minister of Education.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Chairperson, I appreciate the bluntness of the answer that the Deputy Premier has provided.

I firmly believe that this is in fact a role for the Department of Industry and Trade at least to participate in to some degree, because again you are better acquainted in many ways than the Department of Education in terms of what is happening out there in the private sector. If that communication is not there, then I think that we are losing out on a lot of potential good opportunities both for business and, ultimately, I would argue, most importantly, for that young student, because in many cases it does look somewhat bleak. I am sure the Deputy Premier quite often talks to young people and has formed opinions in terms of what they feel their future is all about. So I think it is a positive thing.

The government does have programs that are currently in place. Are there any new initiatives that this minister is looking at currently?

* (1210)

Mr. Downey: Just a reference to the last comments made about the young people in our society, this government is strongly committed to making sure there are opportunities in the workforce for our young people. Again, I can tell the member that our policies apparently are working. We have the lowest youth unemployment in all of Canada at just over 10 percent. That we are extremely proud of and I, again, will put it on the record so that he can hear it.

It is just unfortunate that he, as a member of the Legislature over the past few budgets, has voted against the kinds of initiatives, incentives, that have been put in place that will develop the situation that we have today with our unemployment rate, the second lowest in all of Canada, more people working than ever before.

I can tell you, Mr. Chairman, that I am just disappointed in the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) that he is now coming forward as critical as he is and then demonstrating in his lack of support in past votes as to whether or not the 7 percent sales tax removal on electricity—voted against it; other incentive

programs in place—voted against it. Now he is sitting here saying there is something desperately wrong. I am disappointed in him, I have to say. I thought he was a little more open-minded and supportive than that.

I am prepared to further, as a departmental minister responsible for Industry, Trade and Tourism, work to the development of opportunities for our young people, and apprenticeship programs are one which I happen to agree with. So we are on the same wavelength on that one. I just wish he would get on the same wavelength when I come to taking some of the pressures off of business when it relates to taxes. He just is not consistent in his approach, and I am extremely disappointed in that.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Chairperson, I do not know if the Deputy Premier answered the question but to respond to his discussion or points, I can assure the Deputy Premier had I felt that the government's past budgets were better than what a Liberal administration could do in the province of Manitoba, I would have voted in favour of them. I have, unfortunately from his perspective no doubt, but fortunately from our perspective, felt that the Liberal administration would have done better than what this Deputy Premier—

An Honourable Member: You are actually in a minority in that opinion.

Mr. Lamoureux: In a minority in one sense.

I would like to get an answer to the actual question that I posed and that is, is this department currently looking at any opportunities for new training or retraining programs or initiatives?

Mr. Downey: We are always open to looking at new opportunities that will help enhance the opportunities in Manitoba, the workforce, business. We are always open to looking at new activities.

Mr. Lamoureux: But currently there are no new initiatives on the close horizon?

Mr. Downey: Mr. Chairman, yes, when one looks across government, one can see a tremendous lot of new activities and ideas that will be brought forward

specifically within our department. We will only be part of it as it relates to making sure that the jobs like we have talked about in the garment industry continue to be there for those people to enter into when they have completed their activities.

Mr. Tim Sale (Crescentwood): I have just a couple of procedural questions, then I am prepared to pass this area.

I asked the minister for some information yesterday on a number of different areas. I am wondering whether any of the lists that I had asked for are available today.

Mr. Downey: I will have to check.

Mr. Sale: Mr. Chairperson, I can give the minister the areas if he needs them, but I believe he probably has a record.

Just a technical question on the Order-in-Council appointing Mr. Kupfer and Mr. Robertson to MDC, I think it is. Are there any other board members remaining, or that is it?

Mr. Downey: That is it.

Mr. Sale: Lastly, would the minister table a list of the officers and board members of MTC which I believe is now the central role Mr. Kupfer is going to be carrying out?

Mr. Downey: Yes.

Mr. Sale: Pass.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Item 1.(b) Executive Support (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$613,000—pass.

(2) Other Expenditures \$73,600.

Mr. Sale: Could the minister indicate a list of the requests under The Freedom of Information Act which have been made in the current year, the numbers that have been completely filled, partially filled and refused?

Mr. Downey: We will get that information, Mr. Chairman. Maybe I have it here now. Would he say again the year?

Mr. Sale: The year immediately past.

Mr. Downey: That is for 1994?

Mr. Sale: 1994-95.

Mr. Downey: The department received 18 applications in 1994: four granted as requested; four partially granted, five access denied; two access denied on the basis of no record found; two transferred to appropriate department and one abandoned by applicant.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Item 1.(b) Executive Support (2) Other Expenditures \$73,600—pass; 1.(c) Financial and Administrative Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$651,700—pass; 1.(c)(2) Other Expenditures \$334,100—pass.

Item 1.(d) Research and Economic Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$407,400.

Mr. Sale: Mr. Chairperson, I have a number of questions in this area, and I want to preface my questions just with a few statistics, which I am sure are available to the minister, but for the record.

You will remember yesterday in our discussion I tried to stay with a perspective that was longer term rather than year over year. So I want to just note that in the period from 1980 to 1995, 15-year period, the manufacturing sector in Manitoba has fallen by 10,000 jobs. The public administration sector in total, in spite of all of the new programs the government has been involved in, has risen by only 7,000 jobs. Agriculture has fallen by 6,000.

There has been no change in primary, other primary it is called, primary manufacturing, primary sectors. Business services have grown by far the most, by 60,000; finance, insurance and real estate by 3,000 over a base of 28,000; trade by only 2,000 over a base of 81,000; transportation, communication, other utilities by 3,000 over a base of 47,000; and construction has

fallen by the same amount, by 3,000 over a base of 23,000.

So I want to preface my comments with the fact that I am as pleased as any other Manitoban with the employment numbers, and as I said in my opening comments, governments should neither take all the blame nor all the credit for employment numbers which are obviously cyclical and partially reflect the internal conditions in a market, but they also partially reflect conditions far beyond the market, and obviously manufacturing exports are one of those.

I want to also put on the record that the manufacturing sector of which the government is proud, and in the last year the growth in that sector has been impressive, but nevertheless the manufacturing sector in 1989—which is as far back as the table that I am using goes. This is Table 9, Exports by Industry, Manitoba Bureau of Statistics, June '94. In 1989 exports were \$1.7 billion, imports \$2.6 billion for a \$900 million shortfall between exports and imports. In other words, we had a deficit of manufacturing trade in 1989 of about \$900 million. By 1993, which is the most recent data available in this table, exports had grown by about \$300 million to \$2 billion, slightly over \$2 billion, but imports, Mr. Chairperson, had skyrocketed to \$3.8 billion. So now our trade deficit in manufacturing goods has risen from about \$900 million to \$1.8 billion. In other words, it has doubled in this period of time.

So, while I am not going to suggest that the government's current unemployment numbers are bad—I am happy for that, and I am happy for my constituents and the minister's constituents that can find work of a good kind—I want to point out that we have not got a good record in the area of imports and export balance. So, while I must admit to some frustration with the member for Inkster's (Mr. Lamoureux) questions, I nevertheless would say to the minister that we may have been doing better than we were in terms of exports, but we are doing much worse than we were in terms of balance, and the balance to me is a very serious question. I wonder if the minister has any comments on that.

* (1220)

Mr. Downey: Well, I do not agree with the premise which the member puts on the record. According to the Manitoba Bureau of Statistics, it is in fact doing the opposite. The ratio of exports to imports is factually improving for the province of Manitoba as it relates to the numbers which we have from the Manitoba Bureau of Statistics.

Mr. Sale: Mr. Chairperson, I think it is not probably helpful to go on in a battle of numbers. I am interested in the trade deficit difficulties which we are in, and the question of rates of improvement is always a question of what base you used, but I think we can leave that. We have both put our comments on the record.

I am interested in a sector that the minister spoke about in some detail, except that I seem to have lost the sheet that I was wanting to refer to. The minister has talked about the interprovincial trade group of which he, I believe, is the co-chair, and he has spoken about the progress that he sees being made in this area.

I am concerned about a sector that was left out of the NAFTA agreement, which I believe is now on the table under the direction of the minister, and is Mr. Barber involved in these negotiations? It is the MUSH, the so-called MUSH sector, municipalities, universities, schools and hospitals.

Could the minister tell the committee what the status of the negotiations about the inclusion of the MUSH sector in the Agreement on Internal Trade, the AIT? What is the status of those discussions?

Mr. Downey: Mr. Chairman, I think it would be appropriate to say there is currently dialogue going on with the representatives from the municipal organizations as it relates to the internal trade agreement. It is not a matter of—I do not take the position that they should be. It is not our mandate to directly force participation.

I would hope that over the discussion period, one could encourage, because let us look at it in the same context that we look at it as a province, and I am sure the federal government looks at it as it relates to the provinces, that if we continually set up barriers to the businesses within our provinces as to whether or not

they are allowed to bid on tendered activities province to province or disallowed through a restriction of provincial governments from entering that marketplace, that what you have is you have a building effect of which the cost to the consumer who is buying those really becomes an island unto itself, and how do you eventually make sure that the lowest cost service is being provided?

So that is the principle which we operate on, so I would say to him at this particular time, there are discussions still taking place. I do plan in the next short period of time to meet with the municipalities to discuss what their current concerns are and go from there.

Again, it is a matter of Canada, whether you are talking province to province, province to federal government, or municipality to municipality, has traditionally worked on a compromise way of doing things. I would hope that the municipal leaders—and some that I have talked to are very open to free trade. I think there are limits. Of course, you would not want to have a municipality, for every small, little detail that they want, to have to go and say this is offered to the rest of Canada to sell into our market. But when you get into the larger projects, then it means quite a bit. And I think that eventually, if you do not have free trade between the provinces and between the municipalities, you eventually erode the fibre that keeps this country together.

You bid as a Manitoban or you live as a Manitoban rather than as a Canadian. At the end of the day those are the questions that have to be answered by people who want to continue to have barriers between government jurisdictions. It is in the Canadian and the national interest that I believe we have to press and pursue and encourage that the municipalities fully participate—and schools and hospitals.

Mr. Sale: I thank the minister for that response. Mr. Chairperson, is the minister then saying that the policy of the government is that all major purchases—and I invite him to suggest if he has an idea of what a threshold might be for major and minor, I suspect there is some sense of threshold—that all major acquisitions should be subject to the NAFTA national treatment

regulations so that there is tendering and that sort of thing on all major purchases.

Mr. Downey: I do not disagree with that.

Mr. Sale: I wonder, then, Mr. Chairperson, if the minister would convey to the Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson) his comments, because there appears to be a bit of a discrepancy between the minister's approach on major projects and the Minister of Finance's approach on major projects. We have a \$111-million arena which, because it is being fast-tracked and for all kinds of other reasons which are not particularly positive reasons, will not be subject to tender and will not benefit Manitoba's communities to the degree that I think a major project of that scale should.

Mr. Downey: I do not accept the premise of which the member refers. I believe that there was a proper and adequate process which brought forward proposals, and I will make no further comment. I do not see any inconsistency in what I have said as to what is being carried out in all areas.

Mr. Sale: For the record, I think the minister knows that the nature of the project has changed, not just in a large way, but it has changed in a continuous way, from the time that MEC called for proposals last fall.

There also has been very significant elevation of the government commitment to the project, and I will not enter into debate about the propriety of the level of the input. That is a matter for the government to determine, but the question of control and tendering of public projects I think is a very major concern.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Is it the will of the committee to break for a period of time and that the clock continue running? [agreed]

Mr. Downey: Mr. Chairman, just before we do I have some information which I will provide for the member, which he had asked for yesterday actually, projects which the government participated in through loan programs. It is fairly self-explanatory.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: We will resume at approximately one o'clock.

The committee recessed at 12:29 p.m.

After Recess

The committee resumed at 1 p.m.

* (1300)

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Item 1. Administration and Finance (d) Research and Economic Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$407,400.

Mr. Sale: Mr. Chairperson, we were on the question of the MUSH sector when we took a short break. I want to go back to that and ask the minister to talk about the role of the Canadian Health Development Foundation which I think has a role in the MUSH sector, particularly in the hospitals portion of that.

Mr. Downey: I am not able to speak in detail in that area. As the member knows, the well-known Manitoban and Winnipegger who very credibly handled the responsibilities as the negotiator and basically the lead on the internal trade agreement, Mr. Arthur Mauro—and so as it relates to that specific detail I cannot comment. I am prepared to, however, bring back some information as it relates to their participation and how much involvement there was.

I say in the process what we did as ministers was to have our staff develop the basic principles, guidelines and do the discussions in the different sectors. I apologize, I cannot give him any more detailed information on that particular issue.

Mr. Sale: Mr. Chairperson, I ask the minister, would he want to defer this to a later discussion, or are there other resources he might want to consult in order to talk more about this area, or how would he like to handle this?

Mr. Downey: Again, maybe the member could give me a list of specific areas which he wants to deal with, and then I will see if I can deal with them. If I cannot deal with them here I will bring the information back, so either at my ministerial salary time or whatever, we

can deal with it. I will make sure we try to get him the information, is the point I am trying to make.

Mr. Sale: My concern is this—and I may need tutoring in this area, but let me try and put it as I understand it. The agreement on internal trade is intended to insofar as possible harmonize the rules interprovincially so that provinces will treat each other's industries and resources in a nondiscriminatory manner. In effect the internal trade agreement will replicate the NAFTA agreement in terms of national treatment, so it will say that internally firms must be treated on a fair and equitable basis regardless of where they are located in terms of their access to business in any province.

My understanding of that—and this is where I may not be correct—is that means that in effect these rules then become NAFTA rules. Once you have placed your firms internally on a level playing field, to use a term that was discussed during the Free Trade Agreement, the FTA, they then are in competition with the firms of other nationals that are party to NAFTA, and that by opening up the MUSH sector, which is the one I am particularly concerned about, we would then de facto open up to the requirement to open up all procurement in the MUSH sector depending on what the exclusions and thresholds and other limitations were, but in effect, by including the MUSH sector, we would put all of these firms under the NAFTA rules. Maybe the minister could comment on that.

Mr. Downey: Again, I will get confirmation on this. I am of the understanding that basically, without the agreement of the municipalities—this is negotiable—a discussion is being carried on.

If the member is saying look, this opens up all of the different purchasing agencies for the hospitals and the schools and the municipalities to a U.S. bid as well as a Canadian bid, I would have to get—I would generally have to get a clear legal opinion or an opinion from the department and/or the secretariat as it relates to this. I do not believe—and I say this generally, just talking as an intent—that was the intent as it related to the non-Canadian trade activities. What you are saying is that could in fact imply—I cannot give you a clear answer. I am under the impression, I say that generally at this point, that it would not be more within the Canadian

seat. So again, laws are laws and agreements are agreements, and I will get the interpretation and the clarification on the issue which the member raises.

Mr. Sale: I appreciate the minister's answer. I think that this is really a vital question. The minister states that he is not entirely sure of the implication. I hope that he will be, and perhaps there is not time in our Estimates, but I hope that he will undertake to provide an opinion on this question.

The sources that I have read suggest that once a firm is given national treatment, that is equivalent under the NAFTA agreement to national treatment for all firms, and by implication, that means the opening. I also understand—and I do not think this is in dispute—that once a sector has been opened it cannot then be reserved in any subsequent activity that under both the new world trade agreement and the various incarnations of NAFTA and FTA—once something is moved into the open playing field it cannot then be subsequently be taken back out of it without abrogating the charter or without the agreement of all the parties, which is highly unlikely. So, am I correct in that understanding?

Mr. Downey: I believe so.

Mr. Sale: Then I would just like to refer to a bit of history. The minister has spoken earlier in response to the member for Inkster's (Mr. Lamoureux) questions about a wide range of things. He spoke very positively about the bus sector in Manitoba, the transportation sector, but particularly the bus manufacturing sector.

This is my opinion and, therefore, I cannot prove it, but my sense is that had governments in Manitoba, particularly the City of Winnipeg, not protected the ability of Western Flyer, Flyer, Western Flyer and then, ultimately, den Oudsten to sell their buses into not a protected but at least a semisheltered market, it is highly likely that that firm would have gone bankrupt long since because, essentially, for a number of years the only buses that it sold were sold within semiprotected markets before it began to be successful in marketing outside of Canada.

* (1310)

In effect, as the minister has presented in his Estimates and Supplementary Information, we incubated that industry; whether by design or by accident, that is what we did.

In the health sector and in the education sector, there are many good Canadian firms, Manitoba firms, that provide a very good product and a very good service, but they are likely not to be able to withstand predatory pricing practices from companies who wish to take over a market share by providing what may not be illegal in the sense of predatory pricing but which may be so competitive that the local pockets are not deep enough to withstand the onslaught. And I think we have seen that in the health sector.

We have seen the beginning of contracting out, and it is not that I am opposed unalterably to contracting out for union purposes. I think there is always a union question in contracting out, but even the contracting out, quite apart from the union question, to non-Manitoba suppliers such as Howard Johnson's in the housekeeping, the hotel component of health care, we are talking about, under an initiative that the Minister of Health announced in January, to bring all of the hospitals in Winnipeg together into one major purchasing agreement, one central laundry, one central commissary.

The intention, as I understand it, from those who are going to be heading up those initiatives, is to contract out the provision of those services, put them up for tender.

I think almost inevitably we will see the increasing presence of very large American firms who can loss-lead their way into a dominant position and ultimately cost Manitobans very significant dollars, because there is no evidence that it is cheaper to provide health care in the American model than it is in the Canadian. The contrary is obviously true. And the quality of the jobs may not be as good as the quality of the jobs they replace.

So I would appreciate the minister responding to that concern about not contracting out in the sense of union busting—that is another issue—but contracting out in the sense of losing Manitoba's and other provinces' ability

to meet their own health, education and municipal needs and being dominated increasingly by large American companies.

Mr. Downey: Not returning the comments with a question, I guess I would ask, what evidence would the member put forward that there already is not a major dominance of American suppliers in the system doing it on an individual basis within the system? Is there any evidence that already is not taking place?

Mr. Sale: The minister, I think, is correct in that a great number of our medical resources come from the United States, equipment and, increasingly, services. That, Mr. Chairperson, is not, in my view, a good thing. The minister has taken some pride in his opening remarks, and I think justifiably, in the development of the health industry's initiative in Manitoba, that it has moved from a tiny sector to a significant sector, still not large but it is certainly much better than it was.

I think that the opening up to the AIT and thereby, I think, to NAFTA will undercut the ability of provinces, particularly smaller provinces, to incubate their own suppliers and to develop the kind of diversified economy that the minister speaks positively of and I would speak positively of.

Mr. Downey: Again, Mr. Chairman, I guess one has to—it is a matter of balance. First of all, in doing so, you are looking at cost savings that we are all forced to look at as it relates to the provision of services and the purchase of goods.

To what point does one take that—and that is the issue which the member raises—to which you would become fully captive of a major company that would be dealing exclusively with one entity? How do you control or offset the risk that may be there. I guess it is a matter of a judgment call.

That is why I raised the issue as to how much today we are dealing with companies that are of the same origin doing the same thing. Would it in any way threaten or put us in a vulnerable position? I do not believe so. I think there would still be enough competition—"competition" is the right word—within the

industry that would not hold us captive of any one particular company. So that would be my response as it relates to that particular subject.

Mr. Sale: I cannot comment with a great degree of knowledge in the municipal sector, but in the health sector while the equipment suppliers are largely offshore, not entirely, but largely offshore, the services in the health sector are virtually all still supplied within the province and usually by the institutions themselves or by a consortium of institutions. It is still the exception for services to be supplied by nondomestic suppliers.

The minister, I am sure, knows that the American experience is that the American health care system is ruinously inefficient, not efficient. Its costs are virtually out of control, not entirely because the public sector still has some control through Medicare and Medicaid, but the drug costs are out of control, preferred provider programs are increasingly expensive and pricing many Americans out of health insurance. It comes from, at least in part, the fact that health is a scarce good. It is not a good like lots of other goods that can be easily treated through the market. There are some things that work in the market, some that do not. Health is one of the ones that does not work in the market.

I simply want to express to the minister our concern that in the AIT discussions, the issue of the health sector should be seen as a particular case that needs very, very careful examination before there is any move to open it up to national treatment, because there—I can quote to the minister the American head of Great-West Life who was quoted in American hearings as saying that the Canadian health care system is the last great oyster to be pried open.

The American multinationals in the health care field view Canada's health care system as a profit centre. They know that if they were able to move it into the same shape as their system is, we would be spending another \$20 billion to \$25 billion a year in health care were we to be modelling the American system.

They spend 15 percent of GDP on health care, we spend 10. Our medicare costs are \$45 billion. If you

up that \$45 billion by 50 percent, that is another \$22.5 billion. That is the inefficiency, the opportunity cost, if you like, of delivering health care through a private public model that has very little government control over it.

One of the elements of that, and I am not claiming it is the only element by any means, but one of the elements is the ability to global fund the health delivery system, rather than to fund it on the kind of line-by-line, contract-by-contract basis which is less efficient and opens you in this particular field. Because it is a natural monopoly in lots of ways, it opens you to monopoly pricing. I simply put that on the record as a concern and hope the minister will take it.

Mr. Downey: Mr. Chairman, as I initially thought, I just confirm that there is no linkage between the internal agreement as it relates to trade and NAFTA and, particularly, municipalities—

Mr. Sale: I am sorry, Mr. Chairperson, I did not hear the minister. There is no linkage, did you say?

Mr. Downey: That is right. There is no linkage between the Agreement on Internal Trade and NAFTA as it relates to the municipal procurement.

Mr. Sale: I am sorry, I genuinely do not understand the response.

Mr. Downey: The internal agreement, which has been signed between the provinces, will not open up procurement obligations for municipalities to offer their purchases to U.S. companies. It is internal to Canada.

Mr. Sale: Just so that I am sure that I understand that, I understand that the Agreement on Internal Trade is an agreement on internal trade in Canada. What I was asking was whether then by virtue of doing that, by virtue of the provinces moving out of the field, does that not then subject them in those sectors to the NAFTA rules?

Mr. Downey: The answer that I am being told is no.

Mr. Sale: I thank the minister for that, and I thank you for being patient with my puzzlement here.

Mr. Downey: I want to make a clarification. I am talking municipal procurement; that is what I said.

Mr. Sale: There are the other three sectors then. The MUSH sector is not just municipal?

Mr. Downey: The same thing.

Mr. Sale: Is it true for all four of the components?

Mr. Downey: Correct.

Mr. Sale: I appreciate that series of answers. Still on (d)(1) I have a couple more questions here. Under the issue of infrastructure is the government open or concerned about the possibility of providing legislation to ban large volumes of water export to the United States? Is this an issue that you are concerned about at present? Are you proposing any action on it?

* (1320)

Mr. Downey: In a serious note, the answer is no. I am not aware of any discussions or negotiations of export of water to the U.S. in a form any larger than what the current regulations say. I do not know whether it is in a two-litre bottle or a five-gallon pail, but I believe that is basically what the restrictions are currently.

There are some areas of our communities right now that would like to export some water somewhere, on the lighter side. My preference is to make either food products through irrigation with the water, make electricity and manufacture product and sell the product into the international marketplace. That is how we would like to sell our water rather than the raw resource.

Mr. Sale: Again, I thank the minister for a forthright response. I agree that hip waders are necessary in several parts of Canada right now. A concern here is this, that we know that large parts of the United States, and including certainly the central Midwest, apart from their periodic floods like ours, have a need for water.

There is a great interest in water imports. I think in the long run we have to learn to live with the water we have got. If we are going to inhabit an area, we have to

learn to live with that and not to artificially prop up our ability to exploit either land or any other resource by exporting large volumes of water to a country that is incredibly wasteful with its water. So I am glad to hear the minister's response on that.

I am also wondering if the minister could comment on the Red River Trade Corridor proposal. These are all issues of trade growth, and I am not sure whether that proposal comes under your department. I think it does. Perhaps you could comment on the status of that.

Mr. Downey: There has been recently support given to not only the Red River Trade Corridor but also the North America trade corridor which takes in the western region of the province, No. 10 highway, No. 83 highway. Basically as—and I say this in the position that I come to the office—is that Manitoba I look at as a central part of Canada and as a central part of a trade corridor within Canada.

The more routes that we have, whether it is through air or on the road to promote and develop trade, the better off we are, not that we should not be disputing whether it goes off the east side of the province, the central part of the province or the west side. We are all in this to try and, I believe, mutually co-operate to advance the trade activity through the United States, central United States, and into Mexico.

We have supported them. The most recent support that went to the Red River Trade Corridor and the North Central Trade Corridor was \$25,000 each to promote and enhance themselves as Manitoba representatives and organizations, to further make sure that they have the proper mechanisms in place to interface with American either government-type agencies and/or the private sector. I think it is the way, it is clearly demonstrated, that it is the positive way to go.

We also have an agreement signed with the State of Kansas on trade which I think is what government should do. We should be the umbrella organizations that show the private sector or the people who are wanting to do business back and forth there is a co-operative agreement between the jurisdictions which they should feel comfortable operating within. I think

it is an agency or there are two agencies or organizations that will play a lot greater role as the trade linkages north and south continue to develop.

Mr. Sale: I am referring to a letter which I am sure the minister has—if he has not, I would certainly share it with him, but I am sure he has it—from Jerry Nagal, May 15, 1995. It is in regard to input into the border accord and Mr. Nagal writes to presumably his side of the border, although he may be writing to us as well, I am not sure. He mentions that Lynn Bishop, manager of the airport, represent this region on the executive board of the Canadian-American Border Trade Alliance. Is the minister familiar with the letter?

Mr. Downey: No, I am not familiar with the letter, but I am familiar with the work that is being carried out by Mr. Bishop, particularly as it relates to activities and encouragement to use the International Airport, whether it is not only through the cargo activity, and I compliment Mr. Bishop in the work in being able to achieve the establishment of American Airlines service that now comes into Winnipeg three times a day from Chicago. I know that there is some work being done by the airport to have direct linkages to Denver which, again, you have to move people if you expect to move product.

Specifically, the letter, no, I am not familiar with it.

Mr. Sale: I will make this letter available to the minister just in a moment. I just want to ask a couple of questions about it. The letter is from the American partner, Mr. Bishop, on this board so it may not represent Canadian views, but I ask the minister whether these are his understanding of what we are attempting to do here.

Promoting international trade by first of all adopting the best practices of each country to harmonize commercial border processes and procedures, what is normally meant by best practices in regard to this?

Mr. Downey: I cannot explain what someone else's letter or interpretation means. What I would expect—and let me go back not too long ago when the President of the United States visited the Prime Minister of Canada, and they actually signed a cross-border

memorandum I believe it was. It was not basically an agreement, but it was an instrument which demonstrated the willingness of both the Prime Minister of Canada and the President of the United States to eliminate some of the, what I would say, unnecessary challenges to people wanting to move back and forth across the border.

I take that as a positive step from those two leaders because I say this particularly from the tourism industry side, we have had many people who have complained to us about unnecessary problems when they have come to the border and/or the airport.

They feel that they are almost being treated as if they are guilty of something before it is actually proven that they are trying to do something. That is a difficulty for entering our country. I take it in the spirit of trying to ease the movement of people and hopefully product north and south as the trade continues to expand and grow.

Talking about tourism, we depend very heavily on the United States for our tourism industry, and without that we would be in a very difficult situation in a lot of our communities.

Mr. Sale: I have asked that copies of the letter be made so that we can share them. Perhaps the best thing to do is to put this item off a bit, and we can come back to it at a later time after there has been a chance to look at the letter.

My concern in the letter is not wanting to inhibit international trade or tourist movement. That is not the suggestion at all, but the letter indicates that the interest is in harmonizing of a wide range of things: visa requirements, product entry and exit. My sense of that is that given that we are talking about an elephant and perhaps a good strong mouse in negotiations here, we are much more likely to be harmonizing towards the States than they are to be harmonizing towards us.

I am concerned about some of their restrictions on entry. It has always seemed to me to be easier for Americans to come here to work than it has been for Canadians to go to the States to work. That has, generally speaking, been my experience anyway.

I think there may well be concerns in the agricultural sector about what the common agreements will be in terms of entry and exit of products. I think there have been concerns at the border over the last couple of years on a variety of shipments, animal as well as crop shipments, at various points. There have been American—maybe harassment is too strong a term, but maybe it is not too strong a term.

I am concerned about whether we have a strong view on what it is we want to see harmonized and what it is we want to achieve. Are we going into these negotiations with a position and an agenda, or are we going to be harmonized downward into a less competitive position than we might otherwise be in?

Mr. Downey: Mr. Chairman, the member is straying into what is pretty much federal jurisdiction. If he is asking for an opinion as it relates to the province of Manitoba, there have been areas at which we have found difficulties. Of course, we can go right to the point of the cap that we were forced to put on in the movement of wheat in the United States. That, I believe, is not in the spirit of what the Free Trade Agreement was signed on. You can go right down to movement of people, and it is a matter of a process when you get to the border what you have to show, what you have to declare. Is there equality?

(Mr. Frank Pitura, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair)

I would say at this particular time there has been something taking place that has been in our favour—that is, that Americans can purchase \$200 worth of goods and can return to the United States and can turn around and come back and buy another \$200 worth of goods. That is the way the regulations currently read, which I think it puts our people selling product into the United States at an advantage. Canadians cannot do that.

If I understand the question correctly, you do not want to give up any benefits Canada has that would be seen to benefit the United States and thus not either retain a benefit or lose some control of a benefit that we have. It would not be our intention to want to see that happen. Again, the jurisdiction for that falls with the federal government. I just noted as how the member feels.

Mr. Sale: Perhaps I am also misunderstanding this. Is Mr. Bishop acting purely as a federal appointee to this, or is the ministry involved in this issue in any way?

Mr. Downey: Mr. Chairman, Mr. Bishop is not working for us within the department. It could be that he is working within his capacity as transportation chairman within the Chamber of Commerce, but not in the capacity with the provincial government.

Mr. Sale: So the minister's department is not directly involved in the Red River corridor or the border issues at all?

Mr. Downey: Other than we provide financial services, I believe we have staff that sit in on their meetings and provide resources to them as far as people, but I do not believe we have any—the Red River Trade Corridor does not have any regulatory or any negotiating power. It is a symbol, or a body of people working to enhance and work to move product north and south. It has no authoritative powers, really is what I am trying to say.

Mr. Sale: I do not want to be argumentative on this issue at all, but the way I read the letter, which I have asked to be copied to share with you, is that this body is going to have very major input into the shape of the border that was signed. You will see from the letter that there is quite a detailed list of issues that are being studied and advised upon and ultimately, presumably, there will be some kind of agreement on them.

My concern is that the government is, at least in a tangential way, supporting this as, I suppose in a sense, a good neighbour facilitating trade with an adjacent state. I do not have any problem with that.

But if the officers of the association are acting on the federal government respectively, their two federal governments' behalf advising them on issues, I would ask the minister and his department to look carefully at the issues that are on the table to develop appropriate positions that do protect the interests of Manitobans and to be very forthright about that.

Mr. Downey: Mr. Chairman, it is my responsibility and duty to carry out my office's responsibility in the

interests of Manitobans to the best of our ability, and we will continue to do that.

Mr. Sale: I just have a couple of other questions on this appropriation and then we will be able to pass it. I wonder, just a request, the minister's additional information talked about a World Wide Web as one of the sort of interesting promotional ways of letting people know more about Manitoba's opportunities. I wonder if the minister could share with the committee just a couple of samples, print outs of the page or the pages that are available on the World Wide Web.

* (1330)

Mr. Downey: The co-ordinating body within government that is working—the co-ordinating body is EITC. It is working on behalf of all departments of government to co-ordinate the information that goes onto Internet. We, as a department, are doing a tourism page which is not complete yet, but when it is complete, will be made available, for sure, to the member.

Mr. Sale: I had thought that that was something that was—perhaps I read the wording wrongly. I thought it was something that already existed. I am glad the government is doing that.

Just as an aside, I was fascinated during the election campaign with the number of very modest homes in which people were on the Internet on a regular basis, and I remember going to quite a number of doors where the people at those doors were far better informed than I was on some of the major issues of the day. Perhaps they were unemployed or underemployed, or perhaps, they were working shifts, I do not know. They certainly had time to cruise the Internet, and so I think it is an increasingly powerful way of letting people know.

On a much more serious question, the government is, I am sure, aware of the federal proposals to privatize CN, and I would just like to ask the minister, first in a broad sense, is his department following this proposal? Have they prepared any briefing material on the issue, and can he comment?

Mr. Downey: The Department of Highways and Transportation are basically the lead department as it relates to the activities of the federal government and CN. We are certainly part of it and, as a government, going to be conscious of any either negatives or positives that we have to be aware of on the business side, but I can reiterate, it is the Department of Highways and Transportation that are the lead department as it relates to the CN activities.

Mr. Sale: The minister referred very briefly to the concept of short lines and the possibility of the bay line being thought of in that context, and perhaps some other lines in Manitoba. Could the minister comment on that?

Mr. Downey: I guess the bottom line is that for 18 years, or almost 18 years that I have been a member of government, both in government and opposition, I have fought very hard, and any government I have been involved with has fought very hard to make sure that we had maintenance of a line to the Port of Churchill.

And it is not because we cannot maintain a line. It is not because it is not possible to haul either cement in hopper cars to hydro stations to build them, or build whatever in hopper cars to that point, but at that point we have to stop with wheat cars because they will not handle hopper wheat cars. I am not convinced that that is the only reason that they cannot be hauled up there. I think there has been tremendous, and there is a tremendous political influence from both other sides of the country to not encourage use of that port. In fairness, it is a government-owned port facility in Churchill, there are not any private interests in there, and that basically I think speaks volumes.

On the short-line business I think that there will be some areas of opportunity that open up where, unfortunately, it may be abandoned by the major rail operators. Again, it may provide a service that we would otherwise lose. So I am not certainly opposed to short line. I would hope that the Port of Churchill line is one which could be turned around. As much as the federal government has moved to remove the freight subsidy to the grains being moved off the Prairies it is certainly not supportable in the way in which they have

done it, but it may in fact make the Port of Churchill look somewhat more attractive as it relates to the movement of product out of the North.

* (1340)

What has to happen, Mr. Chairman, is that somebody has to make sure the line is adequately kept up and somebody has to make sure that the hopper cars are the right kind of cars that are made available and that people who are exporting grain out of this country, mainly the Canadian Wheat Board, are of the mind to make sure it all works. There are a lot of players, there have been a lot of players.

I am just saying it may make the numbers, after the first of August of this year, more acceptable as it relates to return for the movement of product to a company that would be moving it up through that system.

I would hope as well that we could look for various other products and activity as we have been doing through Arctic Bridge, either to import products through that system and/or alternative exports. That is what we are continually trying to do.

Mr. Sale: We have observed for the record that there is I believe, I think it is a \$300-million fund that the federal government has proposed for upgrading and stabilization of the rail system or the transport system prior to the privatization. This is part of the Crow benefit adjustment and the rail privatization. What presentations or discussions has the government had with—presumably it is Mr. Axworthy, although it might someone else, it could be Doug Young, who knows—the federal government to prioritize the allocation of those resources for the bayline?

Mr. Downey: Again, this does not follow directly within this jurisdiction, but I am sure that the departments who are involved have staff and have been discussing it with them. I honestly could not say what discussions have taken place in the ministerial level but I can certainly find out for the member. I, quite frankly, want to make sure that Manitoba gets our fair share of the monies available, because when we lose the pooling under the federal government's proposal, we are going to be hit the hardest as a province.

When one looks at the amount of money that will be taken out of the economy by this federal government's action, all in one fell swoop, we talked about the \$240 million transfer payment lost directly to health and education. The direct amount of money that has been injected through support and transportation of our raw products out of this country is a massive, massive amount of money taken out of our economy that has been here previously. It is unfortunate that it was done in the way in which it was so abrupt. I think it will take some time for adjustments to take place.

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

Mr. Sale: I concur with the minister's statements, and I will say that we will look for the same kind of energy to be expended on the bayline and on the transportation adjustments as we have seen unfortunately expended on the Winnipeg Jets. Our party has been I think unfairly cast as being antihockey or anti-Jets. We are not, not at all.

We are anti massive public subsidies for a private hockey team, not because we do not like hockey but because subsidizing that kind of a losing industry does not make a whole lot of sense to us when we are facing the fact that you could upgrade and secure the bayline for another 30 years for less than \$170 million which the public sector is prepared to put into the hockey team.

The potential for the spaceport, the potential for tourism, not to mention the number of jobs that are being maintained or lost on that line, far exceed what I think even the most optimistic view might be of what the potential for a hockey team in Winnipeg is.

I want to ask the minister if he could provide us with the total estimated—I understand there will have to be an estimate here—direct and indirect employment that depends on the continued functioning of the bayline over the next period of years.

Mr. Downey: Mr. Chairman, I do not accept the member's numbers and/or his accusations as it relates to the hockey and the entertainment complex. We are not putting the money into a hockey team. I want the

record to clearly state that. What we are doing is, we are supporting, with two other levels of government, an entertainment complex in which hockey will be played on the ice surface for part of the year.

It can also be used as a trade centre. It can also be used for many other activities which will add positive economic benefits to the province of Manitoba. I would hope they would start to express what is happening as it is, rather than to try and leave an impression that we are in some way supporting hockey teams to the magnitude of which he has indicated. That is not correct, and I want the record to clearly state our support is for an entertainment complex of which for part of a year there will be a professional hockey team play in it which is not owned by us as a province.

It is not the place to debate this, but I want the record to state it. I adamantly reject that there will not be— you know, he says it and I say this, that they are not opposed to hockey. Well, I would hope they would clarify that position differently than they have to this point. It is certainly plain that that is very much the position they are taking. I see an entertainment complex as it relates to this department in trade as a very positive initiative.

The member for Morris (Mr. Pitura) who just made a nonpolitical statement in the House today talked about a major agriculture exposition that they had in Morris last weekend for three days.

By the way, there was support from the provincial government for the Morris Stampede grounds. They have an exposition building there that, without the support of the province and the community to build that, would not have been able to have the ag exposition that they had for three days and bring an industry together that creates billions of dollars worth of wealth for this country. That is the thing I see an entertainment complex doing for this city and this province. That is the context of which I talked about.

As it relates to the efforts and energies putting forward support for either the bayline or for transportation systems that will have to be put in place, failing the federal government's continued support for the industry, we have been—I think our record is clear—

pretty supportive and will continue to be supportive of those activities.

Mr. Sale: Will the minister be able to supply the information that I requested in terms of estimated direct and indirect employment that is dependent on the continued functioning of the bayline?

Mr. Downey: I will try to get as accurate information as possible.

Mr. Sale: Is Manitoba planning to privatize any further elements of Crown corporations under some of the initiatives of this department or other departments? I was thinking specifically of MTS, but Hydro is also a candidate.

Mr. Downey: Again, neither of those Crown corporations reports to this ministry. At this particular time, I do not know of any that would be within the ministry that I have that would be identified for privatization. I could give a long speech on it as to the success of the privatization that has already taken place, but I will hold that speech for another day.

* (1350)

Mr. Sale: That will save us from having to make the other speech in response. In the Health Estimates, both sides at one point agreed that they could refer to each other's remarks by number, and I think that it saved a great deal of time.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Item 1. Administration and Finance (d) Research and Economic Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$407,400—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$146,700—pass; (3) Grants \$214,100—pass.

1.(e) Manitoba Office in Ottawa (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$200,900.

Mr. Sale: I have just a brief question here. Maybe the minister could just briefly tell us the status of the office in Ottawa and his plans for it, if any, at this point.

Mr. Downey: The staffing numbers are the same as they were last year. At this particular point I would say

there is no intention to do anything different with it. I would think, probably in the coming weeks and months, that there may be a greater role as it relates to what is happening in Quebec and the discussions relating to our Constitution—there will be not a greater role, but a different role in that respect.

Mr. Sale: There is just a footnote, and I am not clear what it means. It is probably terribly minor, but perhaps the minister could tell me what accommodation cost recovery means. Is it one of the staff members living in their own house or something?

Mr. Downey: I am told that it is the result of a rent renegotiation.

Mr. Sale: You mean rent for the office, Mr. Minister?

Mr. Downey: That is my understanding.

Mr. Sale: It is a relatively minor amount, it looks like.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: 1.(e) Manitoba Office in Ottawa (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits 200,900—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$118,100—pass.

1.(f) Manitoba Bureau of Statistics (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$450,000.

Mr. Sale: Just for the record, I would just like to congratulate Wilf Falk on his promotion in this department. He served Manitobans well over many years, and Manitoba Bureau of Statistics is a very valuable instrument, and I would just like to congratulate him.

I have one other question in this area. Mr. Chairperson, could the minister indicate whether MBS is going to move in the same direction that StatsCan has, and that is to be so aggressive in its cost recovery that virtually no one can afford their services if they are not in business. In fact even governments now find it onerous sometimes to be able to afford the services of the publicly collected data agency.

Mr. Downey: There are not any plans for major change at this particular time.

Mr. Sale: Are there now charges for the regular products of MBS, Mr. Minister?

Mr. Downey: The answer is yes.

Mr. Sale: I may be able to get these directly from the bureau, but I would appreciate just a tariff schedule of what it is that they are now charging and an indication of whether there have been any changes in the past year to those charges, if the minister could supply that.

Mr. Downey: I will do my best to provide that information for the member.

Mr. Sale: Does the government pay for StatsCan services that MBS uses in its work?

Mr. Downey: To some extent.

Mr. Sale: Have those costs gone up as sharply to you as they have to the rest of the sectors that use StatsCan?

Mr. Downey: I do not imagine we have an exemption on the increase in cost from the federal government, but we can get that information as to whether there have been changes in our costs from Statistics Canada.

Mr. Sale: Just before we pass this item, I would just for the record say that I think that the ability of the private sector, the public sector and the voluntary, not-for-profit sector to be able to make intelligent decisions about public policy depends on having ready access to good data.

I hope this government will not move in the direction that StatsCan has so aggressively moved, that unless one has fairly deep pockets it is simply impossible to get custom cross tabs or custom data anymore from StatsCan, because the cost can run into thousands and thousands of dollars. In fact, they have moved recently to an initial charge basis on which for your initial inquiries now you have to pay to find out what it will cost you to get the whole inquiry met. So, I hope the government is not planning on that kind of direction.

Mr. Downey: I appreciate the member's comments.

Mr. Sale: Pass.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Item 1.(f)(1) \$450,000—pass; 1.(f)(2) \$115,700—pass.

Item 1.(f)(3) Less: Recoverable from other appropriations \$60,000—pass.

Item 2. Business Services (a) Industry Development (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$1,490,200.

Mr. Sale: I have a fair number of questions in this area, Mr. Chairperson. It is three minutes to two. Should we deem the hour to be two?

* (1400)

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Is it the will of the committee to call it two o'clock? Agreed? [agreed]

The time is now 2 p.m. Committee rise.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Mr. Assistant Deputy Chairperson (Gerry McAlpine): Order, please. Will the Committee of Supply please come to order. This morning this section of the Committee of Supply meeting in Room 255 will resume consideration of the Estimates of the Department of Education and Training. When the committee last sat it had been considering item 2. School Programs (b) Education Renewal (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits on page 39 of the Estimates book.

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): I think at the end last time we were in the middle of discussing the government's proposals for Canadian history and Canadian social studies in the new curriculum. I was suggesting that social studies and history were different and that there had been in the past good arguments for teaching social studies at the Grade 6 and the Grade 9 level. Both of those programs had different goals and expectations. In the Grade 11 history program, students were in senior years coming close to citizenship, and it played a very valuable role in deepening their understanding of the history of their own country, its relationship to the rest of the world, and the reasons and arguments for the kinds of institutions that have grown up in Canada.

I am suggesting to the minister that I am sure she has seen many of the petitions and letters that came in in the last session of the Legislature arguing for the retention of a compulsory Canadian history course at the senior levels. I was asking what the government's plans were for this. They have often said that they want to increase the Canadian content below the Grade 10 level, and I applaud that, but I was arguing that it was not the same as having also a senior-level history course. History as a discipline and the analytical concepts that one can teach at a grade level are different than the ones that you can usually teach to the majority of students at a Grade 9 or a Grade 6 level. I wondered if the minister had any further comments on that and if she could give us, as well, some indications of how and where the Canadian content in the grades below Grade 10 will be expanded.

Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Education and Training): Just before I respond to the question, there were a couple of requests for some tablings the other day and I have those here now if I may table them.

One is the request that the member from Wolseley made regarding graduation requirements in New Directions. I have that information here which I would like to table. The other question was, I believe, from one of the members of the committee, I cannot recall which one at the moment, asking for the membership on the Advisory Committee on Education Finance.

We have Caroline Duhamel, the president of MAST; Gerry MacNeil, the executive director of MAST; Greg Giesbrecht from the Manitoba Teachers' Society; Art Reimer from the Manitoba Teachers' Society. From the Manitoba Association of School Superintendents we have George Buchholtz, Don Wiebe and Daniel Reagan, who are all superintendents in divisions in Manitoba. From the Manitoba Association of School Business Officials we have David Bell and Gord Olmstead, who are both secretary-treasurers. Citizen members, we have Vi Prowse of the Home and School Parent/Teacher Federation which has changed its name to Manitoba Parent Councils, and she is the president of that association. From the Department of Education we have Jim Glen, Carolyn Loeppky and Gerald Farthing, who are all senior staff, directors or ADMs in the Department of Education. I will just table that for the

member's information, and, as I indicated before, at this time of the year, those names will all come up for renewal. The organizations will all be asked to submit, again, their names.

In terms of the answer to her question, yes, indeed, I do know the difference between history and social studies. I understand that history is a component of social studies, and I also understand what is being said in terms of best practices research which, I believe, the opposition party supports, at least I hope they do.

But based on best practices research in terms of the whole social studies, which includes a wide variety of understandings about our country, its peoples, geography and customs, and so on, we will be looking for richer content in elementary grades, building on the prior knowledge that children bring to the social studies topics. This will include studies of concepts from psychology, sociology, economics, political science, history, geography. Students of all ages can understand, within their experience, Canadian social institutions, issues for social groups and problems of everyday living.

As I indicated to the member before, our focus on Canadian history will be to strengthen the Canadian history content so that students will have a deeper understanding of how history affects the nation in which they dwell. The exact curriculum will be developed, as I have already indicated to the member within the western consortium and so, at this stage, I am not able to provide the exact answer to exactly what will it say and exactly when will it be introduced.

But I do draw to the member's attention something that is fundamentally important, that I think those who are looking at the new curricula need to understand; it is extremely important that we no longer see areas of study being isolated one from the other.

We believe, for example, in the teaching of language arts skills, that effective communication in terms of receiving and transmitting information, whether it be through the written word or through verbal communications or electronic communications, or through sign language, ASL, whatever the line of communication is—that effective use of communication

should permeate all subject areas. We would like to see, for example, in science, that communication skills also be taught. Our four foundation skills will permeate all areas of learning.

Similarly, within the social studies area, history, which will be strengthened and emphasized and given more opportunity for additional learning in Senior 3 and 4 over and above the number of hours and the attention that is given to it right now, does not stand alone, and I used the example the other day which I will use again because it is a very simple, straightforward example, I believe, and that was the example of the voyageur.

* (1120)

The voyageurs, when you talk about their part of the Canadian experience, encompass history, economics, geography, an understanding of natural resources, an understanding of supply and demand and the changes in that supply and demand—an understanding of a whole wide range of topics. We do not see them as being isolated one from the other.

So the member has several times indicated that history and social studies are not one and the same thing, and while I acknowledge that history and social studies are not one and the same thing, I also think it is important to emphasize that history is a very important part of social studies, and that social studies can no longer, as she implies in her questioning by saying, history and social studies are different, implying that, somehow, history does not permeate every aspect of social studies, showing a lack of understanding for what we are attempting to do. We feel that history does impact on more than just a straight historical statement of, in 19 such-and-such this happened, and in 17 such-and-such that happened.

You have to understand, in the example that I used, how the existence of the rivers, which was geography, and the flow of the current and the climate and all of the things that happened with the voyageur, in part, were influenced by geography, by trade, by economics, by natural resources. So I hope that we will not be seeing history as devoid of being mentioned in other subject areas, and I guess that is my point.

I have just been handed a note by staff which indicates the research that is currently being done is being conducted relative to the preparation of a report dealing with the western curriculum congruence, in both French and English, in social studies' issues and trends in western Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom, broad policy issues related to social studies education in western Canada. Those principles that I outlined are based upon the best research, and we do hope that the member will support that research as valid.

Ms. Friesen: We obviously have a fundamental disagreement. I do believe that history is important, and that it can and should be taught at the senior high levels to all of our students. I think what the minister is doing is probably looking at social studies content. As I said, I have no problem with expanding and would fully support the expansion of Canadian content in the social studies area.

History is more than that, and I suppose we are getting off on to perhaps more technical areas. History is about ideas, and it is about ideology.

The minister is suggesting, really, very many descriptive aspects of voyageur life, whereas what one might be able to discuss with students at a senior level is why in fact we have idealized the voyageur, how the idea of the voyageur has come to be, how historical knowledge, the theory of knowledge that is taught in the International Baccalaureate program, that is the level of conceptualization which you can begin to deal with at the Grade 11 level. You can begin to get students to understand the origin of ideas, enable them to be critical of documents, to be critical of how knowledge is arrived at.

That is why, I believe, that history is different from social studies and that history is an important, both as a discipline and as a deeper and more critical, and I do not mean in the sense of carping or negative which is often the way people understand critical, but evaluative, a critical thinking, I think, is one of the very basic fundamental skills that one develops with history.

I am reluctant to see students being possibly, through no fault of the school boards' own desires, but through

financial reasons, through reasons of retirement, through reasons of scale of a school that that not be available to them. I know that many school boards will want to continue to teach Canadian history, and I fully support them in that.

When the department takes it away from a core compulsory subject, then it does alter the decision making of a particular school division. That gives me great cause for concern.

The minister talks about teaching across the curriculum and all the skills that they are—emphasizing the four skill areas. She used, for example, the issue of communication and literacy, and I suppose it is a truism in education that many of the new ideas are really old ideas cast in new language, as perhaps some elements of the government's plan for benchmarks and standards are really old ideas in a new language.

Similarly, teaching across the curriculum—I remember my father saying to me when he began teaching in the 1930s, the handbook that he was offered had rule No. 1, all teachers are teachers of English.

An Honourable Member: It is not in the handbook now.

Ms. Friesen: Well, it is an old idea, and it is a good idea, and it is something I think which is important to all Manitoba children. That kind of teaching across the curriculum, of course, is the responsibility and has always been taken very seriously by teachers, whether it has been specifically in the handbook or not.

In the sense of supporting interdisciplinary studies, of course there is support from that, but why must it be at the expense of a loss of a subject which I believe is fundamental to citizenship and fundamental to the critical thinking skills and to the literacy skills of senior high school students?

To move this along with a question, I wonder if the minister could tell us, I know that she cannot give us the exact curriculum now, but could she tell us exactly which levels are going to have increased social studies? How is the time to be expanded, if at all, or are we simply looking at the same grade levels, the same areas

of curriculum and somehow more densely packed? Is that all we are really looking at?

Mrs. McIntosh: As I indicated to the member in my earlier response, we are at the stage right now of consulting with the western consortium of educators and they, at this point, have not yet indicated what consensus they have come to as to those details that she is asking. When those details are ready, of course, they will be shared with any interested person, but I cannot preempt what their recommendation to us will be until I have seen it, because I have not seen it yet.

The educational partners, I can assure her, will have a role in determining the shape and the timing of the new history and the new social studies and the new geography, and the levels for increased social studies, which is what we are talking about, have yet to be determined. So Manitoba education partners will have a significant role in this. We are not saying that because the western consortium is working together on this that Manitoba does not have a significant role there because it does.

There were a couple of things that were said that I think need to be clarified in terms of the record. The member had indicated that at Grade 11 students can begin to understand things such as the theory of knowledge and so on. I quite agree that at Grade 11 they can begin to understand the theory of knowledge. I reject the notion, though, that it is only at Grade 11 that they will have sufficient maturity to be able to understand those philosophical and sociological aspects of life. I am concerned about the aspect of the opposition promoting that we have to wait until Grade 11 or Senior 3 before we can begin to expect students to have some concept of those very fundamental understandings of the universe and the world in which we live.

* (1130)

I indicate to the member that I had just put into the record an indication that we are going to, in terms of the richer content in the elementary school—not Grade 11, in the elementary school, and I just stated it earlier that we will be studying concepts in social studies which she says cannot be taught until Grade 11. We

will be introducing concepts from psychology, sociology, economics, political science and issues for social groups, problems of everyday living. In fact, we will have an emphasis on activities that engage students in inquiry and problem solving about significant human issues, and the comprehensive nature of our curriculum renewal is directed at developing students' abilities of inquiry, of reasoning, of analytical thought.

If the compulsory subject change was the only thing that we did, which the member seems to have the misunderstanding that is all that we plan to do, then maybe she might have some legitimate cause for concern. But we have repeatedly indicated that that is not what we are doing, because this is a major change with respect to learning and curriculum and assessment.

So I do reject the statement she made that at Grade 11 students can begin to understand these complexities, because we believe that there is a great capacity to have some understanding of theories of knowledge, of philosophy and all of the good things that she mentioned at a much earlier age than the age that people normally are when they get to Grade 11. Again, our information is based upon best practices researched. We have—I would be pleased to table—a whole series of quotations from reputable people in the field who agree with the direction we are taking in expanding the expectations and minds and experiences of children and not waiting until they are on the verge of adulthood to begin talking to them about fundamental issues such as the ones she raises.

I am concerned that she would think that we have to wait until they are 16 years old before we can start talking to them about what knowledge is and how the facts that we learn relate to deeper, more complex understandings of why the world around us has evolved the way it has and what impact we can make in terms of our activities, our own perspectives, our own things that we do. The member had indicated that we do not do something that we should not be teaching some of the things we are teaching at the expense of the loss of history, with the assumption that there is going to be a loss of history. She keeps coming back to this assumption that any of these good things we are doing, she keeps saying they are good, they are great, but do not do it at the expense of history, implying that we are

going to be doing these things at the expense of history. I reject that notion.

Not only will they have an enriched experience in terms of gaining some knowledge of history, but at the Senior 3 and Senior 4 level there will be even a greater opportunity to add to their history instruction, if that is the way she wants to have it phrased, than they have now. They have an option now of being able to graduate from high school with more history than they currently have the option of graduating from high school with. In terms of students not being able to understand, I will give you one example.

At a junior high in our area, children at the junior high level, not at Grade 11 but the junior high level, one of the teachers in one of the junior highs assigned his students, in terms of trying to understand Canadian parliamentary systems, the assignment that they had to in some way—he gave them a list of things that they could do—learn about the electoral process by the election that was on at that time. Three of those students chose, as a way to fulfil their assignment, to monitor one of the election campaigns in the area. They happened to choose mine, so I happened to see their experience in that.

I was very impressed with these three students who to that point, in terms of a deeper, richer understanding of what democracy is all about, had had no particular political involvement or exposure to the electoral process. They followed through every step of the campaign, even to going door knocking with the candidate, listening to what people said at the doors and understanding how those ideas got transmitted back to decision makers and ultimately affected party platforms, ultimately affected voting patterns, ultimately reflected decisions in government. They saw with their own eyes how the system works, and not only did they understand that, they began to explore the philosophical differences that they saw in approaches to government at the doors, talking to people.

I think that kind of exercise indicated to me that young people—just one of tons of examples—do have an ability to see something about the implications of knowledge and how knowledge can be used. That is just a very small example, and it is maybe not the best

example in the world, but it is one kind of example that I have had recent experience with, just in the last months, in terms of watching and understanding of a system evolve and the implications, the deeper understanding of the parliamentary system in Canada, how it compares to other regimes in other parts of the world where candidates cannot be free to be chosen, where people cannot be free to question, where people cannot be free to make choices, and how we make our choices and the freedoms that accords us, and the beauty of those freedoms and the appreciation for those freedoms that come with that basic understanding. So they were not just being told here is what happens in an election—you do this, this and this. There was a much deeper thing they were looking at which gave it really strong appreciation for Canada and for the way things have evolved in Canada that allow people to be free in that sense.

The Curriculum Frameworks documents that are currently underway, they will address the nature of discipline including history. When I say discipline I do not mean—just as the member explained what she meant by critical, I say the nature of the discipline and I think the member does not require a definition of that. It will address the nature of the discipline including history in the introduction. It will discuss what skills, concepts, approaches are fundamental to history, and that may help provide some further clarification. As well, it will show similarities with other social studies disciplines.

* (1140)

I do not want the member to think that she and I are in disagreement. We are not in disagreement on the importance of history. One statement you made in your introduction there, and I wrote it down, you said something about we will have to disagree because we think history is important or words to that effect. We do not disagree on that. We do not disagree at all on that. We may disagree on the method of delivery and the approach that we plan to take to expose children to history, but we do not disagree on the importance of history.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Chairman, I think where we do disagree is whether Canadian history should be a requirement for all graduates of Manitoba high schools.

Clearly there is a disagreement there, and I am not alone in this disagreement. There have been, as I said, numerous petitions and letters to the previous minister about this.

Just to pick up on the example that the minister offered, that is of observation of elections and students' participation in that. It obviously is a very good project. I think the minister benefited from having students watch her program, her election, as did the students benefit, as would the class.

We are not rejecting the expansion of knowledge at earlier levels. We are not rejecting the raising of expectations for all children at all levels. So that is not the issue. But if you take, for example, the example that the minister gave of electoral understanding, very good, that is exactly what the Grade 9 social studies curriculum has done. The teacher offered and took advantage of a situation that comes around every three or four years to give his or her students practical benefit.

You see, what the Grade 11 Canadian history could do at the ages of 16 and 17 years old—and of course curriculum development is based upon educational psychology or psychological principles which argue that there are different levels of understanding possible for students at different levels of their experience. Not everybody in a Grade 11 class is going to be at the same level, just as not everybody in a Grade 9 class is going to be at the same level of abstract conceptualization; but on the whole, Piaget would lay out those principles of what students could be expected to learn at different levels. That is why we do not teach the same kind of trigonometry in Grade 12 that we teach in Grade 6. Similarly in the social studies and history.

What those students in Grade 9 will be going on to get in their senior Canadian history, as they become ready for voting, is an understanding of the different governmental systems which have been part of Canada's past. So they take it in Grade 9 at the very basic practical level of, what does a government do? How does it work? How do you get elected? Very basic, and it arouses their interest. It expands their knowledge of the world, which is exactly what the

junior high and Grade 9 levels should be doing. By Grades 11 and 12 what you can begin to do is to enable students to understand the origins of that and to understand about historical change. For example, how did we get responsible government? What were the processes involved? How did we get representative government? How did Canada function under royal monarchical government in the French period? How did it function under aboriginal government in the Prairies? How was Metis government, the government of the buffalo hunt, developed in Manitoba? How many governmental systems have we had in this country, and how is the one that they observed in Grade 9 developed, and what were the origins of that?

How has the franchise been won? The minister says we should not take it for granted. Of course we should not. One of the ways we enable students not to take it for granted is to understand the history, the extent of the history of the struggle for the franchise, first of all, for the so-called universal suffrage, manhood suffrage in the 1870s and then again for female suffrage and then finally for aboriginal suffrage and also for the restoration of the vote to the Japanese after the Second World War.

Now, students are not going to get that historical understanding of change, of how one brings about change in the country, at the Grade 9 level. Some teachers will teach it, but they will have not very much time. In the past, what we have been able to do is to take that expansion of their world that we developed in the Grade 9 level and to adapt it to both a discipline but also to a historical and deeper understanding of the varieties of experience of the people of their own past, of their own families. That is what I sense is going to be lost.

Now, if the minister can tell me that that is going to be maintained, that there is going to be at those senior high levels, when students can build upon existing knowledge to understand those historical changes, to understand how the world is changed and how it can be changed and how their own country has come to be, then, perhaps, we do not have a disagreement but, at the moment, I think we do. I do sense that some stage of our students' development into citizenship is being lost.

I want to ask the minister if she can give us some evidence of the ways in which the Canadian content of Manitoba curriculum will be expanded. Is she, for example, planning to move that Grade 11 Canadian history, portions of it, into the Grade 10 level? Is that what is going to happen if everything is to be completed before Grade 10?

Are we going to change the American history course at Grade 10 to be a North American history? Are we going to change it to be a Canadian history? How is the Grade 9 course to be changed to add Canadian content? How is the Grade 6 course to be changed? Are those the levels the minister is looking at or is she looking at a social studies course in every year or adding Canadian social sciences to every level of study? Is that the proposal that is on table before the Western Consortium?

Mrs. McIntosh: The member is very knowledgeable about history, because it is her own discipline and she comes to it with a great deal of knowledge about historical events and is able to quote dates and figures and events in history very well, as it is her area of expertise, but I indicate to her that in quoting all of these authorities and talking about Piaget, for example, that she is talking about some very valuable but some also very old kinds of news.

We talk about the best practices research that I am citing for her in other examples. We are seeing a change there in the thinking about learning and curriculum, and we see a decrease in focus on the postponement of significant curricula until secondary grades. The authorities she quotes as sort of still the most current and only authority, we see there that the developmental phases are not as biologically or age related as previously thought. I appreciate her quotation of a respected authority, a valuable authority, but not the only authority and not the most current authority.

So we see a new paradigm and we talk about best practices research and, again, we have done a tremendous amount of research into the psychology on this, we see Vygotsky talking about mediated instruction, where the teacher takes the student one step beyond where they are in terms of knowledge, skills

and understanding and causes the child to move to the next level of skills and so on. It is maybe authorities that she also knows but chooses not to reference because their research indicates and confirms the best practices research we are talking about, which says that there is a decrease in focus on the postponement of significant curricula until secondary grades. Those kinds of principles upon which we base our raised expectations for students are significant and should not be ignored by those who are concerned. We no longer wait for children to get to a certain stage before we move forward. We move them forward, and it is a different kind of thing.

* (1150)

The changes that we will be talking about will be based on research, will have the input of exemplary teachers and scholars who will comprise project teams for western outcomes and Manitoba frameworks. They have not yet concluded their work to answer the specific question that came after the preamble, so I do not have the dates, times, specific content available at this time. When they are available, which we hope will not be too much longer, they will be made available.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Chair, could the minister give us a date for when they will be available? You see, we have been hearing now for a year that the government is going to increase the amount of Canadian content in the curriculum. So I think it would be helpful for all those people who are concerned about the loss of Canadian history to have an estimated date of when this collective process will be concluded and we will have some idea of where, when, how the government is going to increase the Canadian content in social studies.

Mrs. McIntosh: I repeat for the record because it must not be allowed to stand as fact that students in our schools are going to experience the loss of Canadian history. That is not an accurate statement. Students have to take Canadian history. They will not be able to go through our New Directions program without having Canadian history. So it is important that the record show that students will not lose Canadian history in Manitoba schools, and that needs to be emphasized repeatedly so that the misconception that

the member either has or wishes to have other people believe is correct, should not be allowed to stand as accurate.

The member does not like, or indicated yesterday that—implied, I suppose, because she did not come right out and say she did not like it—she implied that our new streamlining of curricula development was not to her liking, which will now reduce the current development from four to seven years down to about three years, and yet is insisting that we come up with a new curriculum. I do not know, is she wanting to know right away if we can give her a final date? Yesterday she was indicating that we should not be rushing through curricula development, so I do not know which way she wants it.

I do not have a specific date in terms of when the curricula committee will report. There is a target date set for this fall, but whether it is going to be September 15 or September 23 or September 30 I cannot tell her. It is targeted to be reporting to us in the fall of '95, and, beyond that, I simply cannot be more specific.

Ms. Friesen: Well, that was the information I was asking for, when would we know? The minister says it is in the framework. Well, perhaps it is, and if it is, then I missed it. My apologies. The minister is also leaping to conclusions when she said that I implied I had criticism of the framework timetable. I have not voiced those criticisms yet. I would like to explore the timetable today, perhaps have some basis for evaluating that timetable that the minister is suggesting for curriculum development.

My concerns are that we are losing the senior high curriculum, that there are concepts that when students are 17 they can understand, that they cannot understand when they are, on average, at the Grade 9 or at the Grade 6 level. Again, I think the basic argument that I have made, that curriculum is based upon expanding levels of student understanding, applies equally to Canadian history and Canadian social studies. And that is really all my references were, is to say that there are different levels. They are different for different students. There are average understandings and average levels of ability to conceptualize that we will find at different grade levels, and that is how we develop curriculum.

The arguments that the minister is making for mediated instruction, yes—again another old idea, that you understand where the individual student is, and you take them to the next step. That to my sense is what teaching is all about.

I think we are sort of going around the circle on some of these ideas and arguments, so what I understand now is that the western Canadian consortium, of which Manitoba is a member, will be reporting in September '95 on its proposals for Canadian social studies teaching across western Canada, and that this will include proposals at this stage for changes in the grade level at which courses will be taught.

First of all, that is a question. Will it be proposing changes in grade levels? Will it be proposing changes in content or directions for changes in content? Will it be directing—what will be the nature of the report? What are the levels of direction that are going to come in September '95, and what is the next step after that?

Mrs. McIntosh: The initial report will be on research, trends and policies.

Ms. Friesen: Then what is the next step after that? Where does that report go? How does that get translated into curriculum, and what is the timetable after that?

Mrs. McIntosh: The next step will be based on a synthesis, will consider developing a work plan, conceptual framework et cetera, for a western social studies project for consideration by the western curriculum directors, project management team and subsequently by the ADM's steering committee, and that should be around Christmas '95, somewhere in December maybe.

Ms. Friesen: When we are looking at all of this, the context of this is the entire social studies curriculum, or is this just for the development of that Grade 3 curriculum?

Mrs. McIntosh: It is for developing the outcomes for kindergarten to Senior 4, because as you know, we are moving on the continuum, what the member for Maples (Mr. Kowalski) referred to yesterday as the Australian

benchmark, and as the member knows, we no longer pluck out, we see things in totality.

Ms. Friesen: So by approximately December we anticipate seeing—what kind of a document will it be at that stage, and where will it rest, and then what is the next step after that?

* (1200)

Mrs. McIntosh: I should just indicate, when I say that December is the target deadline, that December was our target deadline, but I did indicate and wish to impose the caveat, just in case the member has forgotten what I said the other day, that because we now have other provinces wanting to be part of what we are doing and we have agreed to work with them because we feel that the principle of having western curricula, to have western standards and then to expand to Pan-Canadian curriculum standards as has now been requested by other provinces in Canada, the fact that we are working with other groups now may cause our deadlines to be slightly behind, because we wish to be thorough in our exploration with other provinces. So our target is still that date, but understand we are working with other organizations, and it may not come in specifically at that time.

After that step has been taken and after that report is ready, then the development of specific subject area general outcomes, specific outcomes from K-12 or K-Senior 4, and illustrative examples to produce the common western curricula framework of outcomes from K-12. We will be incorporating the review panel feedback as required. That is the next step that occurs after—I could on through them all if you would like.

Ms. Friesen: I am still trying to get a handle on the transition from the western Canadian consortium to the departmental actions that we have talked about before. Is that when this is happening?—and we will say December, but as far as possible, December.

Mrs. McIntosh: I would just like to indicate, we are doing this all together. It is not outsourcing, so we are working in partnership. We will be carrying on as we work with the western consortium. We will still be

working here on our own, with our own thinking and plans and so on. We will be coming together. I do not know if that answers your question about what the department will be doing or not.

Ms. Friesen: I am really having a difficult time understanding how the western consortium links with the department. Is there anything that the minister could table on this? As I understand it at the moment, the western consortium, some version of it, whether it is staff or ministers, is meeting on and off now until September 1995, when it will have a report which will look at the research trends and some proposals, presumably. Between September and December, more or less, there is going to be some synthesis, some response to that report, and then at the ADM level there will be some connections between the western consortium and the provincial department on trying to set out some specific subject outcomes for the K-Senior 4 level.

Where do we begin to click in with those committees of 12 and the report writers and the desktop publishers? When does that begin to click in? Is there something the minister could table so that we could all visibly see what happens with an abstract timetable? It is not my desire at this point to tie the minister down to a particular deadline, it is to get an idea of what the process is. It is all very new for Manitoba teachers and parents and for opposition members. It is useful, as far as I think, to be very clear and not to have any misunderstandings about what the western Canadian consortium is doing, what Pan-Canadian is doing, and what the department is doing. At which point to do our parents and our students and our teachers begin to and be able to play a role in this?

Mrs. McIntosh: We will begin to play a role here in Manitoba as soon as that initial report in September comes forward. Immediately, at that time that information will be provided to the subject area steering committees and they will begin their examination of it. Before too long—as soon as it is complete, it should not take that much longer—I will be releasing a Foundation of Excellence report which will further clarify some of those details. The subject area steering committees get that information as soon as it arrives and begin their work on the statements in the

report. That will be local. Those will be Manitoba teachers. Those will be Manitoba people, not people from any other province.

Ms. Friesen: Could the minister tell us who would be on the subject area steering committee? I do not necessarily need names. I want to know what the nature of that steering committee is.

Mrs. McIntosh: The steering committees are very broad-based committees and they encompass, again, a wide spectrum of those interested in education: teachers, universities, colleges, the other educational organizations, some representation from business or industry, a wide-ranging make-up on the committees.

Ms. Friesen: The minister says committees, I have been talking in my own question simply in the context of the social studies curriculum. Do I understand from that that there will be subject area steering committees in X number of disciplines, or in X number of areas?

Mrs. McIntosh: In all the core subject areas.

Ms. Friesen: We have been talking in the context of social studies curriculum. Is this same process being paralleled by each of the three other areas?

Mrs. McIntosh: In all four of the core subject areas, yes, and staff has just indicated to me that math and language arts are further along the course of development because they are our primary, initial thrusts.

Ms. Friesen: Each core area has a different steering committee?

Mrs. McIntosh: Yes.

Ms. Friesen: Has the minister appointed the subject area steering committees—I gather they have been appointed, obviously, in two areas where they are working. The two other areas, have they been appointed yet?

Mrs. McIntosh: The mathematics and language arts committees of course, as the member indicated, have been appointed, and actually their year is up in terms of

the timing for re-appointment, either to confirm that people will still be remaining or to add other people. The other two, the science and the social studies, have not yet been appointed, but it is expected that they will be very soon.

Ms. Friesen: Could the minister table at a later date the specific membership of those two committees that have been appointed?

Mrs. McIntosh: Yes, I would be pleased to do that.

Ms. Friesen: The minister talked about a continuing appointment. What would be the continuing role of this committee, first of all, its immediate role the first year? Then how does the minister see these steering committees, which I assume are different than the review panels that I want to talk about next, what is the difference between their two roles, and how will their continuing appointments be directed in the sense of responsibilities?

Mrs. McIntosh: Three basic ways, Mr. Chairman. One would be to help with any implementation, the other would be to assist with the ongoing renewal of curricula because, as we said, it will be always—like we do not believe that curriculum once set will sit and remain static. It will be constantly renewed. The third would be to assist in understanding how teachers will be working with the new curriculum, so there would be the three sort of areas of endeavour.

Ms. Friesen: I am not sure I understand the last one, to assist with how teachers will be working with—Do you mean relating to teacher education or professional development or what?

Mrs. McIntosh: They will be in close contact with teachers in the field. Whatever terminology you want to put on it, I suppose it is professional development, I think you said, but they will be working with teachers to get an understanding of how the implementation will be addressed as we move into the new curriculum.

Ms. Friesen: Well, it seems to me this would be an appropriate area for connections, formal, informal, with the faculties of education and with teacher training. How are those links to be made?

* (1210)

Mrs. McIntosh: Well, first of all, there is university representation involved on the committees, but there is also an Interorganizational Curriculum Advisory Committee. It is called that. It is called the Interorganizational Curriculum Advisory Committee, ICAC, another bunch of letters that we have to remember, but that is like an umbrella committee. It is there for curriculum advice, and it is going to have on it MAST, MASS, MTS, the Faculty of Education at the university and parent representation.

That parent representation will be coming from the Manitoba Association of Parent Councils. It will not be ad hoc, it will be organization specific. I think as representatives of those various organizations come together to provide curriculum advice, it is sort of an umbrella organization format that will get some of that kind of input the member is talking about, and that is a good question.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Chair, that is a new committee, that Interorganizational Advisory Committee?

Mrs. McIntosh: It is about two and a half years old which I, in my mind, call new. It is relatively new.

Ms. Friesen: The other area I would imagine where input into curriculum has been brought to the minister's attention, probably on a number of occasions, is aboriginal input and again, for want of a better word in this context, multicultural input.

How is that to be ensured at this stage of curriculum development? I am still on the subject area of steering committees.

Mrs. McIntosh: On every committee that we set up in these regards, we have criteria that indicate that we represent geographic areas of the province and that we represent the multicultural mosaic of Manitoba which includes all of the groups, including the aboriginal component.

Ms. Friesen: Can the minister tell me, in the two committees which have already been appointed, how that has been achieved?

Mrs. McIntosh: We do not have the names here, but we can get them and bring them back. That will give us, along with the names then, the indication of the region they are from and what Manitoba perspective they present on the committee.

Ms. Friesen: I want to move to the next stage now. It may be a parallel one. The minister indicated that after the subject area's steering committees had met and devised the common curricula framework and the outcomes at K to Senior 4 that she would then be producing a Foundation for Excellence report. Are such reports in each subject area? Is it going to be one single report? Is it a kind of a summary of the work of these four committees that will be presented at the end of the first stage of work, or is this something separate?

Mrs. McIntosh: I hope this is what you are looking for. The purpose of a Foundation for Excellence—which shall be the release I will be making as soon as it is completed and, as I say, it is very close to being ready for release—will have in it our vision, and parts of that will include principles of teaching, learning and assessing; curriculum development process; types of curriculum documents and the elements integrated into the curriculum; the foundation skill areas which I talked about the other day; resource-based learning; differentiated instruction; curriculum integration; aboriginal perspectives; gender fairness; appropriate age portrayals; human diversity; the antiracist, antibias education; sustainable development.

It also will talk about the issuing of diplomas, statements of marks and transcripts and the mandatory status of curriculum. That will be part of the vision aspect of the Foundation for Excellence. But the purpose of the document in an overall perspective is to first of all put out that vision to guide kindergarten to Senior 4 schools and schooling and to communicate the broad outcomes of education for kindergarten to Senior 4 and to describe Manitoba's curriculum development process for the reader's benefit, and again, to describe the various types of curriculum documents to be developed.

It will detail the elements to be integrated into all curriculum documents, so that the reader can gain a better understanding of what we are looking at. It will

provide information on reporting student marks and issuing diplomas and statements of marks and transcripts. It will communicate the revised requirements in Manitoba's four programs. When I say the four programs I mean the English program, the français program, the French Immersion program and the senior years technology education program in both français and English.

It will specify the new time allotments for Grades 1 to 8—and I think that was something you had expressed interest in—and the credit requirements including the graduation requirements. I believe you asked for those the other day for Senior 1 to Senior 4. It will describe the phasing in of the new graduation requirements, and it will also describe plans for the senior years articulation with the adult learning system.

It will have those things in it, and of course it will be probably more than what I have just given you, but that I think will give you a feel for what it will contain.

Ms. Friesen: It is essentially a process and principles document.

Mrs. McIntosh: Yes.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Chair, back on the timetable. The steering committees have looked—or steering committee if we take the social studies example, has now looked at the curriculum, and it has developed its framework and specific subject outcomes from K to Senior 4. What happens next? What is the next stage?

Mrs. McIntosh: Mr. Chairman, just to be sure that I have not left an incorrect impression, the steering committee will be reviewing, but it will not be doing the actual writing. I think I made it clear but I am not sure. Just in case I did not, I wanted to make that clarification.

The next step then carrying on will be to review all the draft materials produced by a Curriculum Frameworks of Outcomes Development Team. They will have reaction guidelines provided which will be developed by the consultant project team. They will develop that in collaboration with the Curriculum Frameworks of Outcomes Development Team, which

is the title. I know it is a bit wordy. In other words they will review all of the materials produced by the Curriculum Framework and they will do that in collaboration with the Outcomes Development Team.

* (1220)

Ms. Friesen: Sorry, I have lost track of who is reviewing what here. The subject area steering committee does not write things, but it does develop outcomes and approves a common curricula framework. Who does what next? How do we get to—I will leave it and maybe we can try again.

Mrs. McIntosh: I think I have confused you and I apologize if I have, because I realize that this is wordy. I will see if I can put it in better language.

You have the steering committee that we referred to earlier. When that report comes in, they will get it and they will check it through and they will begin to do things like help with the implementation and those types of tasks.

Next step, I will try to word this better. While the steering committee is carrying on doing that, our own Manitoba development team—and I will just call it the development team because the other words just kind of get confusing. They need the titles for their own work.

The steering committee is carrying on doing its work, and then we have a Manitoba development team which will then begin to do a review of the draft materials produced by a curricula framework team. They will have reaction guidelines provided, which will be developed by a consultant project team, and they will do that in collaboration with the outcomes team.

That is a group of people—maybe this will help—they will be educators, primarily classroom teachers selected by the department from nominations submitted by superintendents. They will use departmental selection criteria, and, of course, they will also include university scholars, college instructors and representation from industry, labour and parents. So that group, which is a different group from the steering committee which will be primarily sort of educator types, will also have the industry, labour and parent people on it.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Chair, the steering committee continues. A curriculum development team, which is the 12 people, more or less, that we talked about before, goes to work to produce the specific materials that will be used and the goals and the standards and the outcomes, et cetera, that will be used at Grade 3, Grade 4, Grade 5, whatever is applicable. Their work then goes to, I think, what we called earlier a review panel. Is that right? This review panel selected by superintendents, by industry, labour, teachers—it will include teachers, et cetera—then reviews what is proposed by the curriculum development team, which is essentially a professional team that we are actually looking at on line 16.2 (b). Is that the curriculum development team, which is these consultants and the 16 staff years that we have on this line?

Mrs. McIntosh: Yes, you are correct in that they comprise a portion of the team. I just want to go back and emphasize what they will be doing. You had referenced some of their tasks; they will be developing the outcomes. Now that steering committee does have, as well, representation from industry, et cetera.

Ms. Friesen: I think I lost the terminology there. The steering committee has representatives from—

Mrs. McIntosh: Yes, I just wanted to correct something I think I said. I may not have, but if I did, I wanted to make sure I did not mislead you.

Originally, I talked about the steering committee, and I outlined it: it is made up of teachers and industry and everything. Then I think that, when I was going through outlining who is on this second group we are talking about, I made reference to the fact that the steering committee was primarily educators and left the impression that it was only educators.

I just wanted to clarify that if I did that.

Ms. Friesen: Here is what I understood from what you had said both times. The subject area steering committees are composed of teachers, university people, community colleges, business and industry. The review committees selected by the superintendents and others includes industry, labour, teachers, possibly superintendents, I do not know.

Mrs. McIntosh: I am going to try to keep it simple. What we have are two committees whose composition is very similar in terms of the organizations and representatives who sit upon them. Their tasks are slightly different, though, because the steering committee is long-term commitment. The review panels will be brought together to do a shorter term review and looking at outcomes. Maybe that is the simplest way to explain it rather than going through all these titles, et cetera.

Ms. Friesen: Yes, that helps. I do notice however two different compositions. In the review committees the minister included labour, in the subject area steering committee she did not specifically include them although she did say business and industry. So were we looking at the same things there or is there a different intention?

Mrs. McIntosh: Staff is indicating we do try to target both labour and industry on these. Sometimes we are not always able to get a representative, but we make the effort in our attempt and our desire to have both represented.

Ms. Friesen: How does the government define business and industry for the purposes of education? Does it for example, and perhaps specifically, include public institutions, Crown corporations such as the Manitoba Telephone System or Hydro or the big Crown corporations? Does it include credit unions? Does it include co-operatives?

Mrs. McIntosh: To date they have not generally targeted or gone to Crown corporations, but they have gone to all others. Co-ops and credit unions would be included in a list of groups to approach, areas basically where their input would be valuable because it is part of the spectrum. So that includes just about everybody really except they really have not gone to Crowns.

Ms. Friesen: I do not know what the implications are of going to Crown corporations for this kind of expertise, but it seems to me that there is an enormous amount of expertise that could be very useful in both the Telephone System and Hydro, and MTS in particular has been exemplary in developing partnerships with schools. I am particularly thinking of

the Tec Voc one and also Gordon Bell in my own constituency. So I would like to see that Crown corporation.

Mrs. McIntosh: I thank the member for that. We will take her point as a very constructive comment and appreciate it.

Ms. Friesen: So we are at the curriculum development team. This is the one that has the two months, more or less, to produce something for the review panel to examine. What is the next step after that?

Mrs. McIntosh: Now we go to what, if you are looking on the Appendix A sheet, would be the field validation. There we have a review of all draft documents produced by the curriculum framework, the outcomes development team. They react according to reaction guidelines, and again a similar type of composition would be the educational partner representatives—MAST, MASS, MTS, MAP, et cetera. Those groups would be on that.

* (1230)

So they do that. That is the education partner review panels. That is where we have those employed or involved in education reviewing and reacting.

Do you want to go on to the next or do you want to pause there?

Ms. Friesen: I do not have the paper that the minister made reference to. Yes, I would like to stay here for a minute. We have got the development team which has produced some outcomes. Is the curriculum development team that I was talking about earlier the same as the outcomes development team that the minister, the phrase that she just used, or is this a separate team?

Maybe we had just better start from the beginning. What happens after the curriculum development team has had its material reviewed by the review panel? What happens next?

Mrs. McIntosh: I think, Mr. Chairman, if the member does not have this particular appendix, that I can

provide it to her. It will make it so much more clearer to see it put down in forms that are descriptive, set up like this.

I will just indicate to you what I am giving you here. What I have got is Structures of Curriculum Development. It has got five steps shown: the Curriculum Development Team, which we have talked about, and it has got a little description there, et cetera; then it has got the Review Panels; then Field Validation; then the Authorized Use and the Continual Updating. Under each of those headings it explains very simply, in sort of a one-or-two-sentence, descriptive way, how we see this thing unfolding.

When we start getting into the specifics, as we were trying to do just a minute ago—would you please table that so the member can have it? I think it would be helpful for her. Just talking about it, with all of these titles sounding so similar and the make-up of the committees being so similar, it gets very confusing, but I think the visual image will make it a lot easier.

Mr. Assistant Deputy Chairperson: I thank the honourable minister for the information.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Chair, yes, a visual presentation would be helpful. The minister identified it as an appendix, and it is an appendix to what?

Mrs. McIntosh: This is from a working document that the department is doing right now in terms of the Foundation for Excellence. It is still within their sort of working papers, but I just think it would be useful in terms of simplifying what could become very complex.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Chair, at which point do the resource materials get developed and identified and translated, and which committee does that?

Mrs. McIntosh: I think if you would take a look at the sheet that you are just in the process of being handed, you will see where that falls in. She is just taking a copy. When you get it back, take a look, and if it does not clarify, I will go through it with you.

Ms. Friesen: What I am really looking for is the time lines for the development of those resource materials.

If one of the fundamentals of a new curriculum is resource-based learning, clearly that is one of the major components of the development of any new curriculum.

Is that to be comprised within the two months, or is there a parallel team working? Are there additional supports being brought? Where does that all fit in, and what are the time lines for that?

Mrs. McIntosh: Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the member bearing with me, because this is an area that I am on a fast learning curve on here as well, and I am going through some of these questions she is asking for the first time myself. I appreciate her asking them because it is being a good learning experience for me.

In terms of the question she has just asked, in particular, there will be a call for materials that will be going out to publishers once the outcomes are complete. That goes out to all the provinces and, once the publishers have responded with that information, the review would take about half a month, two weeks, approximately. That is something I did not know, so I learned it with you.

It is expected that the math materials will be ready for schools to see this fall.

Ms. Friesen: I can see from the document the minister just tabled that the learning resource selection committee will be working essentially parallel with the curriculum development team, that it is a separate group, so I am interested in the composition of it. Then I guess it begins working really before or in parallel with the review and the curriculum development. So I am interested in the composition of that committee.

* (1240)

Secondly, it sounded from the minister's responses, though Manitoba would be putting out a call, Manitoba would be reviewing materials.

If there is to be a collective western process here, does this go back at all to the Western Canadian Protocol? Is there bulk buying, for example? Are the common resources that people anticipate using, is each

province going to be doing learning resource selection province by province?

Mrs. McIntosh: The call in this instance was done by Alberta, not by Manitoba, but it will go out to all provinces. There will be a western review of materials and we will be looking at things like bulk purchase and those types of items that you have identified.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Chair, then what is the role of the learning resource selection committees? It says, and I will just read the document into the record: responsible for evaluating and selecting print and nonprint learning resources which support the curriculum.

Mrs. McIntosh: Mr. Chairman, each of the provinces will do a portion of the review to a set standard. It will be a shared review. For example, if they have a set standard on gender equality and any other type of issue, then each component doing the review would be working to that standard.

The work itself will be shared, so you will have a review committee here doing something and a review committee in Saskatchewan doing something. The set standards are being developed by the western consortium before any review takes place.

Ms. Friesen: I assume the set standards are those that the minister outlined or will be outlining in the Foundation for Excellence document: the aboriginal perspective, gender, fairness, age, et cetera.

Mrs. McIntosh: The member is correct. We will have included, just for a little further clarification, those items that she has talked about. They will include things such as accuracy, evaluation, bias, physical characteristics, cost, currency.

They will have materials for inclusion in the listing that are approved for use with programs and courses and objectively analyzed. You have attempts to put learning resources into some sort of logical relationship with curriculum development.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Chair, the composition of this committee, is this a departmental committee or does it have outside members on it?

Mrs. McIntosh: This particular committee will be primarily subject area teachers with the expertise of the area.

* (1250)

Ms. Friesen: Going back to the earlier distinction we used, is this a short-term or a long-term committee? Will they be continually evaluating the resource-based learning materials for the updates of the curriculum, or are they short term for these first few years?

Mrs. McIntosh: This is an ongoing one. The thing that happens, and the member I think is familiar with this from other experiences, is that those teachers are really well trained so we like to utilize them as long as we can, but then eventually we will renew and replace people and they will go back to their field. It is ongoing, it is not a short term.

Ms. Friesen: This review of materials available, does the committee, does the minister, does the government rule out the creation of materials? From the way in which it was first presented the argument was that a call goes out for essentially what existing materials are there and then the committee reviews existing materials for their applicability to the particular outcomes that it is looking for. Does the call include the creation of specialized materials?

Mrs. McIntosh: The member asks a really good question, because to really be new, there is an opportunity now for the creation of new material, and the publishers in fact are eager for this, because with a consortium of the west it gives us the same strength and buying power as some of the larger provinces, and indeed we include one of the larger provinces. So they are very interested in developing new materials based upon our specs.

Ms. Friesen: One of the reasons I asked this, of course, is that it changes the time lines if you are including the prospect of the creation of new materials. Is that part of the call necessarily, or is it in this first stage of new curriculum? Is it existing materials only?

Mrs. McIntosh: Mr. Chairman, some of the material may well be new, especially in high school math and

science, because publishers have been following the trends, and they have, from the early days of the new concepts, been watching and preparing. So we do not know at this point which of the materials that come may be new or which will be existing, but we feel it is a good possibility that in math at the high school level, science area, that we could see some new material that has been developed based upon the following of our moves here by publishers who want to be in on the initial stages.

Ms. MaryAnn Mihychuk (St. James): I am going to ask a few questions in terms of the electronic library linkages. What type of linkages are planned? Is it interdivisional? Is it between the department and the division? Will we ultimately have access to our public library system? Perhaps the minister can outline that.

I know that many divisions are looking at having electronic monitoring of their catalogues in school divisions. One of the major problems with that is it is cost prohibitive to provide the required changes. So I am very interested in this area. I think we do need to enhance this process, and I am looking forward to the plan.

Mrs. McIntosh: I thank the member for her question and for the support she indicates because it is very much appreciated.

We have a project called the linking libraries project. It is an initiative of education reform. It does propose to link electronically the Manitoba libraries, the school, public, college, universities, special and government, through the telecommunications network. The idea and the concept of course is, as you indicated, to try and provide a library setting for Manitoba learners right from early years through to adult with electronic access to library resources throughout the province. Of course, that is a large vision, and as the member indicates, it is one that has a cost component to it.

In '93-94, an independent group was hired to study the issue. It was called Nordicity group. It worked with the guidance of representatives from the Manitoba library consortium, and they brought to the minister in April '95 the Linking Manitoba's Libraries: A Vision and Action Plan Report.

We now have a newly created interdepartmental committee. It goes with Manitoba Education and Training; Manitoba Culture, Heritage and Citizenship; and Manitoba Rural Development. They will be forwarding as soon as they can, as soon as possible, to me a Treasury Board submission with the recommendations on linking libraries report.

So we have a really strong commitment to enhance student access to educational resources in establishing an electronic library and towards sharing the library catalogues with a wide variety of educators and government people, individuals, groups.

* (1300)

We are working towards this end, and like so many other initiatives in society these days, it is a new way of doing things. It is a new way of sharing and accessing information so it is both exciting and challenging. You will find, I think, people eager for the opportunity to have faster access and nervous about it at the same time.

Ms. Mihychuk: How much money is allocated in this year's budget for this project, in the '95-96 Estimates?

Mrs. McIntosh: For '95-96, the amount of money dedicated to this is in the \$80,000-range, and I am giving ballpark figures. It is not the exact amount.

Ms. Mihychuk: Can the minister explain when the interdepartmental committee, composed of Education, Culture and Rural Development, make their submission, the minister indicated that she will be submitting a Treasury Board application or a request. Is that separate from the Department of Education. How does that process work?

Mrs. McIntosh: I guess what I mean by that is that the details and the cost implications will be analyzed in the report, and that will be coming to me. We always do an analysis of cost implications to analyze what a project might cost, the justification for the costs and, you know, from which line it should be taken, and so on. It may be a proper Treasury Board submission, but it will be an indication as to the amount of money and sourcing and those types of cost implications. It will be

the financial and cost analysis, I guess, is probably a more proper way to say it. It will be a joint government activity, it will not be specifically Education, but Education will take the lead.

Ms. Mihychuk: The budget allocation of '95-96 of approximately \$80,000 is going to do what in this process? Is this something that is internal to the department at this time?

Mrs. McIntosh: I thank the member again for the question. Those dollars are in the operating budget for education reform. They will be used with respect to activities, professional fees, operating costs, those types of items, and it will be dedicated to the implementation of the report once it is complete.

Ms. Mihychuk: I am sorry, I guess I need a little more clarification on that. The \$80,000 that we spoke of is directed for the linkages project, is that not right? We are talking about professional fees for whom, operating costs of what, since we really, I understand, are in the beginning phases of looking at this whole vision.

Mrs. McIntosh: Once the report is complete, then we will know what kind of work we will need and the staff will then, there will be people then working on the implementation of the report. Those are the costs we are identifying, those are the costs that that money will be targeted towards in part.

Ms. Mihychuk: When can we look forward to the report being completed? Is this the interdepartmental committee, and when would we expect the report to be produced?

Mrs. McIntosh: The committee is being formed right now and the time line that we have set would see the report being complete in the early fall.

Ms. Mihychuk: I look forward to further updates on this project. I would like to now move a little bit further on in something that is outlined in the School Programs. In the Activity Identification section of this line item there is an indication that grants will be provided in support of pilot projects in distance ed. Can the minister provide us more information on those grants?

Mrs. McIntosh: Yes, I can. I am just looking at this now. We have—this was announced last year about this time, almost to the day I think. The purpose of that program is to provide information on strategies for the improvement of distance education expertise in schools, post-secondary institutions, other training programs, infrastructure at both the school, the educational institution and the community levels. It is not just in school but also into the community, student access to information and programs, teaching strategies for distance education.

The focus of the pilot projects will be to test, evaluate and integrate distance education technologies and methodologies with existing and evolving curriculum and program delivery. We have some funded projects here. We could indicate that in Antler River—I am using now the name of a school division—there is a project titled Level Playing Field for Rural Students. Garden Valley has one called Passport; Mystery Lake has one called MysteryNet.

We have some individual schools in there. Miles Macdonell Collegiate, for example, has Network for Learning. Then there is an urban school division consortium, and they have one called InterNetworking Connectivity; Assiniboine Community College has one called Virtual College Trial—I love some of these names. Brandon University has Combining Modes of Delivery; Pembina Valley and Rhineland, the Southern Manitoba Connection; Evergreen, the project title is Using Interaction Response Technology; Swan Valley, the Northwest Consortium Communications Program; Midland has the integration of audio-visual computers and distance delivery; Lakeshore has Linking Lakeshore; and Lord Selkirk has the Selkirk/Interlake RuralNet.

Those are some of the funded projects under the pilot and you can see the various types of endeavours. The titles give an indication of what the project is, although they do not give it a full descriptive, and the total expenditure comes to some \$660,000 for those ones.

Ms. Mihychuk: Can the minister tell us if the department received a good response from this grant program? How many school divisions and projects were submitted and how many had to be turned down?

Mrs. McIntosh: We do not have that information here at the table right now but we will get it and bring it back, I guess, Monday because there will not be enough time to pull it out before the end of the session today. We will get it for you.

* (1310)

Ms. Mihychuk: On the issue of technology and having information at our fingertips, these are wonderful experiences that our children are now accessing. One of the concerns that educators have and parents is that many of these accesses, for example, to the Internet, are wide open. As schools look to linking up, and many have, students are then able to access what we would normally consider material that is inappropriate, material that includes racism, a lot of the sexism is in there, there is pornography on-line. Is the government prepared to take measures? I understand that this is also a federal issue, but I believe that our students are moving much faster than our governments. As they are online now I think the issue is important immediately.

Mrs. McIntosh: I thank the member for the question because one of the things that governments discovered, I suppose not just governments but all kind of individuals and groups, as we get into this wonderful world of technology, and it is a wonderful world and we have all these incredible capabilities now available to us, the downside is that you then begin to have access to things that can be picked up literally by the push of a button as opposed to having to go out and seek it out and so on. It is always a concern of responsible authorities when they open up opportunities to make sure that they do not, at the same time we open the door to let the sunshine in, let the bad elements in as well.

We have had internal discussions about access and about things that could be done to limit access to undesirable materials. The one thing that we feel will be a really good safeguard—or those discussions are ongoing I should indicate. We will continue to go through them because I think they are important discussions to be having. One of the safeguards that we have built in a classroom situation, of course, is the supervision of the professional in the classroom. With

technologies that are used in schools, the supervising educator will be in a position to monitor what is accessed and what is not. There are other discussions going on as to what other kind of limitations can be used. Some feel that in the final analysis the very best thing we have going for us are good supervisors in the classroom when the students are accessing the equipment.

That is not to say that that means we do not need to have any of these discussions about protecting students from undue exposure to things that are detrimental and sometimes even more than detrimental.

Ms. Mihychuk: Is the minister aware of any type of discussion between the province and the CRTC, for example, in this area?

Mrs. McIntosh: In terms of discussions with CRTC, to date discussions with CRTC have been more involved around cables and things of that nature. Although discussions start to take place on issues like this as we begin to look at avenues and ways in which blocking mechanisms could be put in place technologically, at the moment the main emphasis the department is having in terms of any ongoing discussions with CRTC on this or any other issue is to make sure that we have a good understanding of what kind of blocking mechanisms might be able to work before we start discussions as to what we would like to see CRTC be able to provide us.

When we get to the line on MERLIN, if you are available, it might be a line that could enable more information to come forward for you, because it is MERLIN that has been doing the technological work on all aspects of these kind of communications abilities. Things are evolving so rapidly that you will find the mechanism for blocking and then it is another mechanism for unblocking the block and this type of thing. So they have the technical expertise and might be better able to give both you and me an update as to where they are in that regard, because it is a concern that we are all aware of and it is not one we wish to ignore.

Ms. Mihychuk: I would like to make some inquiries in a different area. Under Education Renewal, the

government put forward a set of ideas and one of the major platforms are the parent advisory committees. There have been some changes indicated by the Premier during the election. Can the minister now indicate to us what the structure, what the model of the council will be in its new form?

Mrs. McIntosh: Bill 5, that I have before the House right now, is the bill that will make the establishment of an advisory council mandatory if 10 parents request that there be one and that bill will contain some of this information.

The change that was made involving the composition of the committee, the committee will be community and parent member advisers to the school. The change that was made during the election came in response to feedback we have received from the public indicating one basic concern which in the original guidelines, in order to ensure that the committee was fully representative of parents, they had limited the participation of teachers. The feedback we received from that was that teachers who were parents were being denied access to their child's school by virtue of their occupation.

* (1320)

The government recognized when that was pointed out to them that the people who were making that response were correct. They had noted a flaw, had drawn it to our attention, and we agreed with them that they had put forward an indication for change that was a correct indication.

We thank them for that and have changed the policy according to what we were told. What we now are saying, we still would like to ensure that there are parents on the community committee, but if a parent happens to be a teacher, so long as it is not a teacher in the same school. But if the people want to have parents on who happen to be teachers, then they can do that. They can expand the committee as big as they want to, to accommodate as many parent-teachers as they wish.

What we are saying, for simplified purposes, is that a third of the committee could be teachers. If the council wants to make it a half, they can vote to make

it a half. If they say, well, we have six teachers who are parents who want to participate and the committee is not—you know, half of the committee is not six, well, then they could just expand the size of the committee, so they can have their representation. It will be up to the community now to decide how that representation breaks down.

They have to have 10 people requesting an advisory committee before it is mandated. If they have 10, then they must have it and the make-up will have community representation on it, will have parent representation on it, could have teacher representation on it and will reflect the community, and they will be advisory to the principal.

Ms. Mihychuk: That is interesting. The solution that the government is proposing does eliminate one of the areas that there was fairly blatant discrimination on behalf of individuals who happen to be educators.

My concern is that many divisions and many schools have a variety of models of advisory councils, governing councils, many that include educators and other staff members, including the caretaker and clerical as partners in decision making. The staff members are provided with an active role on the committee by being voting members. Although in the majority of cases that I am aware they constitute less than 50 percent, they do not hold majority. They are welcome because of the expertise that they bring, the knowledge and the philosophy that primarily in early years—in the elementary system there are two very important people that are involved in your child's education, and that is yourself as the parent or guardian and the teacher.

I am wondering why the government has decided or why, in the vision that we have now, we do not look at educators and other nonteaching staff as partners on this and include them as voting members.

Mrs. McIntosh: We do see teachers and those who work in the building as partners in education, absolutely. They are fundamentally important key roles in education. They are the deliverers of education. They are the ones who have been trained. They are an essential and key component.

I guess what we are saying here is that the parents in the Parents' Forum and through the years in correspondence—you have probably heard it too—that the parents, we felt, deserved a turn to be partners and encouraged to participate. So often, without any intention of ill will or any other thing, you used to have parent-teacher associations where you very seldom talked about matters such as these. You would talk about fundraising or you would talk about volunteers in the library and the Christmas concert, but you very seldom at parent-teacher association meetings, in the experiences of most parents, got into the nitty-gritty of these fundamental things about education.

When you did, because the teachers are, just as you say, the ones with the expertise and the ones with the knowledge of the system and the material and the culture of education, for want of a better word, the educational jargon, the things that go along with acquiring the expertise, they very often were the dominant influences in any such discussions, as I say, not because they meant to take over and rule, so to speak, but because they did have that kind of exposure to the culture in a way that the parents would not.

Parents often tell us, and they told us clearly in the Parents' Forum, that they felt a little intimidated or nervous or less likely to speak out because they felt that, well, after all, I am not the expert; I just know and love this child unconditionally. That is one type of parent who, we felt, needed to be given a strong mandate to speak out and not feel that somehow they were intruding into an area that really was not their speciality and they really should not be commenting on because after all they were not the expert in the field.

The other type of parent that we wanted to bring into the net is the type of parent who maybe was not a member of the parent-teacher association, who, to date, maybe needed a little bit of a nudge to get involved in their child's educational experience. We know all the research tells us that parents who get involved in their child's education help produce a child who is more receptive to the schooling experience, that parents who come out to things, who support things at the school, who come out to parent-teacher interviews, for example, and who take an interest in what the child is learning and the courses they are taking tend to produce

children who function better in the school setting. So this is an incentive to that type of parent to get them involved. By no means are the teachers excluded, because the teachers will be there, and the teachers may be there in a role as a parent, so they come with a double expertise in those situations.

They come with the depth of feeling for the individual child and they come understanding how the involvement of the parent from a teacher's perspective—those who are teachers know that where you have got a good supportive parent you have got a much better chance as an educator getting through to that child.

Parents are often included in just sort of symbolic and arbitrary and limited ways, as I say, not through any evil intent, but it was just deemed that they really were not the experts here and there were certain areas that they just were not encouraged to comment upon, and indeed unfortunately in some school settings, discouraged from making comment upon.

We have all had the experience of either having been told or know someone who has been told, look, you know, you are the mom, why do you not just stay at home and be the mom? I am here in this school, I know what is going on here, you really are not an expert in this field.

That hopefully is not the type of thing that happens in the majority of cases, but it has happened. We are all aware unfortunately of those rare and hopefully rare occasions where it has happened.

* (1330)

But there were never formal processes for selecting parent representation developed. Schools would have different ways. Some would have a strong parent council where you would have the exceptional principal who actually encouraged parents to be part of discussions on the real nitty-gritty parts of education, and you would have the other extreme where principals or school divisions would actively discourage the formation of a home and school or a parent council because they were concerned that you might find parents starting to stick their nose into the school and kind of getting in the way.

So you had everything from one extreme to the other. You had those places where parents were just openly welcomed with open arms and fully involved and others where parents were more or less turned away at the door.

We wanted to have some sort of consistency in approach. We also found that in some schools, and parents complained bitterly about this, the parents were just kind of selected by the administrator in the schools—now we need a parent council, so why do you not come on and be the president—that type of thing where certain parents were rarely chosen to be involved in that type of thing for a variety of reasons. So we did not think that was good.

We had indications coming forward at the Parents' Forum that in addition to the sort of inadvertent, unmeant exclusion of parents, there were some blatant, isolated examples of outright exclusion. I do not want to become too negative, because I do not like dwelling on the negative, but where you have parents sort of outmanipulated and outnumbered, those instances were also brought to our attention.

So we thought, well, you have got all of these extremes, from the two that I mentioned, from closing the door on the parents to bringing them completely in. We knew that there were two types of parents, those who had not taken enough of an active interest and those who wanted to take an active interest but were, for a variety of reasons, feeling that maybe they should not really speak up on certain matters. This we felt would take away the symbolic, I was president of the PTA, and what did you do, well, I arranged the Christmas tea type of involvement, so that you would have a true partnership in an advisory council.

It has been extremely well received by parents and, surprisingly enough for those who felt that this would not be accepted by educators, by a large number of teachers who have said things to me personally such as it will be really good to get these parents out and get them involved. I get so frustrated come parent-teacher night. The very ones I need to see just do not come out. They are wanting to see parents assuming some responsibility and giving some support to the teachers rather than seeing them as two isolated entities both

concerned with the same child but not sharing their concern for that child.

Ms. Mihychuk: There are numerous different models of advisory committees that exist already in the province. We have two school divisions that have fairly extensive well-developed models that do include guaranteed decision-making abilities for community and parent members, and that includes the Frontier School Division and the one that I am more familiar with, the Winnipeg School Division.

I take a great deal of pride in being one of the originators of the model in Winnipeg. We conducted a series of public forums—I believe four or five, actually—and went out to the communities speaking to parents and community representatives asking them what their vision of involvement was.

You are very correct. There is need for a guaranteed voice and that is what we heard, but we heard stronger than that that parents and community members do want to work hand in hand with educators and staff members, and these models have been in existence already for years. I do know that the minister or the previous minister has received letters of concern from advisory committees in the Winnipeg School Division, not only from local advisory committees—and there is one per school so that is approximately 80 schools in Winnipeg No. 1—but there are district advisory councils in that division that expressed many of those concerns.

In some schools, for example, it may be difficult to get 10 parents to initiate this process. It all really depends on the community, and it is not necessarily that they feel oppressed or unable to participate. It almost takes a certain will on behalf of the school, the educational centre, to open their arms. There are a great deal of resources in a community and the school is the prime example of a centre that can co-ordinate that.

There was the concern that this would require 10 members from the community to self-generate the request, and that is one of the differences in the models as well. I believe the other two divisions require that the council be established and then there is an annual plan, the membership is evaluated and so there is a

built-in accountability into the system, but there is the onus on that educational centre to ensure that representation is there.

Can I ask the minister why the government did not explore that avenue?

Mrs. McIntosh: I thank the member for her comments and I commend Winnipeg No. 1 for having gone the route that they did. I just wish to clarify that if 10 parents do not wish to have a council, then any existing council structure can continue, so we are not saying that if—you do not have to find 10 parents and make them do it. We are saying, if 10 parents wish to have this kind of advisory council, we will be saying to the school boards and the schools that they must have those councils allowed; but, if 10 parents do not wish to have the council, then they do not have to. If they have an existing structure in place, the existing structure can continue.

When as we say they are mandated, we do not mean mandated in the sense that it is being interpreted in some quarters. We mean where it is requested, it must be allowed, because we have had it happen in the past where people have asked if they can form a parent council and they have been told no. I do not think we are apart on that. I think we see eye to eye on that.

* (1340)

The advisory councils have a mandate, but it does not exclude adding additional responsibilities and roles should there be mutual agreement to do that. What we are saying is they should be allowed, if requested, and be able to do certain things. Now they can do more than that if they wish, and everybody wishes, that is up to them. If there is an existing council and they wish to switch over to the way we are doing things right now, or the way we are proposing things be done, they are free to do that. I would submit, I think that existing council members under those scenarios would have nothing to fear from being elected because then they would know for sure they have the support of the people of the community.

I just want to see something here. Staff has just handed me a little note that there had been research

done on other Manitoba models, other provinces and other countries.

It was for that reason it was recommended that rather than making it mandatory, thou shalt have 10 parents and they must do this, we would rather mandate the opportunity and let parents and community together take the initiative and decide whether or not they wish to avail themselves of this opportunity, so that gives the shared responsibility focus back to the local level.

I want to just add to something I had meant to say in your earlier question when you were talking about recognizing the many things that teachers could offer in terms of a partnership. I had indicated that we recognized that. What we are trying to do now is to also give parents that same elevation in terms of the comfort level of a partnership.

I also wanted to say, and neglected to say it at the time, that teachers will have other ways of affecting the direction of a school in addition to advisory councils that parents do not have access to. They will have that through staff meetings. They will have that through opportunities to dialogue with other staff, with administration, with other experts in the area of education, with department officials and so on, that parents do not have. So this may be their only vehicle to really impact on the school aside from their one-on-one appointments and times that they talk with the person responsible for their own child.

I say that I like what you just said. I think I am familiar, not nearly as familiar as you would be, with some of the efforts that Winnipeg No. 1 has made to include parents. In terms of moving in a direction, format may differ slightly, but we are not far apart on the direction. We may be talking about the details.

Ms. Mihychuk: That is true. My concern is it may be difficult for 10 parents to actually get together to request it, that we may actually have some schools that do not have representation because it will require a considerable amount of effort and organization on behalf of community to do this. I understand that there are some schools, Sprague, for example, that may have only 20 students, so it would require half their population to request it. I am sure that was not the

intent. I sense there is some flexibility, so hopefully the guidelines will provide that room for—I think clearly I support the mandate or the intention to have that voice there.

My other question is: Where we have a very active community—and I know of several schools where they have in fact a well-established council and in some schools where there may be even two councils, there are schools within schools.

For example, the member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen), a school in her constituency has three parent councils, depending on program, all extremely active, extremely vibrant committees, and they work fortunately in harmony. However, there is another example that I am familiar with where there were two councils in conflict.

This may provide some legitimacy for a group of 10 who may not have been endorsed by the annual meeting to come forward and request some other form of governance structure. Who is going to be the appeal on this case? Traditionally it has been up to the school board. What is going to be the role now? If 10 parents come to you and say, I would like to establish the school council for school X, please authorize it, how are we going to deal with that situation?

Mrs. McIntosh: You are zeroing in on really legitimate concerns and questions. I thank you for doing that.

I just indicate to you that built into the guidelines in terms of the concern about small schools, a very reasonable concern, are exceptions for small schools, in an attempt to accommodate that concern you have identified.

As we go along, we now have made some modifications to the basic principle. As we go along, if we can get suggestions for improving the process, I am quite willing to listen. We have to start some place. So we will start basically with the structure we have. As advice comes in saying, okay, now we are trying it and we think it is pretty good, but a little detail we need refining here—we do not see things carved in granite that can never ever be altered. We see this as an

evolutionary thing, and so we have a mindset that is open.

Just like I said, we are constantly going over the curricula, constantly renewing it, that always, always, always we will be looking to see, can we do it better? can we do it better? If the answer is no, then we will stay the course. If the answer is yes, then we will move to do it better.

You asked the question—the advisory councils—they are intended to represent all the parents and programs in the school. The suggestion has been made for the scenario that you described, like the one in the member for Wolsley's constituency and so on, that you could have one council with a subcommittee, like where you have a dual-track school—and we had some of them in my home division as well.

There could be several solutions, but one that has been one that we will propose if asked the question, if you have a council with two subcommittees, one for one side of the track and one for the other side of the track, you might make a joint decision then on the principal because in a dual-track school you would have one principal.

And the situation right now in St. Vital, for example, where the parents, under this new system, would have an opportunity to be part of the process of saying, the principal we want for our school should have the characteristics of being a strict disciplinarian, or we want someone with a really gentle approach because we have children who need a gentle approach or whatever characteristic they are going to identify as part of their part of the process.

For a dual-track school, you still would have the one administrator so you would have to come together for that, but they could have two subcommittees that would function as individual councils, should they wish, for their stream of the school. So there are ways that those things can be accommodated that would still work because even in a dual- or a triple-track school while you have the separate streams, you still have one community of children on the playground at recess or coming on the bus to school or school assemblies or Christmas concerts and the staff component—the janitor,

the secretary. It is still one community within the building, just like a government with different branches.

So your question is a good one and the concern you identify is a valid one. I hope that we will be able to accommodate those.

You asked who would they be appealing to if they had discrepancies and so on, like little problems in setting up, who would be kind of the final adviser or authority to whom they could turn. Hopefully, a lot of these things could be settled at the school level with their own administration, with their own local authority and amongst themselves.

The Minister of Education and the government of Manitoba mandating the advisory councils, of course, are keenly interested in seeing that all goes well as they do set up, and it will be a mandated thing that the government right now, as we sit here, has a bill before the House to make these legal and binding. So we seek local resolution first, but people always have the recourse to appeal to the minister.

* (1350)

We have divisions right now preparing protocol for advisory councils, and we would expect if they needed questions for clarification along that line that they might wish to give us a call and they would be most welcome to do that.

Ms. Mihychuk: For clarification then, if there is an existing council that has been duly elected through an annual meeting and in an existing structure, for example, in Winnipeg No. 1, and you had then 10 additional parents come in and ask for some sort of legitimacy, would one supersede the other? Which one would form the council?

Mrs. McIntosh: Mr. Chairman, where 10 parents ask to have an advisory council set up under the government guidelines, then the local authority is obliged to allow that to happen by election. So what would happen in that case then would be that the school would be told you are going to have a school advisory committee and those who are currently

members are free to run, but the election will be open to all those who are involved and interested with that school. Those who are on a current existing council would be free to run for the new one, and if supported by the majority of people in the school and community, would be back on and maybe fulfilling the same role they are currently fulfilling but it would be made open to everyone.

That would help get around the problem that has happened in some schools and communities where you have—I hate the term, but it is used so frequently—the inner click that kind of gets in and says let us have a parent council. Okay, we will get together. I will be president and you be vice-president and you have a group of sets of parents over here who are not as assertive who feel left out and do not know how to get in. So you open it up. If those people are the people who truly are the best ones and deem to be the best ones to represent the school as parent representatives, then in all likelihood they would be elected.

Ms. Mihychuk: I am sure this will raise considerable debate as I know of situations where it was not perhaps the regular populace that was looking for a voice. It may be a special-interest group that is looking to change the direction. They have a certain political agenda for the local school. There may have been an annual meeting. It has been called at a time frame which may not be convenient. They stacked the meeting. You can end up with a body—just basically it could lead into more dissension than probably the intent of this legislation.

Mrs. McIntosh: I know what the member is saying, but I give back to her that that is already happening. That happens now. I have seen it. I would wager that she has probably seen it too where special interest groups can get in and kind of take control of the school. I guess that could happen under any model that you would set up. No matter how you tried to structure it, whether it was completed unstructured or highly organized by the Department of Education, a special group can always manage to infiltrate and take over.

We have seen that happen in just a wide variety of ways. We saw that with a public organization not that long ago where it was infiltrated and taken over by

another group. It hit the papers, front page headlines. This particular public organization now is controlled by this special interest group. It happens.

Ms. Mihychuk: Some of the councils both in Frontier and in Winnipeg No. 1 represent populations that are not very familiar with a decision-making or an advisory role. The people are not familiar with being in schools and institutions. Both of these divisions have put in extra supports to try to educate the community, to get people feeling like they are able to come forward. In the inner city, for example, I am familiar that there is an organization known as CEDA, Community Education Development Association, and community workers are placed in schools, most half time but sometimes on a full-time basis to do exactly that, to get parental involvement and community involvement in the school motivated.

Even in those cases it is extremely difficult. As people are faced with intense poverty and they are looking at the basics of life, they find it very difficult to understand how this is going to have a meaningful role. So you have a real challenge to reach out to these people. Is the government prepared to provide some support for those situations to make this process truly meaningful?

Mrs. McIntosh: I thank the member for that question. The member raises a really genuine concern because what do you do about parents who for whatever reason do not come forward, do not participate? Some of those reasons may be reasons beyond their own control. Others may be reasons just because they are apathetic. The one group that is apathetic we wish to inspire. The other group we also wish to inspire, but in a different kind of way, because they are missing something as well. The circumstances of their life, the member is right, preclude them from having the energy, the time and the will or the ability to participate. They are maybe trying so hard just to get through the day that it is all they can think of just to get through the day.

Staff here is giving me some assistance on this, because it is something that has been talked about, and it is the question, what do you do if? They indicate to me that we do have some trained staff. We do have principals and parents who can work with school teams

to try and help them plan some meaningful parent involvement. It may mean doing some reaching out, and it may mean that we may not have an advisory council in that school because we have said if 10 parents do not ask they do not have to have. If we wish to inspire, it may mean that we do some outreach, but it will not be because they are mandated and forced to have this advisory council. It will be for the more altruistic reason in that we feel they would benefit so much from being brought into their children's lives.

So the department—this is where I will indicate what the staff has indicated to me here—will provide the development of a tool kit that will help with getting things organized, running meetings, that type of thing. They have dedicated, we have dedicated, a half-time staff person for this, just for this type of thing. We have other staff who have already worked with parent groups and are out there working with them, not necessarily the parent category you are discussing, because I think what you are talking about in the main are really disadvantaged people.

If you have any good ideas on how to do it, I would be pleased to listen. I know you have had experience in that part of the city, so you really do know and understand that problem.

We will go with what we can do, and we will hope that as we do what we can do we will be able to enlarge to capture in people who have normally not been part of their children's lives in that way.

Ms. Mihychuk: One of the things is providing those supports. I am pleased to hear that the department will be providing some materials as to how to organize. I would encourage also the department to perhaps provide some professional development sessions for community members.

If that is going to be arranged, when and how can the community tap into those resources?

Mrs. McIntosh: I have just been handed a very polite little note from the Chair that indicates that we are not discussing Estimates, that we are discussing Bill 5, and there will be time for debate on the bills. It is very courteously worded. It is also very clear. It is

interesting. Well, maybe we should carry on at another time.

Mr. Assistant Deputy Chairperson: The hour being 2 p.m., what is the will of the committee? Committee rise.

HEALTH

* (1110)

Mr. Chairperson (Marcel Laurendeau): Will the Committee of Supply please come to order. This section of the Committee of Supply has been dealing with the Estimates of the Department of Health. We are on item 1. Administration and Finance (b) Executive Support (2) Other Expenditures. Would the minister's staff please enter the Chamber at this time.

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Mr. Chairperson, we had discussed yesterday moving along in terms of other questioning. I just wanted to ask the minister, yesterday during the course of our discussion about the Health of Manitoba's Children the minister indicated about 800 copies of this document have been distributed.

Just at some point, could the minister maybe let me know roughly the extent of the distribution. The reason I am saying that is because we are prepared to offer some suggestions if some areas have not been covered. We are prepared to offer some individuals and organizations we think probably should see this document.

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): Mr. Chairperson, that is very helpful. We will obtain for the honourable member some sense as to what kinds of groupings of people or organizations have been recipients of the child health document, and we would welcome the honourable member's input as to further names of people or organizations that might be interested in the report.

We are anxious to get many, many people interested in the concepts contained within the document so that we can garner support for some of the things that we would like to do in terms of getting a greater public

awareness of the importance of child health, the importance of promoting that and the importance of bringing in programming that will bring about the effects that we would like to see.

I look forward to the day where Manitobans enjoy a much better health status than they do even today, which is, I guess, in comparative terms pretty good, but it is a comparative matter, the state of the health of a population. There is always room for improvement.

The honourable member for Radisson (Ms. Cerilli) asked questions about short-stay surgeries at the Concordia Hospital. This is in reference to a Manitoba Health report entitled "Total of In-Patient and Daycare Cases by Procedure."

The 1994-95 information on surgeries will be available in the early part of July. The five-year average from '89-90 to '93-94 is as follows, these are short-stay surgeries: in-patient 2,619; out-patient 4,188. Those numbers by themselves demonstrate a change in the way hospitals do business in Manitoba. It is noted that since 1989-90, day surgery has increased from 58.7 percent to a point today where it is 65.5 percent of total surgeries. I do not know how long ago you have to go back to make the point that almost everybody who presented at a hospital got admitted. That is not happening at all any more to the same extent.

The honourable member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) asked about the composition of the Child Health Strategy Committee. The chair is Noella Depew of the Department of Health. The Education and Training department is represented by Adair Morrison. The Justice department is represented by Carolyn Brock. The Family Services department is represented by Paul Vincent. The Children and Youth Secretariat is represented by Leanne Boyd.

With respect to the honourable member's question about the Provincial Co-ordination of Services Committee, the membership of that committee is as follows: N.J. Cenerini is the chair, N.J. Cenerini is of the Student Services Branch of the Department of Education and Training; from the Family Services department, Child and Family Support Executive

Director Ron Fenwick; from Manitoba Health, our Mental Health Programs Director Bob Cowan; from Justice, Community and Youth Correctional Services Executive Director Ben Thiessen; and from Education and Training, Provincial Co-ordination Services Committee Secretary Albert Gazan.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, I wanted to turn questioning briefly to the Physician Resource Committee, MMA, again. We have dealt with that in the Executive Support appropriation.

The most recent communique by the Manitoba Medical Association indicates that a block funding arrangement for private laboratories has been established by virtue of the MMA agreement. Can the minister table that particular agreement?

Mr. McCrae: At this time, Mr. Chairperson, I think the best thing for me to do would be to indicate to the honourable member that I will take his request under advisement, consider the matter and report back.

* (1120)

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, can the minister advise me whether or not the projected savings for '95-96, based on this agreement, which are projected by the MMA to be \$2.5 million—can he indicate whether or not that is part of the \$13.5 million that is highlighted in the MMA agreement for savings to be realized in the '95-96 year?

Mr. McCrae: Mr. Chairperson, I did not know the honourable member would be raising these questions this morning. If he would like to put on the record all of the questions that he has in this area, we can have either later today or next week staff who would be able to properly advise me on these questions. It might be an efficient way to do it if the honourable member wants to do it that way.

Mr. Chomiak: That is an excellent suggestion. I am prepared to put on the record a couple of questions. They are not extensive, although I find sometimes in this line of questioning I end up going broader than I earlier anticipated. The first question was whether or not the \$2.5 million that was indicated in the MMA

communique is part of the \$13.5 million. It is indicated in Article 9, Section 15 of the MMA agreement.

The second question is, what is the status of—I will use the term "recommendation" although that may not be appropriate—the recommendation concerning Envoy and house calls as part of this agreement?

Third, I have been advised that there is a meeting on June 16 to review all of these and make recommendations. The minister may or may not be able to advise me as to the status of that.

I guess, fourth, if at all possible, can the minister outline for me what other areas are being considered as part of the \$13.5 million package?

Mr. McCrae: Mr. Chairperson, we have taken note of the questions in the honourable member's comment. I will add, though, that the June 16 meeting of the Medical Services Council is, I am advised, a regular meeting, so it is not a special meeting in any sense of that word. They will probably at that time review all the matters that they have in process.

The way it works is that I do not really have that much to offer by way of comment until I get a recommendation from the Medical Services Council.

An example of that might be, for example, the eye care issue that was raised not that long ago. We get recommendations, and then we as a department, I as a minister will raise the concerns that I have if I have any, then the council would either address them or abandon the idea, or I may not have any concerns in which case then we can go forward. That is more or less how it works. I am not seized of any matters at this point, and their regular meeting would likely deal with all issues presently before them. How far along they will take them at that meeting, I do not know at this point.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, I thank the minister for that response. A further question in this area. I wonder if I can be given any indication of time lines regarding the PRC as well as the Medical Services Council. We are into the '95-96 fiscal year and they are dealing with recommendations.

I just wonder if there is any idea at what point it has to come together where—and I digress for a second. It is an interesting process, because if they have to come up with \$13.5 million, do they go to the minister with recommendations for \$13.5 million or do they go to the minister with a menu of \$25 million in savings and ask the minister to pick and choose? I guess I am just trying to get some sense as to how that process might work, because it could go on back and forth, back and forth interminably with no resolution.

Mr. McCrae: Even though the Physician Resource Committee is a creature—if you like—or a subcommittee of the Manitoba Medical Services Council, it really is quite separate and distinct in the sense of its function and the role that it is expected it should play. So we can maybe hive that off a little bit and say that at the end of December we expect their final report. If something really exciting comes forward before that, I would sure want to hear about it, of course.

However, with the respect of the Manitoba Medical Services Council as per the MMA agreement, they have to make recommendations to government to deal with a certain amount of dollars as laid out in the agreement, and they can come in blocks of a number of them at once or trickle in, depending on how it works, because there is a necessity, and we insist on this, that any recommendation be properly researched and not just be a cost-cutting measure per se.

We want to see measures that make sense from a population health standpoint, that make sense from the standpoint of the care of people in Manitoba. We want to ensure that their care is not adversely impacted by decisions that get made. On the other hand, there are budget imperatives laid out in the agreement and in the budget itself of the government of Manitoba that we have to be mindful of.

* (1130)

We are challenged—we are challenged as a department, and we challenge the Manitoba Medical Services Council, whose only reason for existence is to help us find ways to deliver medical care in Manitoba for less money under the agreement. As I say, we are all challenged, but as a result of the June 16 meeting, I

do not think we will get recommendations that we can act on on June 17 until I am satisfied that the appropriate work went into the making of recommendations. I do not know today what recommendations will come out of that June 16 meeting.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, I expressed this concern earlier in the Estimates process as well as in Question Period. By way of preamble, this is not a political question by any stretch.

If the Physician Resource Committee's reporting presumably will make some sweeping and important recommendations at the end of December, between now and December there still are some major issues concerning physician supply that have to be addressed, not just on physician supply but also concerns about the out-migration of physicians, which, I recognize, has been a long-standing and continuing problem.

I am wondering if there is any move towards an interim kind of strategy to try to deal with that, try to deal with both issues. I realize there has been some movement on the conditional registry for physician supply, but to deal with that issue prior to the recommendations in December.

Mr. McCrae: Mr. Chairperson, just before I respond to this question from the honourable member, I have another response here to a question put by the honourable member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) with respect to foreign-trained nurses.

Registration of nurses is a provincial jurisdiction. All nurses must register in every province in which they work. There is reciprocity of registration between all provinces. The provincial registrars meet as a counterparts group and have developed an endorsement agreement to harmonize registration requirements across the country for foreign-trained nurses.

Now, all provinces have the same standards for this registration, but some of the criteria expected to meet the standards are still different. The acceptable score required on the English language proficiency test would be a good example. All provinces require a demonstration of proficiency, but the acceptable score

is not standard, causing some students to attempt registration in the province with the lesser requirement in a particular criteria and then asking for reciprocity with the province in which they really want to work.

These are the requirements:

1. is a graduate of a nursing program outside Manitoba which the board, by resolution, approves as substantially equivalent. This is—I put the emphasis on the wrong word, Mr. Chairperson—a graduate of a nursing program outside of Manitoba which the board, by resolution, approves as substantially equivalent.

2. registered in good standing as an R.N. in the province, state, country or territory in which the program was taken or in which he or she has practised.

3. if the first language is other than English, the applicant has to have passed the English language proficiency test with a score of at least 500.

4. has to successfully complete the Canadian Nurses Association testing service comprehensive examination or the state board test pool examinations for R.N.s or the examinations required in another Canadian jurisdiction.

5. has to be of sound physical and mental health and functions within the guidelines of the Canadian Nurses Association code of ethics.

6. has to have applied in writing on the form provided.

7. has to have paid the fee.

8. has to have successfully completed any required refresher program prescribed by the regulation and must have practised a certain number of hours in the past five years.

That is for the information of the honourable member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux).

The honourable member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) was asking again about physician resources and the various interim things that we can do and are

doing as we await that final report. There seem to be so many interim things that we are doing that one would be left wondering what could possibly be in that final report when it comes. So I am kind of wondering about that myself, but we shall see.

We have what we call a crisis group. I call it a swat team. This involves the efforts of Dr. Moe Learner, who has been doing some important work. As recently as yesterday he was in Grandview, Manitoba, discussing physician resource issues there and helping and making plans.

We have people who are prepared to serve as locum tenens during short-term times of need. The chairs of the Physician Resource Committee, Dr. Peter Kirk and Dr. Ian White, and the chair of the Manitoba Medical Services Council, Dr. Ian Goldstine, and the government chair, Dr. Wiens, have met with interns and residents in Manitoba. That was on May 8. The dean, Dr. Anthonisen, was in attendance and chaired that meeting.

That was a meeting to try to provide some reassurances to interns and residents about our concerns, trying to provide physician resources to Manitobans and that was also to help promote a better understanding of the environment we are working in and the requirements that we have.

So as I say, we have the implementation of that preliminary physician resource plan. The objective of the plan is to encourage physicians who hold provincial billing numbers to provide medical services in areas of Manitoba which have the greatest need for physician services.

* (1140)

We have ongoing the development of a rural locum tenens program. The purpose of this program is to provide relief medical services while the local physician is away on vacation, continuing medical education, sick leave or other reasons. We have a conditional registry. There is a proposal made by the college for the conditional registration of physicians who do not qualify for full registration and that is currently being worked on by Manitoba Health.

We have the Rural Physician Incentive Program. An integrated system of incentives has been introduced over the years through the Standing Committee on Medical Manpower to encourage physicians and medical students to locate in areas of need. These measures have had an impact. It is expected that eight residents of the Family Practice Residency Training Program, who received incentive loans, will enter rural practice following the completion of their training in June.

The regulation governing the registration of physicians in Manitoba was amended on February 8 of this year. The amendment will allow the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Manitoba to register a physician who meets some but not all of the qualifications for full registration and who has a certificate signed by the Minister of Health stating that the medical practitioner is required to provide medical services in a specified location. The amendment allows for the temporary registration of physicians graduating from Canada, U.S.A. and Commonwealth medical schools with one year of appropriate post-graduate clinical training instead of the previous two-year requirement.

We have also the development of a consistent remuneration package for northern Manitoba and that is to be initiated by the Medical Services Branch by Manitoba Health and the northern medical unit.

The objective of establishing a conditional registry should be made clear. The primary purpose of establishing such a registry is to increase the available supply of physicians for rural and northern Manitoba. There are a number of communities experiencing recruitment and retention problems. If the registry is not required to meet physician resource needs, it can be removed or not utilized. While the establishment of such a registry would provide a route to permanent licensure for physicians, i.e., international medical graduates both offshore and some unlicensed IMGs resident in Manitoba who do not meet all the requirements for full registration, this is not the major objective of the registry.

The draft regulation for the establishment of the conditional registry does not specify a particular length

of time concerning the number of years a physician has been out of practice which would result in the physician being ineligible for the registry. However, the three-year limit referred to in the Winnipeg Free Press may be one of the criteria the college will use to assess whether a candidate is eligible for conditional registration.

The Association of Foreign Medical Graduates in Manitoba has held discussions with the college concerning the eligibility of their members for conditional registration. They advised Manitoba Health that 11, which is approximately 11 percent to 13.8 percent of their membership, would be eligible. However, the college has advised that of these 11, three have entered post-graduate medical training positions for the 1995-96 year.

There are approximately 80 to 100 unlicensed international medical graduates in Manitoba, but their qualifications do range considerably. A number have been out of practice for 10 or more years.

Graduates from universities in Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom, the Republic of Ireland, Australia, New Zealand, the Republic of South Africa may be granted an exemption from the Medical Council of Canada evaluating examination. The college has provided this exemption because it has been determined that these training programs are equivalent to Canadian educational programs. In addition, the requirement for a pass in part one of the Medical Council of Canada qualifying examination may be waived for up to six months from the date of registration for these graduates. However, they must pass this examination within six months or lose their eligibility for conditional registration.

Graduates from other medical schools are required to have passed the Medical College of Canada evaluating examination and parts one and two of the Medical Council of Canada qualifying examination in order to be eligible for registration under the conditional register.

The conditions that the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Manitoba has established for registration under the conditional registry are to ensure that rural

and remote communities do not receive—and I am reading from a document which has this in quotation marks—second-class service. The minister would require such assurance before providing a certificate for physicians to be on the conditional register.

The honourable member, I am sure, would agree with that, too.

Physicians with conditional registration will have to practise under strict conditions stipulated by the college including an ongoing audit of their practice by colleagues and by the college. They will not be able to enter into a solo practice situation. If they fail to meet the requirements set out by the college they will lose their conditional registration.

That is the same as any other professional. You have to meet certain requirements.

In addition, the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Manitoba will be working closely with Manitoba Health and the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Manitoba to ensure that the physicians receiving conditional registration would be competent to practise.

I am sorry to have taken quite so long with this answer, but I think from all the discussions that we have had this is the best opportunity to put more or less the whole case on the record.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, yes, that was useful. I thank the minister for that response. Was that a response to my general question of several days ago, or is the minister still anticipating contacting the college for further information regarding educational requirements that we were not entirely certain of when we discussed this issue last?

Mr. McCrae: Mr. Chairperson, my inquiries of the college respecting educational requirements, that inquiry is still happening.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, the balance of my questions in this subappropriation are general and varied, and I recognize we have been going fairly general on 21.1(b), so if the minister does not have the staff, or has to take notice, I certainly understand

because these questions can be relatively general, although in terms of the appropriation.

My first question is: As I understand the funding for the wellness centre at Seven Oaks Hospital, it is receiving \$3 million of infrastructure money—\$1 million from the city, \$1 million from the province, and \$1 million from the federal government. The rest of the \$9 million to develop the wellness centre is coming from internally generated funds from Seven Oaks Hospital Foundation. Can the minister indicate whether in fact I am correct in assuming it is just the \$1 million from the province, and secondly, whether or not there are any ongoing capital or operational funds that are being offered to the Seven Oaks wellness centre?

Mr. McCrae: Mr. Chairperson, the only funding for the Wellness Institute that the Manitoba government is involved in is a \$1 million appropriation which comes out of the infrastructure funds.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, the Patient Utilization Review Committee reported last year, and reviewed 99 patients, identified 65 who are most frequent users of the system. Can the minister provide me with an update as to what the Patient Utilization Review Committee is doing presently?

* (1150)

Mr. McCrae: The work of the Patient Utilization Review Committee, sometimes called PURC, is still under way. The committee continues to meet on a regular basis. The chair has not changed. I will bring for the honourable member a more detailed report on what they have been doing. We feel that their work is important.

Mr. Chomiak: One of the most difficult issues to come to grips with in health care and one of the more difficult issues to define is the issue of abuse or so-called abuse of the system. The question of numbers and percentages is something that has been asked of me on many occasions and, I am sure, of the ministry.

I am wondering, recognizing how it is a very difficult issue to even define, are there any numbers or percentages that the minister has or have been dealt

with by PURC or any other body to try to put some kind of numerical or percentage figure on that whole issue of overuse or abuse, if I can put it in those terms?

Mr. McCrae: I am going to see what we have here. I dare say, we probably do not have the kind of numbers the honourable member is talking about. The work of the Patient Utilization Review Committee, I have stated, is important. In fact, I think it is extremely important, but it really only targets—it does not pretend to target the whole system—a very, very small percentage of the users of our health care system. The ones who use it the very most frequently are the ones who were targeted to get an idea of why this is happening and to take some action with regard to a very small number of cases. I do not even know what percentage it would be, but it would be very minute.

Because of the ethics involved in the delivery of medical care and services, the honourable member would understand that it is not really there for a physician to turn patients away sight unseen. I think that is a reasonable statement of the way the system works. The most important result of the work of the Patient Utilization Review Committee, in my mind, is that what flows from their work is a public understanding of what is happening in some cases.

So we can see where somebody wants to use a doctor 246 times in a year, it causes me to think to myself, well, now, how many times am I using the doctor? Am I being appropriate in my choices when it comes to what services I use? Am I doing the right thing by deciding at the spur of the moment to go to a hospital emergency room when maybe whatever it is that is bothering me could wait until tomorrow and I could visit my doctor, if my doctor will see me on short notice, or I can go to a walk-in clinic if that is necessary or if that is appropriate, or I could go to a nurse-managed care facility when those are up and running, or I could go to a community health centre for whatever it is I need? What we are trying to do is to promote public education and understanding about health issues and about the proper use of the various types of health professionals.

So while I will ask the staff to try to see if there is a way for us to respond with more facts and figures, the

fact is, we already know, we have enough facts in the first report at least, and there will be others, but we have enough right there to shock us into saying, well, are we using the health care system appropriately ourselves. I have said many, many times that the greatest thing I can ask for as a Health minister is to have a population that understands what services are there and makes appropriate choices about which services to use and when. It must just jump right off the page to learn of a patient in Manitoba who visits 74 doctors 246 times in the space of one year and clearly does.

An Honourable Member: You say that is excessive?

Mr. McCrae: Well, you see the honourable Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Enns) has reached that conclusion. No doubt he has got the research behind him. I came to a very similar conclusion to the one reached by the Minister of Agriculture especially when I had some supporting information from the Patient Utilization Review Committee. I was able to tell my colleague the Minister of Agriculture that your initial response, your initial reaction, was absolutely the correct one. So the Minister of Agriculture is indeed an intuitive individual in the first place.

But the honourable member will have the benefit of whatever further information I can make available on the point. I think it is a very important point. I do not mean or want to suggest that all my fellow Manitobans are out there abusing the health system because we have to have it there when it is needed, and it has to be available in an efficient way, and dollars wasted by people who abuse the system, and indeed in that study there were seven doctors' practices that came under scrutiny as well. Those people, like in the other areas of public policy, where there is abuse, people just naturally get very angry about it because we all make contributions to these programs.

* (1200)

When we hear about somebody cheating on the unemployment insurance we get really angry. When we hear about crime by young people, we get really angry even though I am told that only 5 percent of all of our youth in Manitoba are involved in that sort of

behaviour and that 95 percent of the kids in our province are good and decent kids.

It just makes us mad when we hear about welfare fraud, people taking welfare money from their fellow citizens when they should not be. This makes people very angry. But we need to put it in a perspective too. This is not the majority. The majority of people who are getting welfare assistance need that welfare assistance. The majority of people on UI need that help. So we ought not to jump to all the wrong conclusions, and I know the honourable member is not doing that, but we ought to be operating on solid information.

The PURC uses solid information on which to make its findings, but it also follows up by insisting that people caught in these abusive situations make a contract with us at Manitoba Health to use the services of one primary health professional and one pharmacist. If there is a need for other medical intervention, then let that flow from that relationship, but let us not have people running around abusing the health system.

Mr. Chairperson, do you know what can be done? A person can wake up in the morning in Winnipeg, and do not ask me why, but there are people who do this sort of thing. They are actually drug abusers—that is who they are—but they wake up in the morning and they go on their rounds visiting doctors and pharmacists. That it can be done is the point. I am not saying there are very many who do this, but it can be done.

There is nothing stopping a person, for whatever reason, from going and visiting half a dozen walk-in clinics in the space of a day and following up visits to the walk-in clinic with visits to the pharmacists. If you charge up enough money, enough of that, the Pharmacare program is being robbed, as well as the medical care program is being robbed, by people who do that. I do not think they should get away with it, so I look forward to trying to provide the honourable member with some additional information.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, I just have a couple more questions in this area. We touched upon the whole issue of waiting lists and had a fairly extensive conversation. I am anticipating that this is a

nonachievable, but my question is: Is there any way we can get some statistical data on waiting lists for various forms of surgery in the province or in the city of Winnipeg?

Mr. McCrae: Mr. Chairperson, it is very hard to give information which contains facts and figures about waiting lists that helps us draw some kind of conclusion.

I think all of members at one time or another have probably heard a complaint from a constituent about a long wait for a heart operation or a long wait for a hip or a knee. We never really get to the bottom of it, even I cannot do it, because of the nature of the relationship between a patient and the doctor.

Doctors in Manitoba maintain their own waiting lists. Sometimes, to a constituent, usually someone who is known to me, a friend or somebody who is complaining about a wait for a knee operation, for example, I say, well, who is your doctor? Sometimes I get the answer, well, I have got the best. Well, whatever that means, a lot of people say, I do not want anything but the best. So, if Dr. X is the best and everybody goes to Dr. X and Dr. X does not want to send them off to some other doctor, then Dr. X is going to have a very long waiting list, and to some patients that is going to be unacceptable.

Sometimes I advise patients, you are going to have to make your own case with your doctor for different prioritization or a different placement on the waiting list. There are things like emergent. I mean if the honourable member tomorrow should need emergency heart surgery, well, he will get heart surgery tomorrow. If it is on the urgent list, then the honourable member will be prioritized with others who are in that urgent category. If the honourable member's requirement for surgery is on an elective basis, it simply means that he has been prioritized at the lower end in terms of need, and then we have the issue of which doctor did he go to, and does some other doctor have a shorter waiting list or a longer one?

We have recognized that in some cases the wait is too long. This year, we have put \$500,000 in additional money, redirected money, but certainly

additional for waiting list purposes, dollars to address waiting list concerns. What that does is buy some operating room time. It buys staff to run the operating room.

As an aside, I think it is incumbent on hospitals to run their operating rooms properly. One of the things that came out of the APM experience—and we know that there were some pretty negative things said about Connie Curran and that whole thing—

An Honourable Member: By whom?

Mr. McCrae: By lots of people, not just the honourable member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak). I am not blaming him only for saying things about Connie Curran and all that exercise.

You know, politically speaking, I think the Premier (Mr. Filmon) commented during the election campaign on it and probably does not need me to add anything to what was already said. However, the story that did not get told often enough or did not get understood very well, and here is where the honourable member could have been more helpful. He forgot to mention that the Connie Curran contract involved bringing hundreds, some 700 staff working at St. Boniface Hospital and at the Health Sciences Centre, together, working together in PITS, project improvement teams, to search their souls and to look at how they do their work.

In a restructuring environment, those are the things that need to be done. We needed somebody who could facilitate that. You know for years and years in Manitoba nobody ever would because you know what it meant. It meant looking at how we have to do our work. We do not want to be very critical of ourselves sometimes. So it was not an easy project to get through.

I have a lot of time for the staff of those hospitals who participated in those projects. I am coming around to the point I am trying to make. The point is that our operating rooms do not operate efficiently. Is it wrong for us to ask the staff who run these operating rooms to do something about that? We have been told for years, if you want to know something, ask us. That is exactly what this project was all about. That is the story that

has not been very well told. I will take the responsibility for that, that it has not been told well enough.

The fact is, why should a patient be told that they are going to be operated on on day X and, because we could not bring about a turnaround time in the operating room that was good enough, we have to tell you that you cannot have your operation on the day you were told you were going to have it? Surely you can imagine what kind of feeling of anxiety that will bring about, especially for somebody who is facing serious operative procedures.

What I am saying is that in standard practice Canadian hospitals, American hospitals, any hospitals, there is a time period that it should take between the end of one operation and the beginning of another so that an operating room can be prepared. You get rid of the equipment and so on from the previous operation. You make sure everything is clean and sterile, and you get the operating room cleaned up and prepared for the next operation. There is an industrial, if you like, standard in the hospital business, if you like, that says that should be done in 18 minutes, not 37 minutes or whatever the number is.

So why do we not try in Canadian hospitals to achieve those kinds of standards because whom are we doing this for? Are we doing it for the people who work in the hospital, or are we doing it for the people we are trying to serve—the patients? The patient is better served if we run an operating room program more efficiently and effectively. We were not doing it. We are getting better at it, but we are criticized royally for trying to address these problems.

Why does it take the length of time it takes to get yourself admitted to a hospital? Why do you have to fill out so many forms? Why do you have to answer so many questions? Why do you have to be in contact with so many individual staff people in a hospital simply to get yourself admitted to a hospital or all those steps to get yourself discharged from a hospital? Why do we spend thousands and thousands of dollars more than we need to on things like rubber gloves? We save enough because of this project simply on the issue of rubber gloves to employ two or three people on an

annual basis. That is the kind of money we are talking about, and we cannot afford to waste money in our health system. We have been wasting lots of money over the years, and we are trying to get a handle on that and do a better job for the patients that we work for.

* (1210)

Despite the fact that there are waiting lists, it is things like that that we can help to address unacceptable waiting times, and I am not going to stand here and tell you that there are not some unacceptable waits because there are and only by acknowledging that are we going to make a really good job of trying to do something about it.

In terms of hip replacements, for example, just since 1990-91, in 1991 there were 767 hip replacement procedures done in Manitoba, 767. In 1993-94, there were 855. These numbers are like that for many, many other procedures as well in Manitoba. So we are facing large-volume increases in the numbers of procedures being done. Who knows what all that reflects? We know it reflects an aging population, No. 1, but it also reflects the fact that these procedures now exist.

A number of years ago they did not even exist, so we did not have waiting lists for knee surgery because we did not have knee surgery. Now we do. I just spoke to a fellow the other day who had his knee done, and he is now walking like a couple of miles every day. He only had it done a few weeks ago. Before that, he was bent over in pain waiting. He is my neighbour. He is calling me up, when am I going to get my knee done? So he is very glad that it got done. The reason he wanted it so bad was that it does provide significant relief to him and to many other Manitobans.

I referred to hip replacements. Let me refer to knee replacements. In Manitoba in 1990-91, there were 294 knee replacements; in 1993-94, 598. When I tell you that we are spending \$500 million more per year on health care, that is just one little indication of where that money is going, and yet there are those who talk about cutbacks. It is just not happening that way.

So we have the existence of all of this technology now that we did not have before, which creates a

demand on the system, and we are trying to meet that demand.

The other important aspect of this is the protocols that go into this. Who is getting all these operations? The Manitoba Centre for Health Policy and Evaluation asks, does everybody who is getting them need them? Are we getting outcomes that justify the effort and the expenditure on this?

Those are difficult questions. They are not fun questions to deal with, believe me, because they lead to judgments being made about who gets this and who gets that. Nobody has really wanted to get into that debate, and I am not really wild about the idea myself, Mr. Chairperson.

So waiting lists, which was the question, is a very hard thing to get an accurate definition. I think the honourable member understands that. So what do we do?

We deal with anecdotal cases, instances, examples, somebody who has waited a long time. Then it comes out that because somebody waited a year or a year and a half or whatever for a particular procedure, the statement is then made, oh, well, we have a year-and-a-half waiting list for hip surgery. That is not fair. It is not fair to the people who are trying very hard to keep waiting lists in line, and it is not fair because it does not accurately reflect what is really going on.

It is not correct either. So for me to say that the waiting list for such and such is so long is not going to properly address the issue. There will be further discussion, no doubt, Mr. Chairperson.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, that was an unusually swift answer from the minister, and I commend him for that.

Mr. McCrae: Par for the course.

Mr. Chomiak: The minister indicates par for the course, for the record. We have been moving fairly expeditiously through this, and I am certainly finding it quite useful and helpful.

(Mr. Mike Radcliffe, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair)

I think I only have a couple of more questions in this particular appropriation. The first is something the minister may have to come back with, I suspect. Can the minister give me an update or give members of this House an update as to the status of the intersectoral committees dealing with the Shared Services? Can we get a specific update as to what is happening?

Mr. McCrae: Yes, Mr. Chairperson, I will be pleased to return with an update on the activities of the Shared Services Organization. The honourable member is talking about the one here in the city of Winnipeg?

Mr. Chomiak: Yes.

Mr. McCrae: Yes, well, we will be bringing in further information for the honourable member on that.

Mr. Chomiak: The other question is with regard to the minister's reading statistics outlining the number of surgeries. He cited hip and knee replacements. I wonder if the minister can give us those comparative numbers for other major forms of surgery, just on a similar basis.

Mr. McCrae: While I am attempting to retrieve some further information about various surgeries, I think it was the honourable member who was asking about the labelling of alcoholic beverages, and I have some comments that would not take very long.

Beverage labelling is a federal responsibility. This topic appeared on the agenda of the meeting of Health ministers in April in Vancouver. The Deputy Minister of Health attended that conference. A statement emerged from the meeting that alcoholic beverages carry health warning labels. In that there is no research demonstrating that labels alone will produce desired effects with heavy drinkers, in Manitoba, resources will be directed to the wide distribution of educational materials. For example, pamphlets produced in cooperation with the Manitoba Medical Association, the Addictions Foundation of Manitoba, the Manitoba Liquor Control Commission.

Also, labels are currently being printed on all MLCC single-bottle bags, and it says: FAS & FAE, A Preventable Birth Defect. That stands for fetal alcohol syndrome or fetal alcohol effects.

The committee on alcohol and pregnancy is an active intersectoral committee co-chaired by the Manitoba Medical Association and the Addictions Foundation of Manitoba. To date, their activities involve the development of an FAS and FAE resource network raising awareness through northern consultations and working with representatives of parent groups of FAS-and-FAE-affected children.

The committee plans to submit a proposal to the Children and Youth Secretariat regarding improved diagnostic services and the need for a provincial co-ordinator of FAS and FAE services.

* (1240)

The Addictions Foundation of Manitoba is working with the committee chair to develop a proposal for matched funding from identified industry representatives before requesting funds from government.

At this time we do not have details of that proposal, but the committee on alcohol and pregnancy comprises the following members: from Winnipeg Children's Hospital, Oscar Casiro; from the Addictions Foundation of Manitoba, Zenon Lizakowsky; the Executive Director of Mount Carmel Clinic, Lorraine Thomson; the Executive Director of the Association for Community Living-Manitoba, Dale Kendel; representing the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Manitoba, Dr. Frank Friesen; the Chief Executive Officer of the Winnipeg Child and Family Services, Keith Cooper; from Four Sector Resources, Hal Studholme; Dr. Cheryl Simmonds is on that committee; the Senior Consultant, Education and Training, Neil Burchard; the Director of Children's Special Services, Brian Law; the Southeast Resource Development Group is represented by Lloyd Goodmanson; Linda Grieve of the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs is on that committee; alternately, Delores Abigosis of the Brokenhead Health Centre, also representing the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs; and Carol Williamson is

on the committee; Lynn Baker of the Women's Health Branch; Elizabeth Arychuk of the City of Winnipeg Health Department; Cate Harrington from Brighter Futures; Dr. Terry Benoit of the Child Development Clinic; geneticist Dr. Ab Chudley from Children's Hospital; Jackie Herbert from an organization called Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Today; the Manitoba Association of Registered Nurses is represented by Maria Steeds or, alternatively, Karen Bodnarchuk; the Medical Services Branch of the federal government is represented by Mr. Clarence Nepinak; the Provincial Co-ordinator for Adoptions and Perinatal, Child and Family Support, Donna Dickson; and from Community and Youth Correctional Services, Caroline Brock.

(Mr. Chairperson in the Chair)

Mr. Chairperson, information for the honourable member on cardiac surgery waiting lists. A concern has been expressed that waiting periods for cardiac surgery are too long. In December of 1993, a task force chaired by Mr. Robert Bell and Dr. John Wade tabled its report on Manitoba health tertiary care consolidation with Manitoba Health, known as the Bell-Wade or the Wade-Bell report, now called Wade-Bell 1.

The report identified the need for an integrated approach to prioritizing patients for cardiac surgery. A grant from the Health Services Development Fund was awarded to the St. Boniface General Hospital to develop standard criteria and a process to place all patients from the Health Sciences Centre and the St. Boniface General Hospital on a common waiting list for cardiac surgery. The Central Cardiac Registry is located at the St. Boniface General Hospital. The data collected to date is not sufficient for any analysis, as all cardiac surgeons have not been involved in providing information.

Recently Dr. Bill Lindsay was hired as the head of cardiac services at the Health Sciences Centre and the St. Boniface General Hospital. Dr. Lindsay will be addressing many issues, including the issue of waiting time. We are fortunate to have Dr. Lindsay. Dr. Lindsay is a returnee. He is one of those Canadians who has returned to Canada as opposed to leaving the jurisdiction, and we are very pleased that he is doing

that. He is a well-regarded cardiac doctor, and we think that under his strong leadership we can make some major improvements to our tertiary health consortium arrangements between the two teaching hospitals.

When the Central Cardiac Registry is fully operational it is envisaged that the registry at the St. Boniface General Hospital will provide surgeons with a more complete picture of patients awaiting surgery. This will enable surgeons to make more informed decisions when assigning priority to and slating patients for surgery. It is presently thought that a central listing will ensure that the patients with the greatest need will be assigned the highest priority for surgery.

I guess there is not sufficient comfort around that point as to whether patients are being prioritized as well as we could.

Moreover, centralized information will assist the government and hospital administrations in making policy and planning decisions relating to clinical programs.

Just for a little bit of additional information, at the two teaching hospitals in 1991-92, there were 533 cardiac procedures, this is coronary artery by-pass procedures; in 1992-93, there were 545; and in 1993-94, there were 523.

With respect to replacement of heart valves, in 1991-92, there were 684; in 1992-93, 668; and in 1993-94, 663. Those numbers are declining slightly. As a short-term strategy St. Boniface General Hospital agreed to increase their cardiac surgery by 59 cases in 1994-95. We do not have final numbers for that year. Longer-term strategies will be introduced over the next two to three years to further reduce the waiting list, with more money going into that effort again this year. I do not know what the numbers will be, but I expect to see maybe perhaps a slight increase in the number of surgeries.

The \$500,000 infusion is a short-term infusion which is not intended to stay in the base for that particular expenditure, but it is felt that it will help relieve some

pressure in the short term while the work on this common list progresses and, as we learn more about the indicators amongst the patients that are on the list, and as we learn more, we will do a better job of prioritizing. We will have another look at the situation again at a later date in terms of whether other short-term infusions of capital or money are required to help us through the interim time. The short answer is, that money is not a permanent infusion.

The honourable member asked about the shared services organization. I have a little bit of information that I can share today, and it will not take me long. Manitoba Health, with the full support of the nine urban hospitals, has recommended the centralization of hospital support services wherever cost savings or capital cost avoidance can be demonstrated. The co-operation and collegial style of the hospitals is driven by the need to spend more smartly to bring about efficiencies, and it is also driven by a wish on my part and, I believe, the hospitals, too, to do a better job in the various areas. We think a better job can be done.

* (1250)

The next step was to create a shared services organization to put strategies into place. Government concurs with this strategy and has instructed Manitoba Health to facilitate the creation of this structure and bring back business plans for the four basic service areas. They are: materials management; logistics; centralized laundry; centralized food commissariat; and centralized biomedical waste disposal. A group has been formed with Health and Industry, Trade and Tourism that will be developing an implementation plan for development of food services business spin-off ventures.

Winnipeg is a place where we can maximize on improvements for services to patients in our hospitals, where we can do it more efficiently and where, by bringing in that Industry, Trade and Tourism component, there can be, we think, very significant positive spin-offs for the economic community in Manitoba.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): The minister presented a number of questions that I would

continually like to follow up on in terms of when I first started to ask questions in terms of some of those areas or the facilities, if you like, of health care. One of the issues that I have often had many discussions on is the whole question of province-public versus private labs, if you like.

I am wondering if the minister can give me some sort of indication as to the labs that are out there, what percentage would be provincially run labs versus privately run labs and just some sort of a comment with respect to government's positions on that.

Mr. McCrae: I think that the percentage breakdown the honourable member is looking for or asking about can probably be computed, and as I speak, there might be something further, but I do not know precisely that ratio. Suffice it to say, though, we have a variety of laboratory services delivery systems in place in Manitoba. It has traditionally worked that way, where we have private, for-profit and nonprofit and government-run laboratory facilities, all of which is somewhat driven by the fee-for-service system in the medical community.

There are various suggestions that there may be some duplication. There may be some unnecessary testing going on. There may be various problems associated with the whole laboratory and testing system in our province. No one is able to quantify that exactly because, just like the rest of the medical system, it operates on certain indicators that are there on the part of doctors and patients.

So that honour system has been in place, but there are enough allegations out there that we could be doing a more efficient job in that sector, that it ought to be looked at. We have asked Mr. Matt Jones to chair a very controversial committee dealing with laboratory services in Manitoba. I say "controversial" because what we did is we put all the stakeholders around the table, and they have various interests reflected there. It might have been interesting to be a fly on the wall in some of those committee meetings to hear the nature of the discussions, because you had a range right from—Manitoba Health, I think, was represented in that as well as fee-for-service physicians, as well as union leaders who represent employees who work in the

public and, I think, to some extent, also some of the private ones perhaps.

The honourable member will remember some of the questions being raised here and in the media about conflicts of interest and all of that. I guess, if you are going to refuse to allow people who have perceived or real conflicts of interest to be involved in any discussion, even though those same people have a lot of expertise in the area of laboratory services, you are going to leave it to—the suggestion was that it be left to other people who have conflicts of interest and let them make the decisions. I am referring to the union bosses who have a conflict of interest, because any change that affects the working relationships for the union bosses membership reflects, by way of a conflict of interest, on the union bosses.

There were those, and the NDP, of course, took the side of the union bosses to no one's surprise but to say, well, let us have conflicts all right, but let them all be the conflicts on the labour side. That did not seem to be right either to me. At the same time, I did not want to lose the expertise that existed on the part of the medical practitioners who may have a conflict of interest as well. I thought the best thing to do was just to declare, yes, I think there are some conflicts there, but let us not throw out the whole thing because, if we just left everything the way it was because nobody wants to face up to these issues, then we would be left exactly where we were before with all of the possibility of duplication and waste and so on.

Finally, and I would say miraculously, we have a report. I have it on my desk. I have not released it to the public, although I think there are a lot of people who know what is in the report because of the wide consultations that were part of it, and the membership of the committee probably have shared their drafts with various people as well. That would not surprise me.

The report talks about a mixed sort of system that has existed. I think it talks about some form of continuation of a mixed system—mixed, that being a continuation of publicly or nonprofit and profit-making laboratories to continue to coexist and to work but to observe some guidelines, develop some protocols and live by them and do a more efficient job.

The problem with the allegations about duplication is, it is very hard to point a finger and blame somebody, usually, I think it is. I think we will be foolish if we ignore the fact that that exists, because there is a very significant cost involved in any duplication of a medical service that is paid for publicly.

We look forward to reviewing that report and perhaps making some decisions in the future that would have the effect of getting people to work more closely together on these things. Again, the fee-for-service system of medical care delivery, it is suggested, tends to mitigate against getting rid of the inefficiencies. As we discussed earlier in these Estimates, there are other ways to look at it besides fee for service.

The concept of block funding seemed to be one of the ways that we can deal with the issue of volume. In other words, if we are going to do so many tests a year, let us pay for so many tests a year. Those who make decisions about which test should be done and when and so on will maybe be persuaded to be a little bit careful about the use of laboratories in the sense that we want them to order tests when there are appropriate indications for tests and that tests be carried out when we can point to a result or an outcome.

* (1300)

I sure do not want to substitute my opinion or judgment for that of the professionals out there, but can we get the professionals to develop understandings amongst themselves as to what are the right indicators for the ordering of a test? I know that is going to be hard because patients can be demanding too.

Patients will come along and say, well, I want my cholesterol checked out. Okay, that is probably a pretty reasonable thing to do but not every week. I do not think that is reasonable, or even every month is probably not reasonable, or even every year, depending on the nature of the patient. Just to satisfy your curiosity or mine is not a good enough reason to have a cholesterol test done when you just had one—who knows? A year ago might have been too soon. I do not know what is the appropriate time period between these sorts of tests, but let us not just have tests because we want to have tests.

It is hoped that this report will help us in coming to some rational decision making in this area. I hope that the stakeholders will work with us. We want to make decisions based on appropriate research that justifies decision making. We do not want decision making simply for the purpose of saving money, because we might end up making the wrong decisions if we do that. Yet we know that there is money that needs to be saved along the way here, and we know that there is ample room for savings to be had in the health system. This is where we sometimes differ with our colleagues in maybe both parties sometimes, but certainly the NDP, that there is just no room to squeeze another nickel out of the health system. I do not agree with that. That is not true.

I know that very clearly there is room for improvement in various areas, and those who do not want to go along with that or acknowledge that are simply blind to the fact that we can always do better. If anybody thinks we cannot do any better then they ought to move on. I say that of myself. I speak of myself, because I do not have the right to speak for anybody else, but I say that as soon as I admit that I cannot do better then it is time to move on.

There was one person recently who said to me, there is nothing more that can be done in terms of achievement of efficiencies in our hospitals. Well, that person is wrong. I can speak out on that point and say, that person is wrong. All you have to do is go and talk to most other health professionals, and they will tell you there is still lots of room for improvement. I will bet you the member for Broadway (Mr. Santos) would say that.

An Honourable Member: Conrad knows.

Mr. McCrae: We know that. We know that he knows.

The thing is, that attitude may still exist in some quarters, that there is just no more room for more efficiency. They are just wrong. Every piece of evidence out there demonstrates they are wrong and so, if they say that, then they are not taking part in that approach that is required to bring about the achievement of improvements in our health system.

There is a sense that bringing about efficiencies is just another way of saying cut, and that is not what it is about. We are spending more in Manitoba of our budget than anywhere else in the country. So we have the credentials to embark on the process or to carry on with the process of reform of our health system.

Our money is up front. Our commitment is clear. It is better than anybody else's. We do not have that to worry about, so that is why I keep saying that in this area and in others we really do need the partners, that we cannot do it by ourselves as a department. We have lots of partners. We have lots of people who are very willing to help us improve the health system. There are a few that are not, but we will improve it in spite of them.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Chairperson, I guess ultimately I would argue that the private sector, if you will, does have some role in health care. There is no doubt about that, but when we talk about the labs, this is one of the areas in which I question the role that the private sector actually has.

Maybe it is because of the current arrangement. The minister makes reference to conflict, and perception is almost everything, not entirely, but perception is in fact important. I will be quite candid. I cannot justify to myself and no one has been able to justify to me that it is not a conflict, for example, for a doctor to have part ownership or entire ownership. I do not know if there is a doctor that would have 100 percent ownership of a particular lab or a vested interest of some sort and having patients go to a lab. I perceive that as a conflict and I think it goes more than just a perception.

In terms of the whole ideal of the change, if you will, in labs, in laboratory requirements of our health care system, I believe it is the Province of Quebec that actually has, if not entirely, it is virtually entirely, publicly administered their labs.

I was led to believe that it is much more cost-efficient than what we currently have in the province. That interests me greatly, because I think the potential for having a more efficiently run lab service could potentially be achieved through publicly administered labs.

Even though, again, I do not have the resources to be able to substantiate that claim, I do believe what the individuals that I have talked to, that at the very least we have to visit the whole issue of the mixture of private and public labs and come up with some sort of an alternative.

The minister made reference to a report that he now has, but it has not been tabled yet. I would anticipate in time that we will see that report tabled, but given individuals that were sitting around the table talking all have conflicts, and I do not have too much of a problem with that, if you have a conflict of interest and you are speaking and trying to have input in terms of government decision, as long as the minister and the government of the day is aware of those conflicts.

I see and appreciate that the Minister of Health is acknowledging that there are conflicts with the individuals that are sitting at the table. Once we factor in those conflicts, then we ask the question in terms of, how can we best administer this area of health care services?

Today is not the time to do that, but no doubt there will come a time in future Health Estimates, to challenge the minister more to demonstrate how the private sector labs, in particular, are in a position to better serve the patients if a public lab-administered system, in my opinion, at this point in time anyway, could in fact do a better job more cost efficiently. That is not necessarily, as I say, a philosophy that I have to abide to in terms of, well, gee, the private sector has no role to play. In many different aspects of health care services, yes, they do have a role.

I am just not entirely convinced there is that much of a role, or at least in the future, I would want to be convinced that they have a role to play, but at this point, I do not see that.

* (1310)

I wanted to move on to the whole idea of bulk purchasing. The minister has made reference to the urban hospitals in their movement toward bulk purchasing. I think it is a positive thing. I believe, out in Atlantic Canada, there is virtually almost a

consortium, if you will, approach to purchasing medication, especially some of the more common medication.

I am wondering if the minister can give some sort of indication whether or not the Prairie provinces, possibly in co-operation even with the northwestern Ontario health institutions, in having some sort of a joint purchasing power base built on medication—if the government is looking into that, if we can get some sort of a progress report in terms of just how well things are going or some form of a time frame when we can anticipate that we will be making the rather larger purchases in an attempt to save dollars because, once again, I believe a great deal of dollars could be saved in this area.

Mr. McCrae: The honourable member, in his latter comments, raises an issue that I believe the leader of the Liberal Party has talked about from time to time, when he talks about a western or prairie or multiprovince sort of way of doing business. There is a distinction to be drawn here between bulk purchasing and group purchasing.

There was an internal trade agreement arrived at by another minister, and the Premier (Mr. Filmon) was involved in dealing with trade barriers and so on in Canada. They are moving on to other phases of that, and there may be some discussion of this.

We have a purchasing agent in the form of the MHO, the Manitoba Hospital Association, that is involved in some of this, but what has happened has not gone to the extent the honourable member is talking about, where we are talking provinces getting together. It has not extended the internal trade issues, has not extended to the health sector as yet. That does not mean it will not in the future, but then it may be a direction that we should be looking at or could be looking at.

At this time, we are, in the city of Winnipeg especially, talking about shared services, which really talks about the nine hospitals alone. The concept the honourable member is talking about is meritorious in the sense it should be looked at, and hopefully something more can happen in the future, but certainly, for now, we are making first steps in the sense of the

shared services. We are making important steps in the sense of our rural regionalization process, where we are going to have more integration and more co-operation and co-ordination with the various facilities.

It makes you wonder that it is the '90s that we are looking at these things, where we have had all of these numerous individual hospital boards and administrations making a lot of their planning arrangements and decisions on a basis that has been in the past quite isolated and has not resulted in very good efficiency. It has not resulted in very good population health planning or population health service delivery, so those are the obvious reasons for going in that direction. I can say that we have certainly made some steps in the direction the honourable member is referring to, but we have not gone as far as he is suggesting.

We might yet get there someday, to a point where we are working the provinces together, but I warn you, when that happens, somebody is going to say, well, now that you have done it in the institutional sector and now that you have done it in the educational sector, when are you going to do it in the political sector too?

Is the honourable member ready for that discussion, because it might be he or it might be me that ends up being replaced by far fewer people like us? Are the people of Winnipeg ready to give up their legislative buildings here as a Legislature, or are the people of Manitoba willing to do that? That is a much bigger question. It is not different from the kind of question that comes up when you talk about school boundary reviews and municipal boundary reviews and electoral boundary reviews.

I know there were some people who really did not agree with the idea of reducing the size of the council of the City of Winnipeg, and there were pretty interesting discussions about that, but one thing does lead to another.

So I warn the honourable member that I hope he and I will be there when that time comes to discuss the political changes that might have to flow from all of the economic changes that the honourable member is talking about. That is not to say we should not keep

our minds open and think about these things. Things do change over time, and for every change, there are other changes that go along with them.

The honourable member asked about laboratory services further and talked further about the public sector and the private sector, and he referred to a Quebec model. He, like me, has some trouble understanding all of the forces that are at work.

So I think further review of the report—and when we can make it available to the member, we will, but further review of the whole playing field, when it comes to the delivery of these services, we will no doubt come up with some change. I do not know how sweeping the change will be.

The member was talking about the conflict of an owner of a laboratory service also being someone referring patients or referring testing requests to that same service, there being a conflict, or a physician who heads up laboratory services in a hospital also having laboratory services operations of his own or her own, being conflicts. I ask the member to look at this scenario, leaving aside professional considerations for a minute, because you have to do that in a discussion like this.

The honourable member and I are doctors, and we decide to work together and open a clinic. I am a general practitioner, and the honourable member is a surgeon. I refer my patients to the honourable member. Is that a conflict? Especially under the fee-for-service system, is that a conflict? It sounds like it to me—in business terms.

The honourable member and I could probably justify on professional grounds why a reference was required or might even lead to surgery, for all I know. But when the honourable member talked about perception being a large part of this, he is right. We have to feel comfortable about what is going on out there, and I just used that example, but there must be many, many other examples in a system that is dominated by the fee-for-service method of remuneration, which is why the discussion about that keeps coming up and why it is an important discussion and why that discussion I feel sure will lead to some pretty significant changes in

professional remuneration in the days and years and months ahead.

* (1320)

Mr. Lamoureux: Before I move on to the other question, I just want to give briefly two comments. One, the latest comment that the minister makes reference to when he says I am the surgeon, he is the general practitioner, of course, I would ultimately suggest that if I am the individual who is running your lab and you being the general practitioner, if you prescribe someone to take this lab test, that lab test, there are direct dollars or dividends that you would be a recipient of under the scenario in which the minister had pointed out of course, if he prescribes or suggests that I go to my friend the surgeon, if you like, there is no necessary direct dividend that you would be receiving.

There is always the potential of kickbacks, of course, but I think in principle I do not want to impute motives on doctors. After all, doctors are held in the highest of esteem of all the different professions that are out there. But it is no doubt a very fine line, and we acknowledge that. There is a very fine line and it should not necessarily prevent us from talking about it.

With respect to the whole question of that integration and the purchasing power of different provinces going together and so forth, I guess I am very much aware of the potential in terms of what that could ultimately lead to and, hopefully, someday we will be able to both participate in that debate, because I would like to see this debate actually occur quicker as opposed to having to wait 15-20 years. In fact, we would benefit by having the dean of the Chamber participating in that sort of debate and hopefully this government, wanting at the very least to be forward in thinking, would encourage or want to see this particular debate expedited.

The other question, not necessarily ever wanting to be shy from controversial discussions from inside the Chamber, is more one of those fundamental principles of comprehensiveness of health care. It is an issue that is extremely sensitive and I think can really show the differences of the Conservatives, the Liberals, the New

Democrats and other political parties that might be out there, whether they are the Reform or other political parties that seek to govern the province. When I look at it, there are the essential health care services that we all expect, such as if you get a sore throat, if you break your arm and so forth, and I think that is fairly well supported throughout the Chamber by all politicians, elected and nonelected. Those are the fundamentals that we have to ensure are going to be there.

(Mr. Jack Penner, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair)

There are the other issues that are a tad bit more controversial, issues such as the tattoo removal. You know, it was interesting, there was an article that I read a couple of months ago where, for example, in the province of Ontario now you can get a sex reversal operation or whatever the proper terminology is for it. In Manitoba we talk about eye examinations, and now the additional cost for eye exams that is being talked about from the government. I know there was the two years that this government put into place, every two years, if you want to get your eyes checked it would be once paid for by the government. The second time, you would have to pay for it, which reminds me, I too have to get my eyes checked before you implement the new policy, because it has been a couple of years since I have had them checked.

Having said that, I think that there is no doubt going to be a good deal of debate on this whole issue. The minister likewise might want to take advantage of that opportunity just in case the government does materialize on one of those recommendations that is being suggested.

In order for me to be able to participate in a very significant fashion, I would ask the minister, does he have a list of medical services that are requested of health care in which we do not currently finance, and along with that list a list of services in which there are conditions to our financing? For example, the eye examinations would be something in which there is a condition attached to it. An example of the other one could be in-vitro fertilization, where there is a request for a service of this nature, yet it is not covered by our health care system. Do we have two such lists? If we do have them here I would be most happy to receive

them now so I could enter into this sort of a discussion, maybe not right now, but when we get on to ministerial salaries. If we do not have that list, can the minister make a commitment to compile a list of that nature?

Mr. McCrae: Mr. Chairperson, my staff advises me that they will make some efforts to put something together for the honourable member. It may not be exactly what he is asking for, but it might engender some discussion, debate or lead to other questions, and that is okay.

Over the years, many, many—Mr. Chairman, you would be very pleased, I think, if I would just pause for one second here.

Over the years, Mr. Chairperson, there have been many services added to the list of insured services in the provinces, and that list would look different in every single jurisdiction. This raises questions about comprehensiveness, and what does that definition really mean? Also throughout the years, maybe more in recent years, there have been delisted services as well, and that varies from province to province. So what we are expected, under the Canada Health Act, to do escapes me sometimes, because we are asked to provide services that are universal, that are comprehensive, that are publicly administered—that is only three; there are two more—that are portable and that are accessible.

* (1330)

Those are the five principles of the Canada Health Act and, yet, there is a different system in every province. We hope that there is a core of services that will be equal so that when we talk about a program that operates from sea to sea to sea, that you can be a Canadian in any of those places and get your broken leg set or get your tonsils out if that is what is medically necessary or have serious internal surgery done depending on the circumstances.

This is a very interesting discussion, and I wonder where it will go too. I know that all provinces—I do not know of any province that wants to abandon those principles, but most provinces will jealously guard their right to interpret those principles in the way that they

feel appropriate in accordance with their ability to finance the operation of the system under those principles and, more and more, they are going to resent federal intrusion, which is not a good thing in my view, because federal intrusion in my view is necessary in order for us to maintain the basics or the fundamentals or those things that we must have to maintain that national health system.

But that federal intrusion will not be welcome if there is no money accompanying it, and we are seeing more and more of that. However, as I said to the honourable member, I will ask staff to put together some kind of a paper that discusses this matter or makes lists of things insured, things not insured, things deinsured, that type of a document for discussion purposes. I do not know if it will be exactly what the honourable member has in mind and it may not be all-inclusive, because there are so many services that are insured and so many services that are not insured.

The honourable member made reference to one, tattoo removal, and there was another one too that got deinsured a few years back and there was quite a debate about it. It seemed to me pretty obvious that if it was not medically necessary, that it is something that should be looked at at a time when we are having enough of a challenge insuring the medically necessary things. That does not mean that there are a lot of things that are not medically necessary but cause a great deal of anxiety in people if they cannot have something done about it, and so then those considerations have to be taken into account as well. So we will try to put together something for the honourable member for the purposes of our discussion.

(Mr. Chairperson in the Chair)

Mr. Chairperson: Item 1. Administration and Finance (b) Executive Support (2) Other Expenditures \$163,600—pass.

1.(c) Finance and Administration (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$2,323,500.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, under Finance and Administration, it is indicated that the department funds

67 external agencies. I wonder if we could get a list, we have in the past, of those funded agencies.

Mr. McCrae: Mr. Chairperson, I understand you do not have to rise every time, or do you in here?

Mr. Chairperson: You do not have to, but it does make it much easier.

Mr. McCrae: I see. I am getting tired.

Mr. Chairperson: Item 1.(c) Finance and Administration (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$2,323,500—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$2,074,300—pass.

1.(d) Human Resources (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$1,006,600.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, there is an interesting figure under the Expected Results in the Supplementary Estimates book in this regard. It says, approximately 80,000 civil service payroll cheques will be processed. What is the 80,000? What does that constitute. What body are we talking about that that constitutes? Is that all of the departmental officials from the Department of Health and that constitutes all of those officials' pay cheques over the 12 months? Is it broader? Does it include the hospitals, or is it simply limited to the department?

Mr. McCrae: The number to which the honourable member refers, refers to the staff of the Department of Health and their pay cheques, not external agencies, not hospital people, not anybody else, just Department of Health people.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, this area also administers the implementation of the Affirmative Action policies of the department. Can we get a listing of those policies and the status of those?

Mr. McCrae: Mr. Chairperson, the policy in the Department of Health is the same as the policy throughout the government. That manual would be—and we can get it and make it available. It is just that it is the same manual for any department.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, however, the Affirmative Action plans of external agencies like hospitals would be different from the overall policy of the government of Manitoba. They are individual, I believe. Is that not the case?

Mr. McCrae: Mr. Chairperson, as autonomous agencies, they all have their own policies. They may all look similar, or they may be different, one from the other.

Mr. Chomiak: Are there any departmental activities and, if there is, can I have an update on the issue of pay equity with regard to the Department of Health?

Mr. McCrae: We will ascertain an answer and make it available for the honourable member.

Mr. Chairperson: Shall the item pass? Pass.

1. Administration and Finance (d) Human Resources
(2) Other Expenditures \$188,300—pass.

Resolution 21.2 Management and Program Support Services (a) Insured Benefits Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$5,693,400.

Mr. Chomiak: This area of the department has been reorganized. Can I just get an update as to the way it works now?

Mr. Chairperson: While the minister is reaching for the answer to that question, I am just going to repeat those lines that we have just passed up to where we are just to reconfirm that Hansard has them on the record. I had not turned my mike on.

So it is 1.(b)(2) Other Expenditures \$163,600—pass; (c) Finance and Administration (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$2,323,500—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$2,074,300—pass. (d) Human Resources (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$1,006,600—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$188,300—pass.

Resolution 21.2 Management and Program Support Services (a) Insured Benefit Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits.

* (1340)

Mr. McCrae: Mr. Chairperson, the work or the organization or structure of the Insured Benefits Services branch has not changed. The structure or organization of the Insured Benefits branch has not changed. It simply is now reporting to a different assistant deputy minister. The honourable member may recall last year that the senior levels underwent a pretty significant restructure resulting in the reduction of a number of staff years at the senior levels of the department, but the Insured Benefits Services branch reports to the Assistant Deputy Minister Responsible for Finance and Management Services. So that is the extent of the change.

Mr. Chomiak: Just reviewing page 33 of the Supplementary Estimates book, which talks about the activities, just in brief, of the Insured Benefits division and the Funded Accountability, I recognize that the Insured Benefits Services—correct me if I am wrong—is basically the old Manitoba Hospital Services part that was melded into the department several years ago.

Mr. McCrae: The Insured Benefits part is melded into Manitoba Health. That is correct.

Mr. Chomiak: Then the Funded Accountability part, I do not quite understand what the Funded Accountability section is. Maybe I am just thick on this, but I just—what the differentiation is there.

Mr. McCrae: Mr. Chairperson, that branch, called Funded Accountability, is there to finance the facilities throughout the province, and that branch alone used to be broken down into many segments.

That Funded Accountability branch also looks after the administration of the medical services appropriation, which is a very big responsibility as well. There is a smaller evaluation component of that office as well, but it is very much different today than it was in years past.

I will, just to pass on to the honourable member, if he were to have a look at page 36 of his information, that top paragraph does set out what the objectives of the Funded Accountability branch are.

Mr. Chomiak: I appreciate that response from the minister. I think, structurally and administratively, it makes a lot of sense.

It seems to be a fair representation of how the organization should be going. I just was not clear in my own mind, but I appreciate the minister's response on that issue.

Periodically there are rumours about the possible, I guess "privatization" is the best word, of certain branches of the department, and the Insured Benefits division, a privatization or a contracting out or a movement away from the government periodically arises. Can the minister update me as to whether there are any ongoing plans to move in that direction?

Mr. McCrae: I had not heard those rumours, and this the first and—I do not know if the honourable member is favouring that approach or, if he is, if he wants us to look into it, we could do that. I had not heard any rumours about privatization of any part of that branch, but maybe we could look into it.

Mr. Chomiak: I am simply seeking the information and to clarify—

Mr. McCrae: I honestly have not heard anything about that.

Mr. Chomiak: I accept the minister's response on that. I have a number of questions on funding in different levels and policy matters, but I think it is probably more appropriate when we get to the actual funding of, rather than deal with it in this appropriation, so I am prepared to pass this one as well.

* (1350)

Mr. Chairperson: Item 2.(a) Insured Benefits Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$5,693,400—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$2,640,800—pass.

2.(b) Funded Accountability (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$2,031,400—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$239,000—pass.

Is there leave for the committee to leave (c) Health Information Systems and move on to (d)? [agreed]

2. Management and Program Support Services (d) Facilities Development (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$673,000.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, you are moving so expeditiously; I do not even have time to flip my card index system here. I wonder if this particular section deals with the five-year capital plan. Is it possible to, through this particular branch, get an update on the bed development, both in the hospitals and the personal care home sector in terms of numbers?

In other words, numbers of beds open, numbers of beds closed, et cetera, throughout the system.

Mr. McCrae: Mr. Chairman, the honourable member for Inkster asked this question about personal cares. We committed to make information available about that on Monday.

If the honourable member would find this acceptable, I think similar information regarding the acute hospital part of it, we could have available by Tuesday, in terms of getting the information together.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, there are 12.4 staff years in this branch. Can I get a description? I do not need names of individuals but just a description of the job functions in this particular area.

Mr. McCrae: Mr. Chairperson, in the Facilities Development branch, we have one director, we have 8.4 equivalent staff years, which accounts for people who are architects, engineers and other technical support people. There are three people who are clerical staff for a total of 12.4 staff years.

Mr. Chomiak: So we have, of those 8.4 the minister mentioned, they are comprised of architects and engineers who are full time, employed by the government of Manitoba.

Mr. McCrae: The 8.4 represent full-time professional people.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, would it be in this area that we would have the design guidelines for our personal care homes?

Mr. McCrae: Yes, sir.

Mr. Chomiak: Would it be possible to table those?

Mr. McCrae: It is possible and we will so do.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, recently, well, in the context of the last year or so I understand there have been officials from the Department of Health who have been looking at some of the security arrangements with respect to personal care homes in attempting to upgrade the standards. Is it in this area that these people are located, and, if so, could we get some information about what kind of upgrades or retrofitting is going on?

Mr. McCrae: Mr. Chairperson, there are indeed changing resident mixes in our personal care homes. We not only have more understanding and apparently more of the incidents of dementia-type issues to deal with in our personal care homes, we also have through the reform of our mental health services, mental health residents taking places in personal care homes as well.

All of this gives rise to a requirement to look very carefully at the security systems that we have in personal care homes. There is a tendency in some residents to go for walks and not always to know exactly where they are going, frankly, and there are times when security issues do arise.

So, in combination with our Facilities Development professionals, we have our Long Term Care Branch professionals working together, and the two branches

work together with people who run the facilities throughout the province. We are indeed engaged in that kind of work.

I do not have anything for the honourable member by way of a report today, but I think it would be useful if I could have a few things put down for me for next day, and I can discuss this with a little more background for the honourable member.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, we also will have numerous questions with respect to the five-year capital plan, but I do not think it is appropriate probably to deal with it at this appropriation. We normally do not, but I am just clarifying that.

Mr. McCrae: Mr. Chairperson, I might offer some suggestions next day as to at what point we might discuss the capital issues. I have not got it clear today as to precisely when is the right point, whether it is this point or at some subsequent line in the Estimates.

I think, because of the way the time is now, that it is obviously going to be happening at some point next week, and I will offer some advice early next week on this for the honourable member.

Mr. Chairperson: The hour being 2 p.m., committee rise.

Call in the Speaker.

IN SESSION

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Marcel Laurendeau): The hour being 2 p.m., this House now stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. Monday.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Friday, June 9, 1995

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