



Second 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*



Vol. XLVI No. 24A - 10 a.m., Thursday, April 25, 1996

ISSN 0542-5492

MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Sixth Legislature

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, April 25, 1996

The House met at 10 a.m.

PRAYERS

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

PROPOSED RESOLUTIONS

Res. 3—Recycling for Apartment Dwellers

Mr. Gregory Dewar (Selkirk): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett), that

WHEREAS the provincial government has committed to the provision of recycling services for all Manitobans and the reduction of waste by 50 percent by the year 2000, based on 1988 figures; and

WHEREAS the provincial government, in conjunction with the City of Winnipeg, has established a recycling program that is woefully inadequate as it neglects and excludes 30 percent of Winnipeg householders, roughly 90,000 residents who live in apartment complexes or townhouses, by disallowing them from utilizing the recycling services; and

WHEREAS the provincial government has been charging and continues to charge a 2 cent environmental levy on all purchases of beverage containers which all consumers are required to pay, and which continues to raise a revenue of over \$400,000 per month for the provincial government; and

WHEREAS recent indications support the forecast that the projected surplus from the 2 cent beverage container levy will be \$1.5 million; and

WHEREAS the provincial government has failed to collect \$863,000 in fines from soft drink companies; and

WHEREAS all Manitobans who are taxed for a service should have the opportunity to utilize that service without being discriminated against based upon their residence;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the provincial government, working in conjunction with the City of Winnipeg, to consider establishing a recycling program that is accessible to all residents of Winnipeg regardless of whether they live in a house, townhouse, or apartment; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Assembly urge the provincial government to consider introducing a comprehensive province-wide recycling program, which will be fully accessible to all residents of Manitoba whether or not they live in a urban, rural or northern area.

Motion presented.

Mr. Dewar: Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise to speak on this resolution and to encourage all members of the House to support this resolution. It is members on this side of the House who bring forward serious resolutions when it comes to any issue, really, but when it comes to environmental issues in particular, so it is very important, I know, for the government opposite to read the resolution, and when they see the serious concerns that we raise in it and the practical solutions that we offer that they will stand up and take this to a vote and support it.

Madam Speaker, the government decided a number of years ago to place on beverage containers in this province a 2-cent levy, and the levy was used to initiate recycling programs throughout the province based upon a partnership with municipalities. The problem is that all of us pay that levy. I know I do, and I know all members in this House do, and my constituents do, and the residents of the city of Winnipeg do. They pay that 2-cent levy, but there are 90,000 residents in this city that do not receive any type of recycling service. We feel that this is wrong. That is why we brought forward this resolution today to encourage the government, to urge the government to work with the City of Winnipeg to introduce a comprehensive recycling program to ensure that all residents of the city of Winnipeg receive a recycling program.

When you consider, Madam Speaker, that all residents of the city pay a 2-cent levy on every beverage container,

we feel that they are entitled to be receiving this program. The government opposite, when this legislation was introduced—that was, I believe, before we were elected. I believe it was in '89-90, but I want to just quote from a memorandum I have here from a Michael Bessey. At that time Mr. Bessey was secretary to the Treasury Board, and he sent this memo off to the Honourable G. Filmon, Premier. It is dated October 30, 1989, and I just want to quote under legislation, and I quote: The legislation is, as drafted, for the most part cosmetic. He goes on to say: That is, it does not provide government with the ability to do anything new.

Madam Speaker, that, I think, explains a lot about this government when it comes to environmental issues. For the most part, what they do is cosmetic, and we have a memorandum from the secretary to the Treasury Board confirming that. He writes to his Premier saying that they do not require this legislation. In fact, they have the ability by regulation to do everything that the act proposes to do. So that I think speaks quite clearly as to the government's commitment on environmental issues.

Madam Speaker, the government is bringing forward this 2-cent levy, or they have a 2-cent levy in place, and we know that that levy itself is taxable, which at one time the minister was saying, well, no. He is flip-flopping on that issue. One time he sort of disagreed with it and the next time he was not sure, but you go out and you pay a 2-cent levy on the beverage container. You also have to pay both the PST and the GST on that levy. So you are paying a tax on a tax, and the government is collecting, we estimate, around \$300,000 I believe a month, if I am not mistaken from this tax on a tax. This is from an administration opposite that claims repeatedly in this Chamber and throughout this province that they do not tax.

Madam Speaker, under The WRAP Act, the government at one time established recycling or recovery targets for the beverage industry. In fact, the large bottlers in this province did not meet their targets and they were fined, and I have an Order-in-Council here from the government, \$862,397.17, and I believe by all estimations that the figure was, in fact, well over a million dollars. So instead of collecting this money from these large beverage bottlers, they simply wrote it off. They waived the penalties, and this again from a government that—members opposite are rising in their

seats to our questions claiming that there is no money left in this province to fund any of the vital services that Manitobans deserve.

* (1010)

Here is an example, Madam Speaker, of this government writing off \$800,000 to their friends. You look at the donations to the Conservative Party and it comes as no great secret that, in fact, they received, I believe, close to \$16,000 from Blackwoods Beverages, which manufactures Pepsi and Coca-Cola Bottling. They have donated close to \$16,000 to the members opposite between the years 1988-1992. So, in fact, they have a very special relationship

This government has a very special relationship with the large bottlers in this province, and I think that special relationship may have had something to do with the fact that they decided to waive this \$800,000 in penalties that these bottlers owe to the people of the province. That is just another example of this government protecting and working with their corporate friends. We see that every day in this province.

As we know, this government is now working with their corporate bosses to privatize home care in this province, and this is just another example of that. As a matter of fact, they have decided over the last while that they have to reward their friends. They reward their friends that have supported them over the past number of years, whether it is the bottlers or whether it is the providers of private home care services. We are seeing now the government forcing a strike. Madam Speaker, they are simply doing that because they know that this is payback time. This is the time they have to pay back their corporate friends.

Madam Speaker, in 1989, the NDP at the time established a task force on the environment. We held public hearings throughout the province, and some of the recommendations that came back—[interjection] I could go on and on about the inadequacies of this government when it comes to environmental issues, but I want to offer some positive alternatives, as well. At that time that NDP task force recommended that the province move far more aggressively in terms of waste reduction. They proposed that, in fact, not 50 percent of the waste should be reduced by the year 2000. They suggested that 75

percent of the waste be reduced, which is far more significant than what this government has suggested.

We hope, Madam Speaker, that the government is on target with that 50 percent. I think we are a little bit concerned about that. I know I will be joining the Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings) this weekend at the waste reduction conference in Portage, and perhaps he will provide us with an update as to the progress of his government when it comes to dealing with the waste management issue in the province.

Madam Speaker, we also feel that the government must move more aggressively in the area of the four Rs of recycling, and that is, reduce, reuse, recycle, and recover. There are some innovative suggestions out there in our society to actually recover some of the waste, to actually mine some of the landfill sites across this country.

Madam Speaker, we as Canadians recycle only 2 percent of the waste compared to the United States which, in fact, recycles 10 percent, and the Japanese recycle 50 to 60 percent of their waste. It is my understanding that in Japan waste disposal sites are illegal. That is the way that we should be moving here in this province.

The government opposite, they have placed upon the residents of this province a 2-cent levy on containers, but the money from that tax was to be used to fund recycling services for all Manitobans. Several of the municipalities across this province have joined in, which I think is a great idea, but we are finding that here in the city of Winnipeg, 90,000 dwellers—individuals who live in townhouses and apartments and so on—do not receive the service that they are paying this tax on. So, Madam Speaker, the point of our resolution is to urge the government opposite, and I know the members opposite take this issue very seriously, and they will join with me this afternoon in putting pressure upon the Minister of Environment to pass this resolution to ensure that all Manitobans receive the service that they are paying for.

Thank you very much.

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment): Let me first of all indicate that there are a number of elements in this resolution that I could support, but when I look at the approach that the member has taken, then, obviously, I am not in its entirety going to accept all the

whereases and the premises and the thoughts that he has introduced around speaking to this resolution.

Let me be very clear. The fact of whether or not there is available recycling in the multifamily dwellings in the city of Winnipeg is of considerable concern to this side of the House, as it is to the member for Selkirk, but he should not be quite as adamant about the fact that that leaves an enormous percentage of the population of Manitoba unable to access recycling, No. 1; and secondly, the City of Winnipeg has finally agreed to allow some private-sector—and there is that nasty word again. I am sure the members across would not want to be too involved with it, but they have agreed to allow some private-sector recycling to go into the multifamily and apartment blocks in the city of Winnipeg.

In fact, the figures very much reflect the opposite view from what the member was trying to portray, inasmuch as 90 percent of the population of Manitoba now has or should have available to it recycling capability. One of the problems associated with this, of course—and it is directly related to the delivery of the recycling program—is that we must have the co-operation and involvement of the local municipality. That, quite frankly, is one of the unique aspects of the program that we have put forward. It is there to provide a fund to support the collection of recyclables within the various jurisdictions, but waste management is still mainly the responsibility of the local jurisdictions, and we have fought for eight years, since the very first discussion of the MPSP program, to make sure that principle was not violated or strayed from to any great extent.

I would directly refer the member to the high percentage of households that do have recycling capability available to them and reference directly the fact that 85 to 90 percent, if they were to access the fund, that we could, in fact, under what could be negative margins in the recycling materials that we see these days, use all of the reserves that are sitting in the fund or come very close to using them all.

That, I think, is the other part that concerns me about the approach that the member has taken in putting together this resolution, and that is that the funds are somehow, in his eyes, or in the eyes of those who are the critics of the program, seen to be collecting dollars which

are not being put back to work on behalf of the recycling program across the province.

Sixty percent of all municipalities have signed up, and as I have said, that provides between 85 percent and 90 percent of the population of this province with access. There is no other jurisdiction that I am aware of that can match that percentage or certainly none that can exceed it.

The fact is we have paid over \$1.6 million to the municipalities, including a million dollars which has already been paid to the City of Winnipeg. When this motion was put together, I think the member for Selkirk (Mr. Dewar) would agree that this is now stale in some of the information that is included in the motion because if the research department for the opposition primarily uses the Free Press and The Sun as their sources, the fact was for months on end they said we were collecting money and were simply building a slush fund. I do not know if they thought it was for my personal re-election or what, but the fact is now that the fund is being called upon by the City of Winnipeg, and it appears that we have accidentally or by good management, depending on which side of the House the member sits on, we will find that the fund and the demand is pretty much in balance.

* (1020)

If we do not see further deterioration in the value of recyclables, then I think the approximately \$5 million annually that is collected through the 2-cent levy on beverage containers is, in fact, working very well in enhancing opportunities for recycling.

I would be the first to admit that on beverage container percentages of return that this system does not provide the same rate that a return-to-deposit would achieve on specific items, but in total tonnage, as collected, this system provides a far more proactive basis to bring in glass and tin and aluminum and all of the other varied products that are out there and particularly newsprint.

Everyone, I think, concedes that newsprint is a major part of the recyclable materials that are available out there, and it is also very recyclable. What we see today in the city of Winnipeg alone is about 120 tonnes of materials being collected daily. We know that the newspaper prices have dropped, and there has always been some debate about whether or not there should be a

levy against newsprint to further enhance the recycling fund.

We have resisted doing that up to this point, but the fact is the newsprint in the early stages of the program had enough value that it was more than carrying its own costs of recycling, plus it was providing stability to the industry that it might not otherwise have, but the program is designed and is open to entry of any household product that has a good recyclable market.

As long as we maintain that flexibility, this program will be able to respond to the recycling demands into the foreseeable future. One of the concerns that has been expressed, as well, is that somehow there is a perception that the beverage container industry avoided costs in the past. The members across love to refer to corporate welfare bums. I think that was sort of a 1960s war cry for the NDP. But the fact is what we have seen for once is industries working proactively with government to get involved in a program that they wanted to see achieved just as much as we wanted.

The fact is, and this is a fact that was so conveniently forgotten by those who were the advocates of return-to-deposit, it costs about 4 cents per container to run a return-for-deposit system, and, fortunately, this system obviously is 2 cents a container, but it has a much broader base, and it includes tetrapack and other containers that would not normally be in a return-for-deposit system.

The fact is we acknowledge the high antiseptic quality of those containers, but the fact is if they are not recyclable, they should at least be recognized that they are a factor in the litter and the waste accumulations within the waste stream, and they contribute as a beverage container to the fund. Ultimately, there may well be a use for that material, but at the present time they pay towards the fund as an indication of their responsibility in the system. As far as I know, and to the credit of that industry, this has not been a detriment to its sales or the material being changed in any way that would provide increased cost or manufacturing problems for them, but it has been a very important recognition on the part of the consumer that when they are buying a product, they are buying it knowing what the impact of that product is.

That was an issue, frankly, that I was not in total agreement with my advisory committee about, whether or

not containers that were not recyclable should be included or whether or not there was, in fact, a consumer information and education issue to putting the 2 cents on either visibly or having it included in the price of the product without necessarily making it a visible levy.

Those who were on the advisory committee in structuring this program were adamant in saying that we had to have, as much as possible, a visible levy. In the end, it was left to the retail chains and the local retailers as to how they would display that. As the members opposite may recall, there was some significant disagreement on the implementation and start-up, but I can tell you that when we now have a product or a program that is pulling in about, oh, 12,000 tonnes of aluminum, steel, glass and plastic containers, magazines and boxboard that we have collected since the beginning of this program, then I would suggest that we are on the verge of having a program that everyone in this province can stand up and be proud of, as I am sure the members opposite are. They only wish that they had the opportunity to implement it rather than our administration which has been working on the enhancement of the product stewardship concept since we came into office.

I think I would like to add one other broad general comment in relationship to this motion, Madam Speaker. What that comes down to is that The WRAP Act and the Product Stewardship program that we have put in place allows itself to be open to influence other areas of collection and recyclables, and, ultimately, we have been able to use the same principles for the collection of tires, collection of pesticide containers from agricultural production, and I would suggest that we have the flexibility and will in a short period of time not only to be collecting the long list and large tonnage of materials that I referred to in the last few minutes, but I fully anticipate that we will be able to use this same legislation and regulation to move into oil and oil container recovery and oil filters, an area which in many respects the public out in rural Manitoba and in the service section of the city of Winnipeg are ahead of the province already in terms of wanting opportunities for ability to recycle in a larger volume the materials which they today have some difficulty in dealing with.

Madam Speaker, the other aspect of the motion that is put forward is—and when I referred to this being a stale

motion, I did not mean it in a derogatory sense. I fully understand that this was presented a year ago and that we are now picking up on the motions that were presented then, but the fact is the numbers have been one of the most difficult responsibilities we have had, conveying those numbers to the general public and how they may be used. I would encourage the members opposite, as we look to bringing other materials in, or whether there are questions being raised about whether other materials should contribute to the fund, by legislation this fund cannot be allowed to go into a deficit. It also follows that it needs to have sufficient cushion to have flexibility within the marketplace as the cost of recyclables rise and fall.

The City of Winnipeg took a unique approach to theirs whereby the city, as I understand it, accepts responsibility for marketing of the recyclables after they have been collected. In my view, that was a mistake. I think that the collector, being private sector, should have also been responsible for accepting some of the risk that went with the marketing of the product. Nevertheless, this fund was here to protect the City of Winnipeg and assist them when the markets rise and fall and the value of the recyclables fluctuates.

That is one of the problems in recycling everywhere, the wide fluctuation in the value of the products. As we bring those products on stream, they have to be brought on stream at the same time, as much as possible, as we are able to bring on market forces or attach them or encourage them to be part of market forces out there that are driving the value of the product.

It is very simple when you look at boxboard and cardboard being another product that was very much carrying its own weight at the time that this program was put in place. There was at that time no need to put a levy against cardboard because it was being collected in very large volumes for the value that was in it because the people who were able to access the markets were able to pay sufficiently to cover the cost of the collection and encourage the retail sector, or wherever they were getting the product from, to set it aside and allow them to collect it.

* (1030)

The issue of whether or not we have seen sufficient movement and whether we are going to achieve our 50

percent goal in the Product Stewardship program, I would only close with these comments, that the stewardship program is a partnership and it is working as a partnership. The program does not differentiate between single and multifamily dwellings, but we do need to have the multifamily dwellings brought on more aggressively. With that I concur.

The recycling payments have been made available to all municipalities, to all First Nations who are interested in being involved in the program regardless of their geographic area. I think we have seen enormous growth in the last year. I believe we will see continued growth in the next six months to a year, and I would encourage the members to continue to support this program. I hope that this debate has answered the questions they have raised by way of this motion.

Ms. Becky Barrett (Wellington): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise this morning and put some comments on the record on the member for Selkirk's (Mr. Dewar) private members' resolution on recycling.

I would like to first focus on the first WHEREAS for a few moments. WHEREAS the provincial government has committed to the provision of recycling services for all Manitobans and the reduction of waste by 50 percent by the year 2000.

I think that the resolution, even in its more current format, and also the government's own actions, show that the government, we believe, is not moving fast enough or thoroughly enough or broadly enough to be able to meet that goal of 50 percent reduction by the year 2000. As the resolution states, there are still people in the city of Winnipeg who are unable to access recycling programs because they do not live in single-family dwellings, and I think that it is essential that the province address this issue more aggressively than it has to date.

The percentages may be slightly smaller than the 30 percent discussed in this resolution, but as long as there are any residents of a community, particularly a community the size of Winnipeg, that are not able to access easily the recycling processes that single-family dwellings can, the government will not be able to meet its target. It is very unfair to those residents who wish to recycle to not be able to do so.

It is an interesting thing, there are recycling bins throughout the city. I know there are a series of recycling bins in St. James at the St. James Civic Centre and that is all well and good, but you have to have access to transportation to be able to take your recyclables to that location and others that are throughout the city. People who live in apartments often do not have access to their own transportation. I do not know what the statistics are, but I would venture to guess that the proportion of people who live in multiple-family dwellings and do not have their own transportation is much higher than those who live in single-family dwellings. That, being the case, and as I said I do not have statistics, but my sense is that is probably the case, the current recycling depots are inaccessible for these people in virtually all cases.

I suppose you could say, well, they could get a bus and go out to St. James, but we all know that the transit support from the provincial government to the City of Winnipeg has been cut and cut and cut and that our transit systems in the city of Winnipeg do not allow for the kind of flexibility that would enable people, even if they could carry their recyclables, to get to those locations which are largely in more suburban areas.

Unlike European cities, and I will talk just briefly about the city of Nice that I had an opportunity to visit several years ago. The City of Nice recognizes the fact that many people do not have their own transportation, that people need to have easily accessible recycling bins available. On virtually every street corner outside the core of the downtown area, there are three or four bins that are available for glass and aluminum and newsprint; very small, they are not huge. They are not any bigger than the waste bins that we have on virtually all of our street corners. People in Nice then can literally go out their front door and deposit their recyclables, and they have a much higher recycling rate than we do here in the province of Manitoba. It is something that needs to be looked at and needs to be addressed, and this government has not yet addressed that need.

The other issue I would like to speak about also is in the first WHEREAS, and again it is the reduction of waste by 50 percent. Recycling is one part of that reduction of waste, and we have suggested ways that that could be better achieved. Another major part of the reduction of waste is making it more appealing not to use

and making it less appealing to use. Both sides, both the carrot and the stick need to be present.

I would suggest, Madam Speaker, that the current government in its deliberations, or actually the Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings) in his deliberations on the Clean Environment Commission recommendation about the BFI landfill site in Rosser is a huge component of this resolution.

If the provincial government, if the Minister of Environment listens to the Clean Environment Commission and grants BFI a licence to build a waste facility in Rosser, just north of the city, there will be no way that this government can anywhere approach a 50 percent reduction in waste. There is absolutely no way that will happen. Now why is that? Why does the fact that you have more available landfill for waste mean that you are not going to meet your waste reduction cycle?

It is very simple. Having another landfill in competition with the city-owned Brady landfill will mean that there will be more land available, thereby meaning that there is less reason, for particularly businesses, to recycle, to reduce, to not go into the BFI landfill and say, we can dump it here because it is close.

The other thing that BFI will do is they will reduce the tipping fees. That tipping fee issue is the stick that is currently undertaken by the city and is used quite effectively by the city, something that the government members seem to forget. One of the major reasons for the high tipping fees currently in place by the City of Winnipeg is not only to provide revenue for the city, but there is another very important reason for that and result of those tipping fees being fairly extensive.

Those tipping fees being high gives more of an incentive to corporations and businesses to recycle, to have less material going into the landfill sites. It is a basic economic principle that I am surprised members opposite have not been able to quite understand, or maybe they do understand, and they say it does not matter because they are basically not concerned about the environmental issues facing the province of Manitoba today. I would suggest that may very well be an underlying theme, that the government talks about recycling, they talk about waste reduction. They talk about solid waste management. They talk about co-

operation between the city and the province and the other municipalities throughout the province, most particularly in the capital region. They talk and talk and talk.

Madam Speaker, as has been said in this Chamber and elsewhere many times before, talk is cheap. They talk the talk but they are definitely not walking the walk. Most particularly, if this Minister of Environment and his cabinet colleagues approve of the BFI Rosser landfill application, we will see a degradation of the environment in this province. We will see an increase in the waste cycle of material that will go into the waste stream, not a reduction of the material going into the waste stream.

Businesses will be able to say it is cheap. We can afford to go to BFI and dump our waste. We do not have to worry about the costs and look at how we can recycle and reduce and reuse. There will not be that incentive. There will not be that stick. There will be the carrot of small cost and for many corporations probably a very easily incorporated cost.

* (1040)

So there will be an increase in the waste stream. That is not going to help us reduce our waste by 50 percent—four more years to go, less than four more years to go. By giving BFI this landfill that they are asking for in Rosser, we are not only increasing the waste stream, which is something we do not want to do, but we are also degrading the environment of our province because it has been categorically proven by opponents of this landfill site, the environmental opponents who have come from across North America, that this particular landfill site is very dangerous, potentially very dangerous for the degradation of the water supply there.

This exact site was looked at 20 years ago for a landfill and guess what? It was turned down. Why was it turned down? It was turned down because there is potable water under that ground. Not only is there potable water, a resource that is essential for life on this planet, there is potable water under that ground and it is too easily accessible to leachates. Even with the new technology that BFI is trotting out, there are serious questions about the ability of that liner to withstand the leachate process that will happen. There are serious concerns about the land there, the depth of acceptable land before you get to the water base and guess what, Madam Speaker? The

water that is under that potential landfill site goes in a southeast direction and guess what? That is one of the fastest growing areas in the province when it comes to new development, and there is another area that I would like to discuss at some length, and perhaps we will have a chance to in Estimates with the Minister of Urban Affairs.

There is upwards of 3,000 new buildings, new residences between Winnipeg and Selkirk that potentially could be built in the next few years if the province and the municipalities give their approval. That is right in the area where this water from this Rosser landfill site will filter into. Madam Speaker, we are asking for an environmental disaster to take place. We are virtually ensuring that this environmental disaster will take place if this government allows BFI to go through with its landfill in Rosser.

So in conclusion, I would like to say that while some of the numbers in this resolution may be out of date, the principles that are in this resolution are even more important than they were when this resolution was first put forward, and I implore the government to listen to the concerns that are being raised not only by us but by many residents and citizens of the province of Manitoba. Take a look at the planning. Take a look at what you are doing. Take a look at what you are not doing, and let us work together to achieve this waste reduction. The best way we can do that is by not agreeing to allow the BFI landfill site to go ahead. Thank you.

Mr. Peter Dyck (Pembina): I am certainly pleased to be able to put a few comments on record this morning regarding the whole area of waste management. Certainly this is something that is important and something that we need to address and certainly all of us should be very concerned about.

I have been listening intently to the members opposite, the criticisms that they have been presenting to our minister regarding the whole area of waste management. Certainly, the whole area of recycling and waste management are important items that we need to look at as a government and are continuing to do so.

I would like to give a little bit of historical background as to where my interest in this whole area stems from. First of all, it was a number of years ago, I had two

brothers who were studying in England, and their concept of recycling and waste management, I would say, at that time, and this is many years ago, was well ahead of where we as a province were. So that is where my interest started in looking at the area of what we, and at that time it would have been what we personally, could do at home.

With that, Madam Speaker, I would like to just continue and put on the record some of the things that happened within the Pembina constituency and have happened over the last number of years. I would like to start with the organization known as the Valley Rehab Centre, and before I give more detail of what they, in fact, are doing there as a centre, I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to the founder of this organization. His name is Dr. C.W. Wiebe. By the way, in the last I think it is two weeks ago he celebrated his 103rd birthday. He was the doctor who brought me into this world, so, you know, that was certainly an accomplishment. So, certainly, I am very much indebted to him as a doctor.

But his interest to this day is still vital in the whole area of recycling. As I said before, he was the founder of Valley Rehab. The reason that he looked at this, and I believe it is about 25 years ago that he started talking about the concept of recycling, but this was initiated and motivated by the fact that, as every community has their special needs people, and he had a real heart for these people in wanting to give them employment, employment that they were capable of doing, employment that they felt comfortable in doing, at the end of the day they felt rewarded in being able to work and to be able to contribute to the communities that they were in.

So he started Valley Rehab Centre. I am not sure at the time how many special needs people were involved in the project, but I know that today there are 107 clients, special needs people working at this centre, and they are being supervised by 14 staff. Now, what they do is anything from making rubber floor link mats to taking coat hangers and making them into wiener sticks or, for the community, and there are a number of industries within the area, they are doing custom packaging. Then when we talk about recycling, and this is where the recycling efforts of the community come in, we have what we know as the blue-box recycling program in the area.

So what happens is that these special needs people, assisted by some of the management people within the organization, go throughout the community on a weekly basis and they collect all the recyclables that are available. These recyclables then are brought back to the centre and these people working there are asked to sort anything from glass to plastic to different types of paper.

I believe it was last year that through the initiation of this government and through the minister they were given an opportunity to purchase a bundling machine, a packaging machine, and they package the different materials that they collect. They sort them, they package them, and then, of course, they are sold.

* (1050)

Madam Speaker, I am extremely impressed with what has happened in this organization and the support that they have received from our government and from this minister in being able to, on an ongoing basis, expand and improve the operation that they are involved in. I believe, ongoing, certainly, in my opinion when it comes to recycling and waste management, can we ever do enough? I would say, possibly, no; on the other hand, we must continuously work and improve what we are doing.

Having been able to witness what has taken place at Valley Rehab, I am certainly impressed with what they are doing. Just to continue in that same vein, also in the area, we have what we know as the Tire Recycling Corporation through the entrepreneurial spirit of a gentleman named Dave Dyck, and he is no relation of mine. However, he got involved in the area of tire recycling several years ago; and through, again, the initiation, the support from this government and through research and development, he has gotten involved in the recycling of tires that he collects throughout the province.

I do not have the numbers at my fingertips as to the number of tires he is moving through his organization, but certainly I know he is moving an awful lot of tires. He is recycling these. These are no longer burned as they used to be and are also being put to use in an area where they can be used.

Madam Speaker, he is making a variety of items through the recycling of tires, one again being floor mats. He is also making other items that are being sold

worldwide. Just to again congratulate Mr. Dyck on his efforts. I know he has been asked to go throughout the United States and, in fact, has been overseas and has been talking to a number of different governments and government agencies regarding the recycling that he has been working with, the machinery that is involved in order to be able to do this.

I believe that ongoing we are showing that we are assisting those communities and municipalities in becoming the recyclers of waste materials. It is interesting that, as of March 1996, 123 or 60 percent of all municipalities have registered and are involved in the recycling of products. Madam Speaker, 86 percent of the municipalities with populations greater than 5,000 are participating in this program, and so, ongoing, there is a real interest in recycling.

I believe that, certainly, it is important that we as government continue to work hard at improving and encouraging communities to be involved in the recycling organization, but, certainly, we have to have the support of the local communities, as well, and also individual families.

I know, speaking from experience, it takes an extra effort to put your recyclables into different packages rather than to throw everything into one bag and chuck it out onto the curbside, so certainly we need to educate the people, and we need to encourage them to become more involved all the time.

Almost 90 percent of the population of Manitoba and 87 percent of the households in the province are represented by municipalities registered with a program, so, again, Madam Speaker, we can see that this is taking place, and the encouragement certainly is there. As far as our participation as a government, \$1.6 million has been paid to municipal corporations who are with eligible recycling programs, including \$1 million to the City of Winnipeg. So, again, ongoing, we are encouraging communities, municipalities and the urban area to become involved in this organization and to be responsible recyclers.

The other area, Madam Speaker, that I would like to address, and the minister just briefly commented on it, is the area of waste oil recycling. Coming from a farming background and being involved in business, our

machinery, our motors, they use a lot of oil, and as we do oil changes, we need to have some place where we can leave this product, so in the Pembina constituency a number of individual farmers and businesses are using the waste oil.

They are either recycling it through the use of chemicals and then being able to reuse the oil again, or there is also a number of them who are burning the waste oil and using it as heat for their buildings. With that, of course, stems the whole concern of environment. However, the technology that is out there in the burning of this product is unbelievable, and this technology is being expanded almost on a daily basis, where we are getting to be very close to where 100 percent of that oil is burned and reused and is not in any way being sent into the environment.

So I think, Madam Speaker, it is important that as more oil is being used throughout the country, more vehicles are driving, we need to, in a very responsible way, look at the waste oil management that we have. Again, the minister made mention of this, and I think, if I am correct, a committee has been established which is looking at the waste oil management and is going to be giving support to those who use it in a responsible way. So I am excited as to what I see and the way we as a government and our minister are continuing to work in the area of recycling and waste materials.

The other thing I would just like to add, and for the information for all of us, is the fact that about 12,000 tonnes of aluminum, steel, glass, plastic containers, newspaper, magazines and boxboard have been collected to date, and this double the reported tonnage in 1994. For those who need the information and are interested in it, the City of Winnipeg is collecting 120 tonnes per day, so certainly there is work that is taking place in this area. So, Madam Speaker, I would like to say that certainly I believe that we are responsible in what we are doing.

In conclusion, I would just like to say that as far as the Manitoba Product Stewardship program, the MPSP, it is a clear example of government, both provincial and municipal, where they are working together with industry to provide solutions to a long-standing common problem, the diversion of packaging and paper waste from landfill.

The Manitoba Product Stewardship program is already providing the elements of the proposed resolution,

specifically the MPSP is, No.1, a partnership with industry, consumers and municipalities to recover materials from the waste stream. The program does not differentiate between single-family and multifamily sources, and recycling support payments are available to all municipalities, as well as First Nations communities in Manitoba, regardless of geographic area.

Again, Madam Speaker, I want to thank you for the opportunity to be able to address the resolution, and I certainly want to support our minister in the efforts that he is making in regard to recycling and waste management.

* (1100)

Mr. Marcel Laurendeau (St. Norbert): I notice that I do not have much time left, so the next time this matter is before the House. I know I will truly enjoy getting into this debate.

I only wish the honourable member would have done his research, Madam Speaker, because there are a number of points in this resolution that are inaccurate, and I will really look forward to putting the correct information on the record the next time this matter is before the House. I appreciate him bringing forward this type of resolution because we, under this government, support recycling and all its components.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member for St. Norbert will have 14 minutes remaining.

Pursuant to Rule 21, the House will now consider Private Members' Business scheduled in the rule book to be considered on Thursday, public bills by private members.

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS—PUBLIC BILLS

Bill 200—The Health Services Insurance Amendment Act

Madam Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux), Bill 200, The Health Services Insurance Amendment Act, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'assurance-maladie, standing in the

name of the honourable Minister of Northern and Native Affairs (Mr. Praznik).

An Honourable Member: Stand.

Madam Speaker: Stand? Is there leave to permit the bill to remain standing? [agreed]

Hon. Jim Ernst (Government House Leader): Well, the bill will remain standing in the name of the member for Lac du Bonnet. We would be happy to grant leave to the member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett) to speak on this bill today.

Madam Speaker: The honourable government House leader does not need leave. The honourable member for Wellington is indeed entitled to speak to the bill.

Ms. Becky Barrett (Wellington): Madam Speaker, I appreciate the support of the government House leader in being willing to grant me leave if I needed it, but it appears that I do not, but I appreciate the support anyway.

Madam Speaker, when I saw this bill being introduced by the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux), I was, I must admit, flabbergasted. I could not believe the gall of a member of the Liberal Party introducing a bill to enshrine the five principles of the Canada Health Act in The Manitoba Health Services Insurance Act, when his federal government has eviscerated those same principles from the federal Canada Health Act.

I would like to know why the member for Inkster feels that he needs to bring in this piece of legislation on the provincial level. The only reason that I can think that he needs to bring this piece of legislation in on the provincial level is that he knows what a dreadful job the federal Liberal government has made of protecting the health care of Manitobans and Canadians.

It is just the height of hypocrisy, unbelievable, that the member would do this, but I am glad to be able to put on the record a few of my concerns about this piece of legislation and how it fits into the federal context. I would suggest that we would not need to be debating Bill 200 in this session of the Legislature if the federal Liberal government had not gone a long way toward destroying the health system in Canada as a whole, and

now this member is trying to put his finger in the dike after the holes have been drilled time and time again by the Minister of Finance and the Prime Minister of Canada.

The federal government says that they will provide a floor to cash transfers to the provinces by 1998 and '99, and, again, the CHST, as we all know, does away with tied money to programs to the provinces. It is the Canadian version of 'States' rights legislation, and this is not what Canada is all about.

The whole point of the Canada Health Act, the whole point of the Canada Assistance program, the whole point of the Canada Pension Plan, the whole point of the Old Age Security system, the whole point of all of those—[interjection] Oh, all Liberal initiatives, the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) said.

I am so glad he brought that up because I was wondering if I was going to get an opportunity to tell the member for Inkster, those may have been implemented under Liberal governments, but they would never, ever have seen the light of day if it had not been for New Democrats in the Parliament of Canada like Stanley Knowles and David Lewis and Tommy Douglas, and he knows that. [interjection] Oh, the member for Inkster is calling Stanley Knowles and Tommy Douglas and David Lewis a loser. I think that is great. That is despicable, and the member for Inkster ought to apologize for that. That shows the level of his thinking and his discourse in this Legislature.

I would like to continue my discussion about the federal government and the context within which the member for Inkster brings in this piece of what should be unnecessary legislation. The floor that Paul Martin Jr. is putting in place for social programs and health care in this country should not be called a floor. It should be called a sub-sub-sub-subbasement.

By 1998-99, when the elevator finally hits the sub-sub-sub-subbasement, the floor for support for social programs in health care in this country will be \$11 billion less than it is now, and it has been cut by billions by this government in the last three years. This means there is \$11 billion less in the economy to spend on programs and services in the social services, health and education, the programs that have been the glue that has held Canada

together, programs that have been in place for 30 and 40 years because Canadians understood the importance of those programs.

Canadians understood that there were some things that their citizens had a right to expect, whether they had money or did not have money, whether they were healthy or ill, whether they were young or old, whether they lived in Winnipeg, Toronto, Vancouver or Rankin Inlet. They had a right to expect that. They still have a right to expect that, and the member for Inkster's (Mr. Lamoureux) federal cousins have destroyed those expectations.

Madam Speaker, if it had not been for that federal Liberal government behaviour, then we would not need to be debating Bill 200 today. Do you know what the impact of this sub-sub-sub-floor is going to be on the provinces and, by implication, all the citizens? It is not just the reduction in services and the fact that we are going down to the Americanization of our health care system, partly by this and partly by the actions of the provincial government, but that would be out of scope of the discussion in this bill, another huge impact that people I do not think are as aware of as they should be of this \$11-billion reduction is the impact it is going to have on jobs.

Statistics show that for every billion dollars cut out of the economy, and this is \$11 billion removed from the economy, it is money that is not going to be spent. It is money that is not going to be going to pay for jobs for people to provide their services. It is not going to be spent for people who have those jobs to put into the economy.

For every \$1 billion removed from the economy there is a loss of approximately 30,000 jobs. So if you remove \$11 billion from the economy you are losing, in effect, the ability of the economy to provide upwards of 200,000 jobs. Now, that is an enormous social cost, because you are not providing the services. It is an enormous economic cost, because for every one of those jobs that is not maintained, is not created, you are not paying income taxes, you are not paying sales taxes, you are not providing the spin-off jobs that we all know we need in this economy.

This cut that forms the basis and the background for the member's bill is not an agenda for Canadians, as

Canada Trust has said. Canada Trust, that bastion of social democratic thought, has said in response to this last federal Liberal budget, this is not a budget for Canadians.

This is not a budget for Canadians. It is a budget, however, for banks, big corporations and the very wealthy. This government in the last budget cut the heart out of social programs, health care and education while it retained virtually every tax loophole for wealthy Canadians and large corporations. Corporations can still lobby. There is a huge amount of money in our system, in our society that is not being fairly recaptured to enable all Canadians to live the good life the way the big banks can, the big corporations can and the very wealthy.

* (1110)

The Bank of Montreal said that this last federal budget was a good budget for business. Canada Trust's complete statement was that it was a budget for financial markets, not for Canadians. We all know what is happening. We all know that it is the glue that holds Canadians together, whether it be the privatization of CN, the potential privatization of Canada Post, the evisceration of our health care system, the reduction in our education system. No matter what it is, this is only good news for transnational corporations. It is only good news for power corporations. It is only good news for Magna. It is only good news for those tens of thousands of profit-making companies that donate heavily to the federal Liberal government.

We know and we are seeing day after day the true colour and the true picture of the federal Liberal government, and it is not Liberal red, it is Tory blue. It is actually more Tory blue than even the Tories are. Jean Chretien and his federal government have gone further to dismantle the Canada that we have grown to know and love and respect than even Brian Mulroney's Progressive Conservative government did, and they have done it in the guise of caring about Canadians.

Paul Martin Jr.'s father must be looking down on what his son has done to the country that Paul Martin helped develop and the programs that Paul Martin helped put in place. He must be wondering what on earth has happened to his country and what responsibility has his own son, the federal Minister of Finance, played in this

destruction of what used to be the best country on the face of the earth, and a large part of that responsibility rests with this current federal government.

Madam Speaker, just to close my remarks, to reiterate again, this piece of legislation would not be necessary if the member for Inkster's (Mr. Lamoureux) federal government colleagues had not done such a good hatchet job of destroying the five principles of the Canada Health Act. If they had been in place, we would not need provincial legislation to attempt to bolster our sagging health care system.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: As previously agreed, this bill will remain standing in the name of the honourable Minister of Northern and Native Affairs (Mr. Praznik).

SECOND READINGS—PUBLIC BILLS

Bill 201—The Aboriginal Solidarity Day Act

Mr. Eric Robinson (Rupertsland): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Dauphin (Mr. Struthers), that Bill 201, The Aboriginal Solidarity Day Act (Loi sur le jour de solidarité à l'égard des autochtones), be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Mr. Robinson: I just want to make a few remarks about Bill 201.

June 21 has long been regarded as a very special day among the first peoples of this continent, and people that regard themselves as members of First Nations, including myself, refer to North America as Turtle Island, and among the traditional element of our communities, it is still regarded as such. There is a long story attached to the meaning of Turtle Island, and, of course, now we know it as North America, but there is a long story that would take a long time to describe about the significance of the story of creation among First Nations people in the continent that we all know now as North America.

The day that we know as June 21 is also regarded as the summer solstice in other cultures, and for aboriginal

people, before there were calendars available, it was also a day that was regarded, according to oral tradition that has been passed on by the elders and the keepers of knowledge among the First Nations of this country—the day, first of all, being the longest day of the year, secondly, as a signal for the changing of the seasons and a beginning of our Mother Earth's replenishment of medicines and also the food for sustenance for humankind, the four-leggeds and also the winged ones, and, thirdly, a reminder to us humankind about the power from the Creator or the Great Spirit, of the supreme power that governs all colours and races of humankind on Mother Earth.

In recent years, however, Madam Speaker, most particularly in the early '80s, when First Nations and other aboriginal people were working hard in ensuring recognition of their rights in Canada's Constitution—of course, we now refer to that as the Canada Act of 1982—prior to its patriation in 1982 and on the 17th of April of that year, First Nations peoples in this country felt betrayed because of the notion of unilaterally transferring Crown obligations to Indian nations based on treaties to the federal Crown in Canada without the input of First Nations people.

So when it became evident that First Nations were not going to be a part of the decision-making process in patriating the Constitution, and it was going to occur without the consent of First Nations and other aboriginal peoples, the National Indian Brotherhood, which was the forerunner to the Assembly of First Nations, a cross-lands Indian organization in this country, those of us who were involved in that organization at that time, including the member for The Pas (Mr. Lathlin), endorsed a resolution which in part read that we declared a national day of solidarity for First Nations and other aboriginal people, that June 21 is the longest day of the year and marks the changing of the seasons; it is also the time when the seeds of our future sustenance have been sown and grow in this land which is ours since time immemorial. That was a statement made by the First Nations leadership at that time.

Aboriginal people have also contributed to this land in many, many different ways. Unfortunately, many people often do not take that into consideration when decisions are made that affect the lives of all Canadians, and, for the most part, it is aboriginal people who feel the

negative elements of decisions that are made perhaps in Ottawa or perhaps here in Winnipeg.

So many aboriginal men and women, as well, served in the great wars of years gone by in the defence of this country, and I know that members of this House were solid in coming together and endorsing a private members' resolution declaring the 8th of November as Aboriginal Veterans Day, and I want to thank all members when they did that some time back in this House, Madam Speaker.

* (1120)

I refer to the men and women who served in the great wars, because many of these people I have an opportunity to visit still to this day, many who served in the Second World War. Many of the promises that were given to them for serving their country never came about, and they never fully realized many of the promises that were given to them. Unfortunately, many of our soldiers are now in unfortunate situations, not only in the city but across this country in First Nations communities and also in many of the urban centres. Many came home shattered after fighting for the freedom that all of us now enjoy in this country.

I want to make it clear, Madam Speaker, that this particular bill will not be a drain on the public purse, sometimes the incorrect perception of aboriginal people whenever they ask for something. This is simply going to acknowledge aboriginal people's contribution to the province of Manitoba and also to the country of Canada.

I am going to look forward to the support of all members of this House on this particular bill, and I call upon colleagues to not only do themselves proud but also all Manitobans and especially aboriginal people by being the first group of legislators to acknowledge and recognize Canada's original peoples, the first people's history and their aspirations. Perhaps other provinces and hopefully our national government will follow our lead in declaring and acknowledging the contributions of aboriginal people across Canada, but I want to ask all colleagues to be the first group of people to acknowledge the contributions of aboriginal people in this province, because in this province we have a lot to be proud of, all of us as Manitobans, including the aboriginal people and

other First Nations people, not only in this province but across the country.

So I am asking for the support of all members that this be referred to a committee, allow the people, the aboriginal representatives of this province, to make their views known to the committee, and let us do something meaningful and extend that support, that we do acknowledge June 21 as Aboriginal Solidarity Day.

With that, Madam Speaker, I am going to conclude my remarks by thanking all members for allowing me to present this bill, and I ask now that after some debate here that it now be referred to committee. Thank you.

Mr. Stan Struthers (Dauphin): Madam Speaker, I want to stand in support of Bill 201, The Aboriginal Solidarity Day Act, and I want to congratulate the member for Rupertsland for bringing it to the Legislature for our consideration, and I hope for the support of all members of this Legislature.

I think it is a very important step that the bill is taking us along. I want to make sure that we as legislators do not miss this opportunity to recognize the important contribution that the original inhabitants of Manitoba have brought to our province well before our province even existed. I think it is absolutely clear that the society before 1870 in what is now called Manitoba was a very organized, very egalitarian, democratic form of government that I do not think receives the type of recognition, I do not think it has ever received the type of recognition that it properly deserves, and we have an opportunity in this House with this bill to finally recognize the important contribution of the original inhabitants of our part of the world.

I think also what this bill will allow us to do as legislators on behalf of all Manitobans is to express our commitment to the aboriginal people in Manitoba. Since 1870 the aboriginal people have been an integral part of our province. I think they have made great contributions to the benefit of all the people of Manitoba through their hard work, their culture, and I think part of their culture provides a diversity in Manitoba which is unequalled in all other areas of the world. I think what we should be doing and what we can do through the adoption of this Aboriginal Solidarity Day Act is make a commitment to not only continue the steps that have already been taken

to incorporate the aboriginal views within our province but that we will also be committing to improving our commitment to including aboriginal people in decisions that are made throughout Manitoba.

I want to speak on a very personal level when it comes to this Bill 201. I grew up in rural Manitoba, I think maybe sort of in my own little bubble. It was like in the old Get Smart show with the cone of silence coming down. It encased me into a very narrow way of thinking. I did not understand how other people outside of my own little world were living. I assumed that since I was doing okay, everybody else in the province must be doing okay, too. What really opened my eyes was when I was hired on as a schoolteacher on the reserve at Norway House, at Rossville School, and I went and I lived on the reserve and taught school there.

Madam Speaker, probably no other event in my life has taught me so much as the four years that I spent at Norway House. I learned all kinds of things about a totally different way of life, and I consider myself a much further enriched person for the experience that I had in the North.

Some of the things I learned were very positive. Some of the things I learned disturbed me greatly. On the positive side, I learned, unaware to me beforehand, that native people on the Norway House reserve and, I eventually learned, throughout Manitoba have a great deal of pride in what they do. They have a very diverse and interesting culture that we can all learn from. What struck me most was their determination to make things better for the next generation coming behind.

The leadership that I met at the Norway House reserve was a leadership that was concerned about leaving a world better for their next generation than the one that they had grown into. I think that is something that all leaders should have as a goal. I think leaders throughout the province have that as an objective. It was something that struck me in Norway House, though, because of the conditions which young children were being born into, through no choice of their own, born into a reserve at Norway House, with high unemployment, a reserve that was located in the middle of the Canadian Shield, no opportunities for agriculture, a reserve that was located in an area where resources such as timber were not available to them.

The primary industries had been trapping and fishing. Well, you know what happened. Everyone knows what happened to the trapping industry. Through no fault of their own, the folks who were making a decent living on trapping ended up losing that as an industry, as a form of income. A number of guidelines were put in place that really restricted the amount of commercial fishing that went on in that area.

Through decisions that were taken outside of the band government, the decisions were producing negative effects on this particular reserve and reserves throughout Manitoba. But through it all, I was very encouraged with the positive attitude that the leadership at the time, at Norway House, throughout the four years that I was there, the positive attitude that they had towards building a better future for their children.

* (1130)

As a schoolteacher, I was also very impressed with the attitude that the students themselves brought to the classroom, yet you need to understand that on the reserve I was the only nonaboriginal person within that classroom. I had, in some cases, 25 or 30 students who were very mature in their ways. They were very caring and compassionate, and what I learned was that they had learned that caring, co-operative, compassionate way from the type of democratic form of government that they had on the reserve and the type that they actually lived with in their houses in the family units.

On the negative side, one of my students was a young woman by the name of Joan Osborne, who was Helen Betty Osborne's youngest sister. It was through Joan and parent-teacher interviews that I got to know Justine Osborne and where I first learned of the tragedy that had taken place in the town of The Pas in 1971.

I will never forget the first time that Justine talked to me about it. She had asked if I could stay a little late for a parent-teacher interview. So everything was dark; it was the middle of the winter, and Justine came up to my Grade 6 classroom. We were the only two in the building, so it was quite an eerie feeling, and she started to tell me all about the events of 1971. What struck me the most, outside of the horrific act that was taken by the murderers of her daughter, what struck me the most outside of that fact, was the coverup that came out of, that sprang from the very violent act itself.

That, Madam Speaker, indicates to me very much a lack of understanding on the part of nonaboriginal people, a very hideous lack of understanding and a lack of compassion and a lack of recognition. I think the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry that eventually did spring, at least in part, from the murder of Helen Betty Osborne was in some way, and once the recommendations are enacted upon, part of the process that we need to go through in order to say to aboriginal people that there have been wrongs committed against aboriginal people as a nation and that we are willing as legislators to own up to the things that have gone on in the past. Example after example has come to me as cases where aboriginal people have been treated differently and negatively by us as nonaboriginal people.

This bill that we have placed before us today will give us one more opportunity to say to aboriginal people that we recognize that your struggle has been one which you have been fighting. It is an honourable struggle, and it is something that we are now committing to work together with you on. The whole Helen Betty Osborne affair was something that nonaboriginal people in this province have got to belly up to the bar on and take responsibility for. It happened in The Pas. I think it could have happened anywhere in our province. It is something that never should have happened in the first place. It is something that never should have been covered up after it had happened. It was yet another example of how we have mistreated aboriginal people throughout the history of our province.

That, Madam Speaker, is sort of a very, very personal connection that I have to supporting The Aboriginal Solidarity Day Act. It is a very personal reason why I think at least I will be standing with my colleague for Rupertsland (Mr. Robinson) when the vote on this does come. I think what we should do, each of us as 57 MLAs, is to think back ourselves to our own experiences with aboriginal people. Think about the negative things that have happened to aboriginal people over the years, but also what I would like to stress is that we need to think back to all the very positive contributions that aboriginal people have made over the years in building the province that we have today.

This bill will provide us with an opportunity to move on, not only correcting the mistakes of the past that we have all made, but also another step in ensuring that

maybe we will get to a day sometime in our history, in our future, that we will not be making those kinds of mistakes over and over again, and not just in relation to the aboriginal people of the province.

Maybe, through these sorts of acts and these sorts of days, through this kind of recognition, there will come a day in our province where we will treat all people fairly, where we will actually be committed to treating people equally, a day when discrimination, racism, sexism, all of those things that we consider so abhorrent, we actually will not participate in, because we have in the past.

I look forward to a day when we do not have those kinds of problems, and I think that by supporting The Aboriginal Solidarity Day Act we can take a step in the education of all the people of Manitoba as to the very positive contributions that aboriginal people have made to our society.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Marcel Laurendeau (St. Norbert): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable member for River Heights (Mr. Radcliffe), that debate now be adjourned.

Motion agreed to.

Hon. Jim Ernst (Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, I believe there is a will of the House to call it twelve o'clock. [agreed]

Madam Speaker: This House is accordingly recessed until 1:30 p.m. this afternoon.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Home Care Services

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Madam Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Linda Stimpson, Ian Stimpson, W. Bilowus and others requesting the Premier (Mr. Filmon) and the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) to consider reversing their plan to privatize home care services.

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): Madam Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Ian M.C. Dixon, Elissavet Kardami, Roslyn Greenberg and others requesting the Premier and the Minister of Health to consider reversing their plan to privatize home care services.

Ms. Diane McGifford (Osborne): Madam Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Ron Padua, Brad Doble, Lecna Hozaima and others requesting the Premier and the Minister of Health to consider reversing their plan to privatize home care services.

Ms. MaryAnn Mihychuk (St. James): Madam Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Grant Pierce, Marcello Panagia, F. Panagia and others requesting the Premier and Minister of Health to consider reversing their plan to privatize home care services.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Home Care Services

Madam Speaker: I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member for St. James (Ms. Mihychuk). It complies with the rules and practices of the House (by leave). Is it the will of the House to have the petition read?

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: Dispense.

THAT on at least six occasions during the 1995 provincial election, the Premier promised not to cut health services; and

THAT on December 16, 1995, a plan to privatize home care services was presented to Treasury Board; and

THAT this plan calls for the complete divestiture of all service delivery to nongovernment organizations, mainly private for-profit companies as well as the implementation of a user-pay system of home care; and

THAT previous cuts to the Home Care program have resulted in services being cut and people's health being compromised; and

THAT thousands of caring front-line service providers will lose their jobs as a result of this change; and

THAT profit has no place in the provision of vital health services.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba may be pleased to request the Premier (Mr. Filmon) and the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) to consider reversing their plan to privatize home care services.

Madam Speaker: I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale). It complies with the rules and practices of the House. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read?

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: Dispense.

THAT on at least six occasions during the 1995 provincial election, the Premier promised not to cut health services; and

THAT on December 16, 1995, a plan to privatize home care services was presented to Treasury Board; and

THAT this plan calls for the complete divestiture of all service delivery to nongovernment organizations, mainly private for-profit companies as well as the implementation of a user-pay system of home care; and

THAT previous cuts to the Home Care program have resulted in services being cut and people's health being compromised; and

THAT thousands of caring front-line service providers will lose their jobs as a result of this change; and

THAT profit has no place in the provision of vital health services.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba may be pleased to request the Premier (Mr. Filmon) and the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) to consider reversing their plan to privatize home care services.

* (1335)

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Committee of Supply

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

I move, seconded by the honourable member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Tweed), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Flood Conditions

Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Natural Resources): Madam Speaker, I have a statement for the House.

Madam Speaker, the storm that crossed into Manitoba last evening has further aggravated the flood situation in southern Manitoba. As of 7 a.m. this morning, precipitation amounts had ranged from 12 millimetres near the United States boundary to 22 millimetres in the Winnipeg area. The forecast from Environment Canada is for a further 10 to 15 millimetres of precipitation before the storm ends this afternoon.

The department's forecast centre is currently evaluating the effect of this storm on the flood situation but initial indications are that the forecast peak levels along the Red River south of Winnipeg will be raised by an additional half a foot from Emerson to St. Jean and by one foot from Morris to the floodway entrance. Peak levels along the Red River will therefore be in the range of from one-half foot to one foot lower than the peak levels which occurred in 1979.

The storm in combination with the cool weather over the last few days has also delayed the time of the crest by several days. The crest is now expected to reach Emerson on April 28 and St. Adolphe on May 2. My staff will be able to provide more precise forecasts by Friday morning

after a more detailed study of the impact of the storm is completed.

Madam Speaker, with your permission, I have a more detailed report that I would like to table for the members in the House. Thank you.

* (1340)

Mr. Stan Struthers (Dauphin): I want to thank the minister for bringing this information to the House today. I know the minister does not have a magic wand that he can wave to stop the snow. I do want to make certain though that everybody understands that there are some things this government can and should be doing to help out in the area of compensation for the R.M.s who are still waiting from last year to hear of some news, and not just offload onto the federal government people.

Part of the problem in rural Manitoba in getting prepared for the flood of 1996 is that R.M.s are not confident that this government, that does have the ability to compensate these R.M.s, has done that and is slowing the process of readying for the flood.

Having said that, I do want to join in with many of the members who have stated in this House their pride and their congratulations to those Manitobans who are out there fighting the flood as we speak, including students, families and people throughout the province. So with those words, I do hope that before we have to build an ark in this province that the snow does subside and that we do not get any more precipitation and that the minister will continue to bring such reports to the House. Thank you.

Day of Mourning Workplace Injury and Death

Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Labour): Madam Speaker, I have a ministerial statement.

Each year in Canada, April 28 is designated as a day of mourning to remember those who have died or been injured in workplace accidents in Canada. Every year, too many workers become ill or are injured, sometimes fatally, at their place of work. All life is precious and any workplace injury or fatality is a serious matter and of great concern to us all. Injury and death at work brings

with it pain and suffering to co-workers, families and friends. Whether the person is a fellow worker who is older or younger, male or female or working as a farmer, a logger, a construction worker, miner, a worker on an assembly line or in some other type of work, their injury is preventable.

From each incident, whether it results in a serious injury or not, we must learn what happened so that we can prevent similar occurrences and ensure that such tragedies do not happen in the future. While the accident rate has been generally decreasing over the last 10 years, we must be diligent in continuing to make Manitoba's workplaces even safer and healthier. Employers and workers are working together, assisted by their government, and bear the primary credit for the improvements over the last 10 years and must not falter in their objective of producing workplaces free of risk and injury.

This day of mourning, April 28, gives us all a chance to consider the serious nature of work and to set aside a few moments to think about those persons injured or killed and consider how we can all work together towards the goal of eliminating all workplace accidents. I am pleased as Minister of Labour to issue a proclamation recognizing this particular day and commend its observance to all Manitobans. Thank you.

Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona): Madam Speaker, I would like to start off by thanking the minister for his statement here today.

This is a very important day. This day would not, of course, be able to be recognized had it not been for the hard work and efforts by the former member for Churchill, Mr. Rod Murphy, in his efforts to bring forward a private member's bill in the Parliament of Canada recognizing April 28 as the day of mourning for those who have been injured or killed on the job, and we thank Mr. Murphy for his efforts in this respect.

We also note, too, that Manitoba is sustaining still high numbers of deaths as a result of workplace accidents. We raised in this House just a short time ago the death of another miner. We have had six miners' deaths in a very short period of time in this province, only one of the many industries within this province where people are unfortunately killed, and there is much work

yet to be done by the minister's department, the Department of Labour, Workplace Safety and Health Branch, Workers Compensation Board for which the minister is also responsible, to prevent the deaths and the accidents that are taking place in the industries of our province, Madam Speaker.

In addition to that, we recognize too that unions play a very strong role in preventing accidents through the Workplace Safety and Health committees in the various industries throughout this province. So we too would like to recognize those activities, both the union activities and the part of employers, to try and prevent future accidents, but I hope that the minister and his department and his government will recognize that there is much work yet to be done to prevent deaths and accidents in Manitoba. Thank you.

* (1345)

Introduction of Guests

Madam Speaker: Prior to Oral Questions, I would like to draw the attention of all honourable members to the public gallery where we have with us this afternoon forty-seven Grade 9 students from Morden Collegiate under the direction of Mr. Mark Derzak. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Pembina (Mr. Dyck).

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

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Home Care Program Privatization

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

We have had an opportunity to review all the reports that the government tabled late last week, and, eventually, some of them on Friday. After reading all the studies and reports, after listening to Dr. Shapiro and others, after listening to the clients on Monday, for the life of me I cannot understand why the government is proceeding with the privatization plan and why it will not solve this issue that is now in dispute.

The only report that I have been able to read whose recommendations find itself into the Treasury Board document that we again tabled yesterday in the House are the recommendations that came from We Care in 1993.

I would like to ask the Premier: Is he satisfied that that is merely a coincidence in terms of the recommendations? Is he satisfied that there is no bias on the part of his Health minister in arriving at the Treasury Board document and the privatization plan that is so much in dispute with the public and clients here in Manitoba?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Madam Speaker, the only bias is in favour of the clients of home care.

The simple aspect of this is to ensure that the client will not be held hostage by people who want to have their grievances worked out in terms of their own needs and their own circumstances, as opposed to in terms of the needs of the client.

Madam Speaker, we will not have the clients, in future, being held hostage, being used as pawns in collective agreement disputes and all sorts of disputes about whether or not services could or should be rendered on the basis of the client's needs and the client's needs only. They are the assurances that we will be able to provide with the competition that we are introducing through this process into the provision of services, that clients will be able to get the services as they require them, when they require them, how they require them, seven days a week, 24 hours a day.

They are the assurances that we seek. They are the assurances that we will get as a result of this proposal that we are embarking on.

Privatization—Minister's Bias

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Madam Speaker, the Premier never answered the question. Of course, I challenged the Premier last week to have a plebiscite and let the clients decide. Of course, the Premier will not let the clients decide because he knows what they will say.

Last week, the Minister of Labour (Mr. Toews) confirmed that he is on leave of absence from Great-West Life. Today, we have had it confirmed that Great-West

Life is now moving into the home care insurance business.

Clients, workers and the public want to deal with a government that has no bias or no perception of bias. I would like to ask the Premier: Does he feel that there can be a perception of bias in light of these circumstances, and what action will he take to deal with this perception of bias?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Madam Speaker, there could not possibly be a bias because we are not cutting services that would require them to seek insurance for this.

The fact of the matter is that was the policy that was proposed under the NDP-commissioned study by Price Waterhouse, that we in fact stop paying and providing for these services and require the clients to contract out for those services or to acquire insurance coverage for those services. That was the NDP's policy; that is not our policy. The taxpayer will continue to provide for these services, and so they will not be the services that are the subject of anything that Great-West Life is interested in.

* (1350)

Privatization - Public Hearings

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Obviously the Premier has a different view of this than the Manitoba seniors who said that this privatization initiative of his government is the thin edge of the wedge to move to an American privatized health care system in Manitoba. Obviously, the seniors that built this province understand the stakes of this issue and the stakes of the biases of this government a lot more than this Premier.

I did table the letter from the Manitoba seniors. Obviously, members opposite did not have the courtesy to read it.

Madam Speaker, I would like to ask the Premier, in light of the fact that there are no studies that the government tabled to validate their position on the privatization proposal, the ideological proposal that they have proceeded with, in light of the fact that the public, the patients and the workers are of one in calling on the government to provide reasonable leadership and to provide a one-year moratorium and public hearings, will

the Premier today not agree that a one-year moratorium, as recommended by many client groups, and public hearings, as also recommended by the users, is a reasonable way to solve this difficulty?

Let us get the home care workers back working with the patients and let us let the people speak out in those public hearings.

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Madam Speaker, there are three aspects to home care. There are the nursing services, there are the home care support services and there are the home care attendant services. We are taking one of the three services—

An Honourable Member: Two of the three.

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Filmon: The strike that is involved here, Madam Speaker, involves the proposal that takes one of the three services and seeks to put out to competition approximately 25 percent of the services.

This has occasioned an absolute ideological, philosophical response, driven by members opposite and their union bosses, Madam Speaker, and has caused a withdrawal of services—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. I would once again request that all honourable members show common courtesy. I recognized one member and it is not a time for debate or disruption.

Mr. Filmon: Madam Speaker, what the issue is, is the blind ideology that drives the members opposite and the New Democratic Party to stand together with their union boss friends in opposition to guaranteeing the services to the clients of home care. That is reprehensible and the members opposite deserve the criticism they are continuing to get from people for their blind ideology.

Home Care Program Privatization—Ministers' Bias

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Madam Speaker, given the relationship that exists between the Minister of

Labour (Mr. Toews) and Great-West Life, who are moving into the home care business, and given the relationship that exists between the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) and We Care Health Services that stand to make millions of dollars on the home care decision, does the Premier have confidence that either of these ministers should be either negotiating a potential settlement in this area and/or dealing with the issue of privatization, given the apparent bias that could exist in this matter?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Madam Speaker, I repeat, our only bias is in favour of those who require our services, who depend upon the services of government and who will be served by this government under any circumstances.

* (1355)

Privatization—Insurance

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Madam Speaker, my question for the Premier is, has the Premier thought through the process and considered the implications that people now receiving home care could be forced in the future to purchase insurance for home care, and does that not suggest another reason why the government ought not to be privatizing home care?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Madam Speaker, that could only happen if the New Democrats were in office and were going to implement the recommendations of the study that they commissioned by Price Waterhouse, because that is exactly what that study recommended. That is what we have rejected. Our proposal does not require people to have insurance. Those services are provided for and the costs of those services are provided for by the taxpayer, by the government, and we will maintain it in that form, unlike the New Democrats who, if they had followed the report that they were intending to by Price Waterhouse, would have forced people to have the insurance for it because government would no longer have provided it.

Crime Rate Government Reduction Strategy

Mr. Gord Mackintosh (St. Johns): Madam Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Justice.

In the election campaign that ended one year ago, the government made 36 promises on crime for implementation by the province.

My question is, given that we know of some announcement or action regarding three of these and since the minister is never shy about fanfare even when she has not done anything, whatever happened to the implementation of the other 33? I will table this.

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): This government's record in the area of dealing with keeping the citizens of Manitoba safe is, I believe, the strongest in this country. Our action has been and continues to be in the area of legislation, in the area of community development, community participation, in the area of services to victims, in the area of programs for youth and adults, and we continue to live up to our promises, Madam Speaker. I will be introducing in this House later this spring, in this session, legislation which deals with parental responsibility to put the victim back into the picture in the area of criminal activity.

Mr. Mackintosh: Would the minister then explain why the government MLAs are admitting to their own constituents in a mailing this month, under the heading, Safer Streets, and then, Commitments Kept, that of the 36 election promises on crime, the government has only come through on one?

Mrs. Vodrey: I have to wonder, where have you been? Madam Speaker, the member has constantly missed the initiatives of this government. He has been nowhere to be found. He has been nowhere to be found on the Young Offenders Act, he has been nowhere to be found on the stalking initiatives, he has been nowhere to be found on community notification committees.

Madam Speaker, he even is quoted as having objected to the initiatives which this government has brought forward, in many cases the first in Canada, to keep the citizens of Manitoba safe. We will be living up to each and every one of our election promises. Some of them also require the assistance of the federal government. I will be meeting with the federal minister next week, and we will continue to make Manitoba a safe province. We will continue to put public safety and the interests of victims very high on our list.

* (1400)

Mr. Mackintosh: Would the minister, who I hope has implemented more of these promises, even without mentioning it to anyone, tell us—here we are with the highest violent crime rate—what is she waiting for?

Mrs. Vodrey: Again, I am just having the opportunity to look at what the member has finally tabled to me, and I see that he is speaking about some civil penalties. As he knows, this government has already embarked on a review of our whole civil justice system. That system will be looking at what happens in the family courts, what happens in the courts of general division.

Madam Speaker, we have an ever-increasingly good record, along with the community and the police, in terms of reducing property crime. We also are focusing very strongly on personal security, and will be introducing a number of initiatives that deal with personal security, actually within the next few weeks. So there are a great deal of very significant announcements to come.

But, Madam Speaker, what the member across has forgotten is that we do work with communities, we do work with police agencies, and that in dealing with the issue of crime in Manitoba and public safety, it requires an effort that requires all partners to take part—all have willingly.

Employment Creation Government Strategy

Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East): I have a question for the Minister of Finance. Statistics Canada has recently released a document entitled Historical Labour Force Statistics, in which it is revealed, Madam Speaker, that whereas Manitoba gained 35,000 new jobs during the previous NDP government, we obtained only 14,000 jobs under the present Filmon administration.

Can the minister explain why the rate of job creation has fallen so drastically from 7.4 percent between '81 and '87 down to 2.8 percent during the term of this government?

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, without accepting any of the preamble from the member for Brandon—

An Honourable Member: It is StatsCan.

Mr. Stefanson: As I was saying, without accepting any of the preamble—and I would point out to the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton), it would not be the first time that, even from a document, misinformation is brought forward by some of his colleagues.

I want to point out to the member for Brandon East, in 1995 there were 10,000 new jobs created here in Manitoba, virtually all of those jobs created in the private sector; the last two months of 1996, 9,000 new jobs created in the province of Manitoba.

In fact, in 1995, Manitoba had amongst the best job growth in all of Canada, particularly in the private sector. I would remind him of organizations like the Conference Board of Canada that the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer) likes to refer to quite often. If you read their assessment of provinces today, you will find that they point to Manitoba's economy as steamrolling ahead and give us the highest marks in all of Canada.

Mr. Leonard Evans: Can the minister explain why, according to Statistics Canada's latest historical data, the rate of job creation in Manitoba has dropped from about four-fifths of the Canadian average during 1981-87 whereas we have now dropped to only one-third of the Canadian job creation rate average under this government? That is, why have we declined relative to the rest of this country in job creation according to this document by Stats Canada?

Mr. Stefanson: Madam Speaker, I would remind the member for Brandon East that Manitoba today has the second lowest unemployment rate in all of Canada. We had the second highest growth in gross domestic product in 1995 here in Manitoba. We are projected to have the second highest growth again in 1996 here in Manitoba.

He is well aware of the list of private sector announcements that have been made over the last six or seven months. In fact, some of them are in the part of the province where he happens to represent, companies like Simplot, McCain, Canadian Agra, Repap and so on, showing confidence here in our province. In fact, in the last six or seven months there have been a billion dollars of announcements.

Madam Speaker, the economy here in our province is performing amongst the best in all of Canada, and that is

because of the positive economic climate that exists here in our province. I would encourage the member for Brandon East to get out and talk to individual Manitobans, talk to individual entrepreneurs, talk to businesses, talk to business organizations, and he will find out first-hand, if he takes the time to do that, that they see Manitoba as an excellent place to do business.

Mr. Leonard Evans: Madam Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity, in asking my supplementary, to table a document based on these figures, for the edification of all members of the House in charts that everyone can understand—35,000 under the previous government, 14,000 at best under this government.

My last question: Will the minister acknowledge that the claim of 32,000 new jobs being created under the Filmon government, as contained in this recent Conservative pamphlet called Manitoba Strong, is simply not true and cannot be substantiated by employment data published by Statistics Canada, and will he see to it that a correction is sent out to the people of Manitoba?

Mr. Stefanson: Madam Speaker, no, I will not acknowledge that whatsoever, and I reiterate that, based on the quality of some of the financial information and economic data that I have received from members opposite, it has been sorely lacking. I had an example of that last week for the question from the member for Crescentwood (Mr. Sale) that I was approached on subsequently again, and the information was wrong, as is usually and consistently the pattern.

Manitobans are proud of the economy. We are seeing it in jobs, we are seeing it in job creation, second lowest unemployment rate in Canada, lowest youth unemployment rate in all of Canada, 10,000 new jobs here in Manitoba last year, all in the private sector. All Manitobans are proud of this province, can compete in this province. The only people that are out of step with what is happening in our province sit right there, and I think they should start talking to Manitobans and find out just what is happening here in our province.

Education System Staffing Reduction

Mr. Gary Kowalski (The Maples): Madam Speaker, my question is for the First Minister. One of the

responses to this government's 2 percent cut to public education is to lay off the 27 first-year school teachers in Winnipeg School Division No. 1. Those 27 teachers, along with the approximately 600 students from Manitoba's faculty of education who will be graduating this spring, will all be looking for jobs as teachers in this province, where the minister's public education system is downsizing.

Does the First Minister have any advice to offer those young adults who have chosen teaching as a career as to what opportunities they will have in this government's education system?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Madam Speaker, this government transfers money to school divisions and expects school divisions to take responsibility for their actions. They get together with their staff and they work out the best alternatives for the use of the money that they have within their system. I know that there are many answers. There is not only just one answer to every challenge that is faced, and the members of the various collective bargaining units of the city of Winnipeg School Division No. 1 could well have gotten together and found a solution that might have not required the layoff or the reduction of 27 positions. That is a choice they made with their leadership and with their decisions, and certainly those are choices that they will have to take the responsibility for.

Teaching Opportunities

Mr. Gary Kowalski (The Maples): Can the First Minister do anything to send a message to those Manitoba high school students who are considering teaching as a career that there is a future for them in Manitoba's public school system?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Madam Speaker, my experience is that there continue to be opportunities for those who enter the teaching profession, that those opportunities will attract quality people who care about children and who want to go and do education, and those opportunities will continue to be available. There is a turnover each and every year of a substantial number of people as retirements take place, as people move throughout their professions, and those opportunities will continue to be there for those who choose the profession of teaching.

Mr. Kowalski: Will the First Minister advise Manitoba's three universities then to limit the enrollment of prospective teachers until this government renews its commitment to public education in Manitoba?

Mr. Filmon: Madam Speaker, no, I would not give that advice

Department of Industry, Trade and Tourism Departmental Review

Mr. Tim Sale (Crescentwood): Madam Speaker, last week I asked the Minister of I. T and T about a study done by Price Waterhouse of his department. I want to ask the same minister if there have been any other studies done by external agencies or groups of the effectiveness or functioning of I. T and T during the period 1992 to 1995, the dates and costs of those studies.

Hon. James Downey (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism): Not that I am aware of, but I will take as notice and check for the member.

* (1410)

Employee Morale

Mr. Tim Sale (Crescentwood): Will the minister admit today that morale in his department is at an all-time low, that communication patterns are very poor, and that the overall effectiveness of his department is extremely questionable?

Hon. James Downey (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism): No, I will not, but I will elaborate a little bit as to what is in fact taking place within the economic activities with the province of Manitoba.

We have seen a record investment by the private sector, particularly in the province of Manitoba. Collectively, we have seen over a \$4-billion investment. We have seen over \$1 billion in the last few months, particularly as it relates to food and fibre processing in Manitoba. There are many signs of very productive activities. In fact, in the Brandon East riding alone, where Simplot is constructing an additional \$230-some-million addition to their plant, there will be some 800 jobs this summer.

Madam Speaker, the morale in our department flows with the economy. The morale may have been down at

some time in the past, but it is very much improved and will continue to do so.

Mr. Sale: Madam Speaker, will the minister today take responsibility for the fact that his own staff is saying that the allocation of resources, that promotions, that recognition, is perceived by the staff of his department to be uninformed, arbitrary and highly political? Will he take responsibility for that?

Mr. Downey: Madam Speaker, I am extremely disappointed that the member would accuse me, of all people, of doing anything politically within my department.

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): So how many hacks have you employed in your department?

Mr. Downey: The member for Thompson asks about hacks in my department. The last time I checked, the last two that were really high profile I think were Terry Sargeant and Phil Eyler, and they certainly were not associated with this government.

Independent Loggers Allocation of Permits

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): When the Louisiana-Pacific agreement was announced, the independent loggers raised concerns about getting enough wood to run their sawmills. [interjection]

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Ms. Wowchuk: When the Louisiana-Pacific deal was announced, the independent loggers raised concerns about their wood allocation. The minister announced that 50,000 cubic metres of hardwood would be set aside for the independent loggers. However, to date, even though two proposals have been put forward by regional staff, the government has still not made a decision on the allocation.

Can the Minister of Natural Resources tell this House why he continues to delay making this decision which is so important to the loggers in the Swan River area?

Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Natural Resources): The short answer would be because I am not quite ready to make that decision. The reason I am

not quite ready to make that decision, keeping in mind the requirements of the small operators in that area, is that until we see how things settle out with Louisiana-Pacific and their contracts, I do not want to make any moves that would jeopardize that.

I have the interests of the small loggers very much in mind, and I have to assure members here in the House that the small operators have all got the required amount of wood that they want to cut. We will continue to do that until we finally are able to make that decision in terms of the allocation of the wood requirements of the smaller operators.

Ms. Wowchuk: Can the minister tell this House then, even though this allocation of permits is causing a lot of difficulty for all of the people that are working in the bush, including Louisiana-Pacific, Repap and others, is the minister saying that this system is going to continue in the new logging year after May 1 and permits will continue to be issued?

Mr. Driedger: May 1 is just shortly around the corner, and I have not made the decision in terms of how we will do the allocation. So, yes, there will be permits available again after May 1 until we finally get this thing sorted out and make the right decision.

Ms. Wowchuk: Since this is a very important issue to the independent loggers and all the users of the resource, will the Premier (Mr. Filmon) ensure that this issue is resolved before any decision is made on issuing the Louisiana-Pacific forest management licence?

Mr. Driedger: Madam Speaker, I anticipate that somewhere along the line the decision is going to be completed and a licence possibly will be issued to Louisiana-Pacific. It is for that reason, until that happens, and then we see exactly how the activities are going to sort out with the wood requirements of Louisiana-Pacific, there is no urgency at this point in time other than some concern that the loggers have. We have assured them, and I will again assure them that they will be able to get their permits to cut the wood that they require.

Public Housing Federal Funding Reductions

Ms. Marianne Cerilli (Radisson): We have raised before the unfairness of this government working with the

federal Liberals to raise the rents in public housing. I am concerned that this budget again has a reduction in funding to the Manitoba Housing and Renewal Corporation.

I want to ask the Minister of Housing if the rent increase to 27 percent of rent geared to income is covering the costs for the reductions from the federal government for public housing.

Hon. Jack Reimer (Minister of Housing): I want to thank the member for Radisson for that question because, as mentioned by her, the federal government has initiated conversation and talks regarding the offloading of their housing responsibilities onto the province. We in the province have not taken a position on that. We are very, very concerned with the impact, not only on the housing stock and the availability of housing here in Manitoba, and it is something that is under consideration right now, but no decision has been made as to what type of direction will be made with the federal proposal.

Ms. Cerilli: A supplementary question for the minister: Has this government realized that rent increases for public housing are really balancing the budgets on the backs of those least able to pay, or will they again be raising the rents for public housing this year?

Mr. Reimer: The member is referring to the fact that the federal government has initiated and is recommending that the RGI, or the rent geared to income level be raised to 30 percent as they are doing in their jurisdiction. We are in the process of evaluating all types of rent geared to income in not only what the federal government is recommending but also looking at what is happening right across Canada with the housing.

Ms. Cerilli: I want to ask the minister to clarify, will the government be raising the rents for public housing in Manitoba this year, given that a letter that I have from the federal minister indicates that the rent geared to income set by the federal government is at 25 percent, not 27 percent, as it is in Manitoba?

Mr. Reimer: The 25 percent that the member is referring to is the level that we also have in place right now for bachelor units. Bachelor units are rented for 25 percent of RGI. The present formula is also 27 percent for units of one bedroom or larger, so that we are of the

same mind that she has just mentioned with the 25 percent regarding the bachelor units here in Manitoba.

Winnipeg Art Gallery Board Appointments

Ms. Diane McGifford (Osborne): Madam Speaker, after assuring the Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship that I have indeed read *The Globe and Mail* article of which he is so proud and which is mostly on performing arts, I want to return to the Winnipeg Art Gallery and questions left unanswered earlier this week.

Will the minister confirm that despite staff layoffs, public quarrels with the Manitoba Arts Council and the arts community, the revenue-draining reality of a closed restaurant, and despite the fact that the Winnipeg Art Gallery receives millions of dollars in public money funnelled into both its operational and capital budgets, the minister has appointed only one out of three government members, thus compromising public accountability?

Hon. Harold Gilleshammer (Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship): I am encouraged that the member has read the article. I would suggest she try and understand it. Perhaps if she attended some of the events and met with some of the groups within the arts community she would have a better understanding of the vibrant community that we have. Certainly we have given tremendous financial support to the Winnipeg Art Gallery. From time to time they go through issues with staffing, and other issues. There are in excess of 25 members on that board, and I am sure that as they work their way through some of their difficulties, they will make the appropriate decisions.

* (1420)

Ms. McGifford: Madam Speaker, I think my reputation with the arts community is at least as strong as that of the minister, and I could take it beyond the arts community, but—

Madam Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member for Osborne was recognized for a supplementary question.

Ms. McGifford: Will the minister today tell the House when he plans to make these appointments and so

personally keep abreast of the expenditures of public money and the cultural climate in Manitoba?

Mr. Gilleshammer: I would point out to the honourable member again that this board is composed of members elected at the annual meetings. There are also appointments made by other levels of government. From time to time we do have resignations and those appointments will be made at the appropriate time.

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Thompson, for one very short question.

Provincial Parks Seasonal Camping Fees

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): Madam Speaker, the government has raised seasonal camping fees by as much as 100 percent. In the case of Paint Lake in northern Manitoba—and I do not know why we got hit with 100 percent increase—the number of seasonal camping applications this year is 38 compared to 87 last year. That means that the government has fewer than half the applications and is actually going to even lose money and have the camp sit there half empty.

I would like to ask the Minister of Natural Resources, will he reconsider the 100 percent increase and come up with some sort of fee increase that is more reasonable and allow our campers to use the facility this year?

Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Natural Resources): Madam Speaker, first of all, we want Manitobans to enjoy our parks and campgrounds. I have asked my staff to basically get me an update as to the applications made in all the provincial parks in the seasonal sites based on the increase that took place.

But I have to tell you that in the Paint Lake area, where we increased fees substantively, in that particular case we had people, where we supplied the wood, that hauled half-tons full of wood out of the park to use in their homes. We are trying to adjust some of these things so that we can put fairness in there so that all Manitobans are going to be treated fairly and equitably.

Madam Speaker: The time for Oral Questions has expired.

Speaker's Rulings

Madam Speaker: I have two rulings for the House.

I am ruling on a point of order raised by the opposition House leader (Mr. Ashton) during Members' Statements on April 16, 1996. The point of order concerned comments attributed to the First Minister (Mr. Filmon). As I indicated at the time, because I did not hear the comments in question I took the matter under advisement to read Hansard.

Having done so, I see there are no words on the record attributed to the Premier. I am therefore unable to rule whether the language was in order or not.

* * *

Madam Speaker: During contributions to a motion for a matter of urgent public importance on April 16, I took under advisement a point of order raised by the government House leader (Mr. Ernst). His point of order concerned words used by the honourable member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) which the government House leader argued imputed unworthy motives to the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae). The words at issue were: "This government, driven by the agenda, the private agendas of private home care companies and the private agenda of this minister is bringing us to the brink—"

I have reviewed Hansard and I am ruling that the government House leader did not have a point of order. In my opinion, the honourable member for Thompson did not impute unworthy motives to the minister. But I would remind the member that provocative language usually generates a response and often leads to points of orders which may detract from the issues at hand.

I would ask the honourable member for Thompson and all honourable members in this House to choose their words carefully.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

First Anniversary Provincial Election

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Madam Speaker, one year ago,

exactly 365 days ago to this day, on April 25, 1995, the people of Manitoba spoke. They listened to all those individuals, sought their trust. They reviewed past actions and they reviewed future initiatives, and after five weeks of thought votes were cast and the Filmon government was re-elected.

What is significant here is that for the first time in nearly 40 years—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. I would ask the co-operation of all honourable members in this Chamber to give the courtesy deserving of every member. I feel very strongly about this. This is Members' Statements, and as private members, each individual member has the right to take and express a two-minute statement.

* (1430)

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Speaker, what is significant here is that for the first time in nearly 40 years, a Manitoba government has won a third consecutive term. In 1988, our government came to power under the strong leadership of Premier Filmon. In 1990, the people of Manitoba again gave us their vote of confidence, and now, exactly one year ago, our government received an almost unprecedented third consecutive term.

Our unbroken time in office, thanks to the confidence of the people of Manitoba, has allowed our government to ensure continuity of policy. This is the policy which has directly benefited Manitobans. It is a policy that has ensured Manitoba remains a place that people want to live in, to work, and to raise a family.

The last election campaign was not about yesterday, no matter how great the achievements. Our campaign was about tomorrow, about new ideas and new plans, about energy and commitment, about saying to Manitobans, there is more we can do and there is more we can be.

This government, through three terms of office, has many accomplishments. We have created tremendous job growth. We have kept major taxes down. We have strengthened the education system so our children can accomplish more for themselves than we ever dreamed possible.

We have provided the people of Manitoba with the benefits of a balanced budget in order to protect our valuable social programs. We have taken steps to make this province a safer place to live in our streets and neighbourhoods.

Madam Speaker, I wish the government a happy one-year anniversary on their 1995 election victory. I know we will continue to hold the confidence of the people of Manitoba and celebrate many more anniversaries.

Canada Book Day

Ms. Diane McGifford (Osborne): Madam Speaker, earlier in the spring, the Writers' Development Trust, a national charitable organization, declared April 25 as Canada Book Day.

Today, April 25, 1996, is the first of what is hoped will become the annual Canada Book Day, a day designed to celebrate books and the love of reading. It is a day to give books to friends or to donate books to schools or libraries. Many of my New Democratic colleagues will celebrate Canada Book Day by making presentations to their local schools or libraries. I hope colleagues opposite will support this initiative with book donations of their own. Please spring for a book.

Manitobans, as writers, publishers, editors and booksellers, have made enormous contributions to Canadian literature. A visible sign of their commitment and creativity is the presentation of the Manitoba Literary Awards, entitled *Brave New Words*, to take place at eight o'clock on April 27 at the Winnipeg Art Gallery.

They include: The Manitoba Book of the Year and the Manitoba Book for Young People, both sponsored by McNally Robinson Booksellers; the John Hirsch Award for the most promising Manitoba writer, sponsored by the estate of the late John Hirsch; the Heaven Art and Book Cafe Chapbook Prize, sponsored by Heaven Art and Book Cafe; and the Manitoba Book Publishers' Award for book design.

The Manitoba Writers' Guild and other sponsors of the Manitoba Literary Awards invite all Manitobans to join them on April 27 at the Winnipeg Art Gallery to celebrate this event.

**Wellness Centre
St. James-Assiniboia**

Mr. Gerry McAlpine (Sturgeon Creek): Last week, I attended the official opening of the Wellness Centre in St. James-Assiniboia, located in the constituency of Sturgeon Creek, along with the Minister responsible for Seniors (Mr. Reimer).

Madam Speaker, this health initiative is one which is designed to assist in the creation of health in society, rather than simply the treatment of disease. This centre will help seniors at risk for disability and poor health, and it will give those in the general senior population education and support to enable early appropriate cost-effective management of health needs and optimal use of the health care system.

Madam Speaker, Manitoba Health provided financial support for this project in the amount of \$17,100 to the seniors centre, \$12,800 to the support services to seniors, and \$61,700 to the Wellness Centre, for a total contribution of \$91,600. This is an example of the commitment this government has to the long-term needs of our province's seniors, and we recognize that the health of seniors is dependent upon more than the institutionalized care.

Madam Speaker, the government recognizes the need to work with the seniors in Manitoba as such seniors will be active participants in the identification of needs and the prioritization, development, delivery and the evaluation of the Wellness Centre initiatives. The Wellness Centre will operate as a community-based service, a model in the meeting of the needs of seniors in the St. James-Assiniboia area and will also act as the model for other areas in Manitoba.

This government is committed to the health of our seniors and this centre reaffirms that commitment. Thank you.

Job Creation

Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East): Madam Speaker, Statistics Canada has recently released a report entitled Historical Labour Force Statistics showing among other things the rate of job creation in Canada and the provinces. I have studied these figures and examined

the growth of employment in Manitoba under this government since 1988 and compared it with the growth of jobs under the previous NDP government from 1981 until the end of 1987. During the NDP period of government, Manitoba gained 35,000 new jobs, where, under this present Filmon Conservative government, Manitoba only achieved 14,000 new jobs, that is, there has been a major drop in total job creation in this province under the present government.

On average, Manitoba realized over 5,800 jobs per year under the previous NDP government, whereas only 1,750 per year were created under the present Filmon government. In other words, we achieved a 7.4 percent increase in employment during the NDP years but have slipped down to 2.8 percent under the present government's term of office. Even relative to the national job picture, we have declined in Manitoba under the present government, whereas during the NDP years, Manitoba's employment growth rate was about four-fifths—[interjection]

The Minister of Finance would have us believe that their economic policies have resulted in a great expansion of the Manitoba economy. The facts show otherwise, however. We have experienced a major slowdown in the rate of job creation under this government and, obviously, the economic policies of the present administration have not been successful. No amount of government propaganda can wipe out these facts about the poor job creation performance of this government. The lack of good job opportunities in this province explains why we are losing some of our best and brightest to other parts of Canada.

I trust the government and the Conservative Party will acknowledge that the figures on job creation contained in their recent pamphlet sent to Manitobans are not correct, that Manitoba did not realize 32,000 jobs but only 14,000. The government's economic and fiscal policies have failed to maintain the rate of job creation experienced with the previous government and no amount of government propaganda can erase the truth. Thank you.

**First Anniversary
Provincial Election**

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Madam Speaker, I want to reflect on what the Minister of Justice (Mrs.

Vodrey) just finished commenting on in her political statement.

Yes, it is one year as of today that this government—and what has happened over that last 365 days is that we have seen a government that has demonstrated that it has a focus and that focus, quite frankly, is to freeze personal income tax and to freeze sales tax and to balance the budget and that is, in essence, what it is that they want to be able to say to Manitobans more than anything else in terms of their accomplishment. Well, I would ultimately argue what this government has been most successful at doing is demonstrating to all Manitobans that this is not a caring government, and we have seen that through changes in health care, changes in education and so forth.

I would rather pick up on a theme that it was eight years ago as of tomorrow where we had an election in which there were a few more Liberals that were elected at that point in time. The theme then was competence with heart. I do not believe for a moment that this government has the heart, and one has to question very strongly the competence of this particular government. But I applaud all of those colleagues and join with the member for St. Boniface (Mr. Gaudry) and those who were elected back in 1988 because we will not be sitting tomorrow.

I see I only have about 30 seconds left. The only other thing I would like to say is I did not really give the comment on the resolution earlier today regarding recycling. Recycling is very important. In fact, we would like this government to take a look at what it is they are doing with BFI and to take a more co-ordinated approach dealing with the landfill site or garbage dump, depending on which side of the House and whatever it is you want to call it. Thank you.

* (1440)

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Hon. Jim Ernst (Government House Leader): I move, seconded by the Minister of Rural Development (Mr. Derkach), 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 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)

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Mr. Deputy Chairperson (Ben Sveinson): Order, please. Will the Committee of Supply please come to order. This afternoon this section of 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 1.(b)(1) on page 34 of the Estimates book. The honourable minister, to complete her response from yesterday.

Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Chairman, yesterday, I had been answering a question on best practices that had come forward from the member for Crescentwood (Mr. Sale), and I would like just to conclude. I had begun a response on that.

This question on best practices is interpreted to include all aspects of Education, such as teaching strategies, programs, application of technology, administrative practices, approaches to decision making, ways of working with education partners involving parents and others. The member had asked what the department is doing to stimulate, to support and identify and disseminate such best practices, and it is a good question because it emphasizes that innovation, collaboration, and sharing of practices are effective.

* (1450)

The department believes that a supportive environment is needed if best practices are to be developed and broadly applied, and no one simple model or approach can accomplish this. This environment needs to be viewed in its total context to include structures, mind sets, organizational culture, commitment, trust and the ability to be innovative and visionary. The best

environment for this to happen is where educational partners feel empowered, supported and meaningfully involved in the education system. The department, in order to create this kind of environment, together with other education partners has taken many important steps. I briefly referred to some of them yesterday, the establishment of advisory councils for school leadership to ensure that parents and community members have the fullest opportunity to participate in the education process. They have also established departmental regional teams which provide a local presence and a forum for educators to work together and share ideas. We have held several Parents' Forums, or recently held one a couple of weeks ago, to encourage parents to share effective practices in school planning and to look for areas where improvements are needed or to build on strengths that have been discovered, and that is a very good sharing process.

The department has initiated a key thrust in school planning which will bring out so to speak the skills, knowledge, and insights of communities and assist schools in planning effectively at the local level. Manitoba Education and partners are actively supporting best practices in a series of specific areas. Some examples of those include the assessment and evaluation, activities increase teacher skills, support divisions in conducting effective assessments and evaluations and generate new knowledge about what is working and what is not, so they have been working on assessment and evaluation with school divisions. Also in the area of technology they have brought about activities which have enabled the piloting of educational applications of technology, to foster the sharing of information on using technology for teaching and for learning both as a tool in the classroom and as a skill for students to acquire and also to develop the use of technology for communication and administrative purposes.

In the area of curriculum development, activities have capitalized on collaboration with other jurisdictions, incorporating the input of experts in many fields. Curriculum development also identifies learning outcomes, standards, teaching strategies and resources and emphasizes the continuous and timely updating of curriculum.

With regards to school planning, there is a new thrust and emphasis on school planning. Activities in that

regard will assist schools to strengthen their planning and to share knowledge and experience with this very critical endeavour. We feel schools do need to have a comprehensive plan so that they have goals identified towards which they can strive.

In the area of teacher training and professional development the department has activities to support the development of teachers skills and knowledge to enable teachers to support one another through the train the trainer approach. I made brief reference to the train-the-trainer approach yesterday and also to encourage teachers themselves to be lifelong learners and encourage students to be lifelong learners.

Those are some, Mr. Chairman, of the initiatives the department has undertaken in support of best practices, and I would emphasize that you do need to have some sort of structure around which these things can be woven. It is difficult just to go off and have decisions being made in an ad hoc piecemeal fashion that do not have any sense of continuity. So we are trying to see all these areas linked together, and I hope for the member that that would provide the type of information he was seeking when this question was posed.

Ms. Diane McGifford (Osborne): Mr. Chairman, I would like to ask the minister some questions regarding the Norrie report on school boundaries. Particularly, I am concerned with the Osborne constituency and specifically with one school in the Osborne constituency, the Fort Rouge elementary school, which is situated in the northeast part of the Osborne constituency.

In order to make my questions more sensible I would like to provide a few details about the school and, therefore, put the question in a sensible context.

The location of the school in this matter is extremely important. The area where the school is situated is sometimes called the Stradbrook-Mayfair island, because really the school and the community are isolated, made an island, because of the extremely busy streets. The traffic is very heavy.

Some of the features of the area are changing a little bit with the construction of the Norwood-Main Street bridge. The Stradbrook entrance to Main Street will be closed so that the area that I am talking about now will exist

between Mayfair and Bell as opposed to between Mayfair and Stradbrook, which indeed will make it slightly bigger.

One of the features of the area is the Mayfair-Stradbrook housing project, which is a large, social housing complex. It is home to many of the children who attend Fort Rouge School. Many of the families who live in this complex are single parents. Many of the families are immigrants. Most of the families, and I could probably say all of the families, are quite economically disadvantaged. The community is interesting and fascinating because the parents of this school, disadvantaged as they are economically, and some of the children who attend this school come from across the Donald Street bridge. Anyway, the parents here have developed a very strong community and very strong community links and all of them lead back to the school.

Community here is made possible, in part, by the fact that the school has a school-aged child care centre, which is an extremely vital part of the community. The child care centre is called the Maybrook Children's Centre. There is also a preschool program on nearby Mayfair, almost right across the street from the school, called the River Avenue child care co-op, which has been around for a long time. It is a wonderful, wonderful centre. It has an extremely good reputation in the community.

The school, together with these child care centres, is the community centre, and it is the gathering spot. It is the only real place that children can play, for example. There is no park in this area; kids can play in the school ground.

Parents are very, very strong in their hope that the school will stay open. They want the school to stay open. Yet parents are afraid that with the pie-like divisions proposed by the Norrie report, this small inner city school, which has now been chucked in with—I forget the name of the division—but anyway it has been chucked in with that division that is south of the Assiniboine and west of the Red River, so it has been placed in the same division as very upper middle class and certainly wealthy neighbourhoods, and they fear that the school will close. They fear that their children will be bused to other schools, and consequently this vital community centre would be lost. Can I keep going, Mr. Chairman?

Last summer, a group of extremely dedicated parents went door to door and produced, I believe, some 200

petitions which, together with a document, a letter, detailing their concerns and fears, was submitted to the Norrie report. I want to ask the minister if these parents are correct in their fear or in assuming that their school might close, given the prospectus that I have described?

* (1500)

Mrs. McIntosh: Mr. Chairman, decisions on school closure, of course, are decisions made by school boards, and they are not normally decisions that would be made at the department.

Norrie had worked very hard to ensure that the choice of people in a certain locality would be their choice; that would continue. He went further to say that people should have access to schools of choice. But school boards throughout the decades have opened or closed schools based upon their local decision making, so any decision about the continued existence of any particular school would always come back to the trustees elected by the people in the school division.

So I really find it a difficult question to answer. I know the concerns the member is raising, and I understand the legitimacy of those concerns for those people, but they are concerns that would have to go to the locally elected trustees for decision making.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: The honourable member for Osborne, before you start your question or comments, to all members, there is a 10-minute limit, if you will, that you all have.

I was not sure when you asked—

Ms. McGifford: I knew about the 10 minutes; I did not think I had taken 10 minutes.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: No, you have 10 minutes to do your question or your comments.

I was not going to cut anybody off; I was just wondering when you mentioned to me, could I go on. But there is a 10-minute limit, and I will let you know when you get within a minute of it so that you will know.

Ms. McGifford: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for your remarks.

The parents of the school are then very anxious that their school be included in one of the divisions whose socioeconomic mix more closely matches theirs. They feel this will help protect the school and keep it open. Would the minister like to respond to this?

Mrs. McIntosh: I understand what the trustees are saying, what the people are saying. They are talking basically about the principle of what has come to be called communities of like interest, communities with similar goals and objectives. Again I can indicate, with the current Winnipeg School Division there is a very wide disparity amongst the various areas, the neighbourhoods of the Winnipeg School Division as it exists today where you will have areas that are fairly well-to-do and others that are quite poor.

I believe the Winnipeg School Division Board in its decision making has made every effort to try to accommodate the needs of those in schools that have greater challenges in terms of socioeconomic circumstances or children at risk or disadvantaged families vis-à-vis those in the more affluent neighbourhoods in Winnipeg No. 1 where the families have a fairly good income and a lifestyle that would indicate a degree of privilege in terms of being able to have piano lessons and swimming lessons and access to enrichment in their social fabric outside of school.

I say that because the current configuration that you are describing finds the particular school in question in a division right now that has a very wide range of socioeconomic circumstances. Yet I believe the trustees on that board have worked very hard to try to accommodate that mix that they find and in many of the schools have done a very good job in fact of achieving that meeting of the local need.

So it is not always a truism that a division, just because it has a variety of peoples and backgrounds, is unable to accommodate those various factions and diversities within their own division.

Ms. McGifford: Mr. Chairman, I think the fear of the parents, I know the fear of the parents is that according to the proposed boundary there would not be a variety. Their school would be an anomaly in this area of basically economically well-heeled schools. Therefore, their school, a small school, would be quickly closed, or

maybe not quickly closed—closed. After a number of years a decision might be made to close the school, taking away their community centre and creating a situation where their children were bussed, where their children did not have that community centre anymore, and they feel it would be absolutely destructive of their community. I wonder if the minister could respond to that.

Mrs. McIntosh: I very much appreciate the concerns of the parents in that regard. It is a concern, I think, that many schools have felt through time, whether or not boundaries were up for examination, because school divisions right now have the ability to close schools—and have and do close schools—where the trustees of that division feel the need is warranted. That has happened in many of the existing divisions with usually a fair degree of concern and upset expressed by parents during the closure period.

I have been through the process. I know what the member is talking about because my home division has closed many schools. Experience has shown that once the students enter a successful, consolidated school, generally, in the vast majority of cases, the opinions do change once the new situation is experienced. But I quite agree that the nervousness at the thought is most unsettling to people.

Part of the dilemma inherent in the member's question is that, whether or not anything happens with boundaries, any decision as to schools would still be up to the local elected board of trustees. There is just as strong an ability for the current board to make decisions on school closures as a potential new board. So it all comes down, in the final analysis, to who is it that sits on the school board and what kinds of decisions do those trustees make once they are in power and empowered to make decisions.

* (1510)

I note your concern. I am aware of it because it has been brought to my attention. I appreciate you and other MLAs who have come forward to express, on behalf of their own constituencies, a reiteration of those concerns and the request that they be taken into consideration. They are indicative of the sensitivities of this kind of question. It will be one of those concerns that is looked at as we go through our process, which we are doing now

as government, to see if the balance that needs to be there in education, a balance for taxation equity, for community needs, administrative feasibility, but most important of all—and the one essential that can never be overlooked—is this, in the long-term benefit of students. That will always underlie everything.

So I am not able to answer her question with definitive answers because it enters so much into the speculative realm. Yet, I know the concern that has caused the question to come forward. I note it for reference and thank her for bringing it forward.

Ms. McGifford: Just to reiterate or clarify one of the points that I was making, I think in the current situation, the school feels safer because it is an inner city school along with a lot of other inner city schools, but if the boundaries, as they are proposed, were indeed enacted upon, then the school would be an anomaly and would be alone. So that is why the parents feel themselves much more susceptible to closure in the proposed divisions than they do in the current. That is also why the parents would prefer to be in a division, have their school included in a division which is an inner city division.

I understand that despite the 200 petitions that have been submitted by the parents and despite what I understand to be quite a lengthy presentation, there was no mention made of Fort Rouge School in the second Norrie report, which really, I think, underlines the concern of the parents. So I am very glad to hear that the minister understands and has heard what I have had to say on behalf of the school.

I spoke this morning with the chair of the Fort Rouge parents council, and this woman asked me if I would ask the minister why they cannot get straight answers from the minister and why they cannot get an appointment to speak to the minister about their concerns. They feel they have no credence and no recognition in the office of the Department of Education.

Mrs. McIntosh: Mr. Chairman, I have met with many school division boards and schools. Do you happen to know when they made the request for a meeting?

Ms. McGifford: No, I do not have that information. I was also told that they had sent several letters which had not been answered. I can certainly find out that

information and correspond with the minister. These parents are very concerned, and they would really like to meet with the minister so that they can put their concerns directly before the minister.

Mrs. McIntosh: I thank the member for that. As I say, I have met with many communities and virtually all the school boards at this point. What may have happened, if they did not receive a response, if it was a 200-signature petition, many of those have been received in the office and received as information. Some of them may have requested a reply and would receive one; others, it is assumed that a petition, for example, would be sent in for information and not be seen as one that had desired a reply but rather just wanted to make sure that information was before the minister.

Anything that came in before the commission completed its second report was received by my office either as information or as a piece of correspondence that wanted a reply and anything that was sent in of the nature the member describes before the commission reported was forwarded to the commission with a covering letter from me indicating something along this line that I have received a petition that is applicable to your study and forwarding it to you for your consideration so that you will be aware of these citizens' concerns, something like that. The commission may have been copied on a lot of these things because I noted that sometimes I would receive something that was clearly something the commission should have, would forward it over for their consideration and they would indicate that they had already received a copy of it. So people were either writing to the commission and copying me, or writing to me and copying the commission, but I never assumed that would happen. I just, normally, would forward them over for their consideration, and at the same time, of course, would then tuck the knowledge into my own brain as well, because I had then heard the information.

I have not consciously refused to meet with anybody who has asked to meet with me on this issue. It may be that there have been some requests come in that I am not aware of. A lot of things will come into the office where it may be seen that the information can be provided by staff, in which case the staff will simply provide the information and feel that they have provided what the person contacting the office was requesting, and then they do not bother the minister, so to speak, just because of

the volume of telephone calls and so on that come into that particular ministry's office.

So staff, generally, when requests come in, if they feel they are able to accommodate or provide information, if that is what is being asked for, will handle it themselves and come to me with those things where it is a specific request, or where they feel that they, themselves, are not able to help the citizen with whatever it is.

But I will check when I get back. I think you have the name of the school in the Hansard, and I believe it is in the Fort Rouge area. Is it the Osborne school?

Ms. McGifford: Fort Rouge.

Mrs. McIntosh: The Fort Rouge School. I will check when I get back, and if they have a specific request there, see if they would still like to meet with me. I would be pleased to do that. Sometimes it is sort of funny times for meetings, but it can be arranged.

Ms. McGifford: I thank the minister for that. I am sure that the parents still are very anxious to meet with the minister, and I will phone the chair of the parents council and give her the information that the minister is willing and eager to meet with parents councils.

Mrs. McIntosh: That would be very helpful, if the member does not mind doing that, and perhaps you could indicate when he or she phones that they indicate on the phone that the minister and their own MLA have talked about this and the minister is expecting the call. That way it will go through to my appointment secretary.

Ms. McGifford: I will certainly do as the minister suggests.

I wanted to just ask one other question, and that is, back to the Norrie report, the second Norrie report. I understood the minister explained about petitions and letters and whatnot, all going to the commission, and yet, despite these 200 petitions and lengthy document that was apparently submitted, according to the parents—and the minister will have the opportunity to discuss those with the parents, no doubt—there still is no mention in the second Norrie report of Fort Rouge School and of the concerns brought forward by those parents.

I wonder what could have happened. Is there a problem in the process, or are there glitches? I wonder if the minister could answer that question, please.

* (1520)

Mrs. McIntosh: I am assuming the petition came in prior to the Norrie report's final determination.

Ms. McGifford: Actually, what had happened is that I phoned and made an arrangement for this material to be accepted a little later. It is wonderful that these parents were able to do anything, and I think that the minister would agree with me that some people are more equal than others and, in this case, these are disadvantaged people and it took them a little longer to get things together. I did phone and I did obtain permission for them to have their submission received slightly later and the dates escape me now, but I think it was August 15.

Mrs. McIntosh: Mr. Chairman, at that date, yes, it would have gone to the commission.

I cannot speak for the Norrie commission in terms of what they included in their final report. I know we had a similar question raised yesterday by the member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett) who was also looking for commentary on points that had been raised by the Brooklands area. My answer to her yesterday—which will be essentially similar to what I will now provide you—is that Norrie in his second round did not comment on Brooklands or Fort Rouge or those areas, although many had brought concerns to his attention. What he did was to indicate where he had decided to deviate from his original report and had indicated in his second and final report that, unless he had specified a change, the rationale that he had presented in the first one, the commission still felt held on the second round, despite what they had heard from people.

Essentially—I am paraphrasing—but the message that came through was that they had not been sufficiently convinced to change their original rationale when they did the second report, except in those few places.

Just looking at the report, which I am sure you are familiar with, on page 8 he has indicated that they are reaffirming their original recommendation on virtually all of the Winnipeg decisions and he acknowledges some of

the items that school boards had put before him and people had put before him, but then indicates—just to give you an example, because it is the page I am looking at—he is talking about some things that were pointed out by a school division that had had a lot of school closures. He indicates the commission recognized that over the years divisions have had some difficult choices with respect to school closures and downsizing due to reducing student numbers. It goes on to indicate the concerns that were put forward and then says, however, such adjustments are inevitable with any attempt to rationalize the 10 Winnipeg school divisions and comes back to saying that we reaffirm our original recommendations. So he heard, listened and held to his original position.

Ms. McGifford: Perhaps I could finish with a comment. The failure of this group of parents to be sufficiently convincing I think really underlines the fear that they have, that there are a few of them, there is a small number of them. Who is going to listen to them? Who is going to look after them? What is the future of the school? What is the future of the community? What is the future of the kids? I think that we have a moral obligation to protect this school and this community and these children.

Mrs. McIntosh: I thank the member for her comments. At this time, I am unable to indicate a conclusion to the Norrie report, but her comments are now with us, and I will be most pleased to meet with the parents. I might indicate it might be sort of an unusual time of the day or something like that, but if they do not mind, I do not mind, and I will be expecting their call when they are able to make it to the office.

Mr. Gerry McAlpine (Sturgeon Creek): Mr. Chairman, I have a couple of areas that I wanted to touch on. I do not know whether the minister or the department will be able to answer these questions at this time, but I do want to get some understanding of the matter with regard to the Department of Education's direction or whether there is any direction with regard the degree program, primarily the bachelor of education degree, centred around that and the numbers of students that are enrolling in these faculties. What is happening with these students when they graduate? I guess my concern is the numbers that are graduating. How many of these are able to get employment in the system within the province of Manitoba, who we are putting through this

system in this province? I wonder if you could comment on that, and then I will go on from there.

Mrs. McIntosh: We can check the exact numbers and provide them for the member. What I can tell you, without the specific numbers here right now, is that we are graduating right now many more teachers than are being hired. We have four faculties of education in Manitoba, as the member is probably aware, and we see it come in surges in that right now there is what we call an oversupply or an overabundance of newly graduated teachers. We are graduating more than the field requires.

We are aware at the same time, however, that there is a large body of teachers who are in an age grouping, that big grouping again, that is sort of moving through the system, the big generation moving through the system. They are in their 50s, fiftyish, in terms of age bracket. Many of those in a few years will be beginning to retire. So we have on the one hand an oversupply right now; we are graduating more than we need if they are looking for classroom teaching. One thing I say to people is that a degree in education can be used for a lot more than teaching in a classroom. A degree in education can be used for a wide variety of occupations and career opportunities, but by and large, of course, people are seeking classroom experience.

* (1530)

When we get to the point that that large group of teachers retire, and they retire within a very short time span, we will then require more people graduating to take those empty positions. It may be the number we have got graduating right now is the amount we will need graduating in eight years time or 10 years time, even though it is too much right now.

We have Dr. Shapiro from McGill University currently taking a look at the faculties of education in Manitoba. That was sparked by two things: One, BOTE, the Board of Teacher Education and Certification, has asked for some changes in the credit hours at the University of Manitoba in teacher education. The University of Manitoba, earlier this year, indicated it wanted to move to a two-year after-degree program. In other words, they said they wanted to have students coming in to obtain a degree in education who already had their undergraduate degree in arts, music, whatever it would be. They would

then come in and take a two-year after-degree. So it would be what we call three plus two, a five-year program to obtain a teaching degree.

The University of Winnipeg, on the other hand, has an integrated program where they have teachers from Day One of their studies working on things that are useful in the classroom. They take courses in mathematics, for example, that are geared towards the teaching of mathematics as opposed to just the acquiring of knowledge. They then take their final year of experience through the University of Manitoba. So a change at the University of Manitoba has a very large impact on those studying at the University of Winnipeg.

One of the things when we talk about moving towards a post-secondary system where we see the system as a whole, instead of looking at it as a series of individual institutions in competition with each other, as we start to look at the system as a whole system with a series of co-operating partners rather than competitors, we need to make sure we can get the flowing of needs back and forth working well.

We asked the University of Manitoba if they would hold for a while, at least a year, on their decision to move to the three plus two while we tried to look at the impact on everybody else who was either doing teacher training or hiring of teachers. One thing that was of great concern to school boards, when the University of Manitoba announced its intentions, was that it meant the teachers would automatically graduate with Class V. The school board said, that means first-year teachers will cost us more and it will discourage us from wanting to expand our base with teachers from the University of Manitoba because they will be more expensive in their first year without the experience.

(Mr. Peter Dyck, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair)

Dr. Shapiro from McGill University, who is an expert in this area and has done similar studies elsewhere in Canada, is currently examining and exploring what could be done to ensure that teacher training in Manitoba is—it does not have to be identical institution to institution, but that you can do some good interacting, that you are not impacting negatively on any other area by decisions made on one campus, and that we have a system that best meets the needs of students of a system that is a system-wide

system, and of the ultimate system for education where the students learn from those teachers who have graduated from our universities.

This is a rather long answer, I realize, but it is a rather complicated issue. We are hoping that the information that we obtain from Dr. Shapiro will be useful for the universities to examine and discuss, for us to look at in terms of any direction that we might feel we should be giving to help.

We are also, at the same time, wanting to make sure that what we are teaching those who would be teachers is really relevant and meaningful, and this goes much beyond what Dr. Shapiro may be able to say to us, but as Minister of Education and through the department, we want to make sure that as we renew education in the schools, teachers come out of faculty equipped to handle those new directions and that they are not left foundering. So we have to look at those kinds of upgrading of curricula there as well.

We can get you, and we will get you information on the specific numbers that you have requested, and we might hopefully have it for you this afternoon, but the trend is we are putting out more than we are currently able to find jobs for right now.

Mr. McAlpine: I thank the minister for that answer, and she did answer some of the other questions that I was going to raise at this time.

My understanding and my interpretation of the answer that she did give is one that I am led to believe that the minister, after Dr. Shapiro's examination of this, would maybe put a greater onus on the universities and the faculties to create the balance that we are maybe lacking in that area as far as the enrollment with regard to Education students into the faculties throughout the four areas of the universities that offer that today.

The other aspect that I would be interested to know is, if that is the case, would the minister or the department be possibly open to the suggestion that there be some consideration given to the same faculties as, say, engineering or the medical faculties where they do limit the number of students that are enrolling in those faculties for that very reason?

I guess when we talk about the—and the minister hinted on that—when we have young students graduating from

the Department of Education, and I know that there are many out there that are unable to get employment in the system, they either go and are quite qualified to go and do other things. We have all had that experience with these young students, but also I think that what happens then, if then want to, if they are determined to stay within the profession, they are encouraged to go, just by the design of this, and try to gain greater education like a master's degree. Then they get to the point where they price themselves right out of the market, because they do not have the experience to go along with that. I guess what I am leaning to here, and I am asking for the minister's and the department's feeling on that aspect, as to whether or not they would actually consider having a greater input in terms of what the numbers are going into the enrollment of the education faculty.

Mrs. McIntosh: The member raises questions that are being wrestled with constantly and certainly recently by the Board of Teacher Education and Certification, by the universities themselves. The whole question of supply and demand is an inexact science. You can make trends and predictions; particularly in education, you can make trends and predictions based upon population projections and demographics. It is possible to look ahead, for example, and say, if population remains stable, we now have X number of infants who will in four years time be in the public school system or in the school system somewhere and will require X number of teachers. You can sort of do those predictions a little more easily than you can with other kinds of disciplines.

The university itself, universities and colleges and so on are aware of this supply-and-demand question. They have been addressing it themselves, to some extent, by raising standards for admission, by making it more of a requirement to have certain prerequisites prior to entering faculties of teaching, and they also have by virtue of suggesting things, such as get an undergraduate degree first before you take your degree in education. They are either directly or indirectly, consciously or unconsciously, providing students with a degree useful for other areas besides just education prior to a two-year pedagogical study, whereas the integrated program would see people preparing from Day One for a classroom career, which may or may not be the end result of their training. So they are aware of those sensitivities and conscious of supply and demand.

* (1540)

I will be interested to see what comes out of discussions currently being held amongst the decision makers with Dr. Shapiro and BOTEC, as they wrestle with the very question the member has raised.

(Mr. Deputy Chairperson in the Chair)

We are always receptive and open to any suggestion that we think might help improve the quality of education, the right mix of aptitudes and abilities entering the teaching fields. We know that within a decade, give or take a few years, we will once again see a high demand for teachers as that great body retires. We want to make sure that, when that time comes, we have the right numbers and the right kinds of graduates coming forward. I am afraid I cannot be more specific than that at this time.

Mr. McAlpine: Mr Chairman, I guess I have a little bit of concern with the answer, where the minister has made the comment with regard to increasing the standards. I have some concern for that in the fact that the best students academically do not necessarily make the best teachers. I would just throw that caution out.

I do want to make it clear and have it put on the record, too, that I do not want to see the minister making the decisions for all those people, or the department making the decisions for all those people who should be making decisions for themselves. Being the enterprising individual that I am, I feel that there is a responsibility on them to ensure that there is going to be an opportunity at the end of the tunnel for these people before they do go into it, but that does not seem to be happening. I guess my concern is for that because when you consider the economics—and that is really what I am looking at from that aspect, so I just wanted to clear that aspect of it, and also to make the comment that I do not necessarily think that increasing the standards is necessarily the answer to limit the number of students enrolling because of that reason. I felt that going through the school system and university courses throughout my education process, I found that those that certainly had a good command academically of the education process did not necessarily make the best teachers.

I think that is what we are really concerned with is the quality of the teachers and the quality of the learning

because I think it is one thing to be a teacher, but I think it is more important that the people that are going through the system are learning from this. That is where I guess I put a priority and just making those comments.

There is one other aspect that I wanted to—actually, two more things that I wanted to address, and those are with regard to the numbers of teachers that are going through the system. I just want to ask the minister and the department if they are aware that student teachers before they graduate must spend a particular time in the classroom. Is there any difficulty in placing these students that are going through from year to year? If there is such a problem—and you may want to check on this because it has been suggested to me that there are universities that actually have had to send some of their students out of the country in order to get experience. I do not know how that can be done and still get a certificate here in Manitoba. But that has been suggested, and it came from a fairly reliable source.

Whether you will be able to answer that or not, at least it is on the record that the student teachers before they graduate have to have practical experience in the classroom and there are not sufficient schools that are able to take these students to give them that, so that consequently universities are having to refer them to areas outside the country. So, if you wanted to answer that, and then I have a couple of other questions that I would finish off with.

Mrs. McIntosh: Mr. Chairman, there were two points that the member raised, and I would like to address them both. One is in his comments after my last response about standards. He made some very good points, and I agree with him. I would just like to reassure him that, when universities talk about raising standards, they are not talking about academic marks per se. I think over time we have come as a society to use the word “standards” so specifically that this is a common concern out in the field. We talk about testing for standards and people automatically assume that we mean standardized testing, or when we talk about standards, people make automatic assumptions based upon past usage of the word.

In this instance, the raising of standards for the entrance into the faculty, some criteria have been set. One of those criteria is indeed the academic standing

which, at the moment, is confusing for universities because, until we get some standards in Grade 12 against which there could be a common measurement, you know, 80 percent in one school means something completely different than 80 percent in another, so it is very difficult for the university. It is a source of constant complaint from the university that we have to have these measurements that can be seen as consistent so they know what the mark means, particularly when they are used for university entrance.

* (1550)

The university talks from time to time about trying to have a common first year or first year of sort of remedial work so that they can take the students through and then again test and find out what their standards really are. We do not want that of course. That is why we are putting in standards exams and assessments so that people know what 80 percent in Grade 12 mathematics means when they go to apply to university, as one place they apply.

But having said that, academic is one of the things, but there are two other important components of the standards. One, of course, is to ensure the person is free from any criminal record, and that is seen now as something that must be done. So that is one. The academic is the other. The third is a personal, in-depth interview, which we will discuss with that person or attempt to find out from that person attitudes, feelings, personal interactions, the human side, the manner aspect of teaching, those kind of things.

One very simple, simple thing I had I will use by way of an example because I remember feeling so very, very sorry for this particular individual, a true illustration that absolutely verifies the member's point. The person in question was a Faculty of Education student assigned to my class as a co-operating teacher who had straight A's all the way through and got in front of a classroom and just simply could not teach. It was so sad. A lot of it was simply an inability to project the voice or speak in anything but a monotone. It was very difficult for that individual, very, very soft-spoken, that unless you were in the front row you could barely hear. The tonal quality was such that it did not take very long for people to become no longer willing to listen and attention was diverted to other things. Try and try and try as we might

to assist this person, and it is possible this person could have been assisted ultimately given enough time and enough energy into it, the teaching experience was not a happy one, and yet this was a very highly skilled academic.

A very important component, I think, for people who want to become teachers is that they find out fairly early in their studies how well suited they might be to the field. I think that is good for them to find that out early; it is good for the system as well. But, in the final analysis, we want excellent teachers, as seen by the fact that they are good and sound people for the safety of the children, that they are academically able, that they must know what they are teaching. It is not enough just to know how to teach; you must know your subject area as well. I know a lot of people argue that and say that you do not have to know the subject area, if you know how to teach, you can then learn the subject area and teach it—you know, a music teacher being a prime example. You have to know your subject area well, have a passion for it, and then, on top of that, have the pedagogical skills to transmit that knowledge.

The third thing is that they have to be methodologically effective. They have to know about, and how to employ, and when to employ various methods, the how-to of teaching. Some things will work with some children; you will need a different approach for others. They need to have senses of that. But the human qualities of fairness, caring, firmness, understanding, the ability to inspire, to motivate, to be interesting—if you are not interesting, if you cannot inspire in front of the class or if you cannot get people to listen to you, you are not going to stand a chance trying to transmit knowledge.

You have to be innovative because you are going to have this group of people in front of you, each coming to you with a different way of looking at life, so you have to be innovative to try to reach them all. You have to have a sense of humour; you die if you do not have a sense of humour when you are teaching. To me, it is an essential. You must have the ability to see the humour and the joy and the fun in things as you are ripping yourself apart trying to get knowledge into the students.

So those are things they are looking for now as students come in, so when I say raising standards, that is all part of it. I think it is what I heard in your question,

is the concern that those things should happen, and we are moving to see them happen.

In terms of your other question about the practicum, I have not heard of any teachers that have had to leave the province for that practical experience. We are seeing comments coming forward and suggestions coming forward that if the faculty has 150 credit hours, that 90 percent of that should be for academics and 60 percent for the practical.

I am one that advocates a long period of time in the classroom. My personal preference is to see the mentoring. I have said it before; I do not mean to be repetitious about it, but in all areas of learning I like the master/apprentice. I like that way of doing things where you attach an enthusiastic student to a master who is skilled in the field, and you let them work in conjunction with each other for a long enough period of time that the master's model becomes absorbed by the apprentice.

So I think the choosing of co-operating teachers is critically important and that the period of time that a student-teacher spends with what we now call co-operating teachers, which in my mind I call mentors, needs to be a fairly long period of time. It needs to be a period of positive interaction where the mentor, the co-operating teacher, is there to assist and to help that student improve and reach higher and higher standards.

In the final analysis, it has to be one where the mentor is honest with the student and not give them a passing grade on their practicum if, indeed, it has not been of good quality. That is very hard for many co-operating teachers; but if our long-term goal is to say that schools are for students, then everything else, in terms of how people might feel, is irrelevant in terms of the greater need of the student. I have seen co-operating teachers pass practicums when they should not have been because they did not want to hurt the student's feelings and because they had A's in their other work.

* (1600)

Mr. McAlpine: Mr. Chairman, I guess I am encouraged by what the minister offers.

I think that—again, I talk of past experience with regard to teachers—the quality of each individual teacher—I mean,

we have such a wide choice in seeking teachers and hiring teachers today from those who are graduating. Certainly, we have a strong resource there. I cannot emphasize enough the importance of the quality of the teacher, not so much on the academic but in being able to have the understanding, because often those teachers who have graduated with high academic marks do not maybe have the understanding that some people may not be able to learn as quickly as they were able to and have that same appreciation. I think that is enough to say about that.

I am encouraged by what the minister says. Hopefully, the divisions that are seeking teachers are of the same mind because I think that is really important, and that is where the decisions are made in terms of the type of teachers who are being hired.

It leads me to my next question: With regard to society today where we have a lot of single parents in society, and most of those single parents are female according to my recollection and my knowledge, I am just wondering if there is any policy in place, an Affirmative Action Policy, that as far as the department is concerned or any divisions that you might know of which practise affirmative action. Primarily, because of the fact that if that is the case, where young students may not have the same exposure to the male influence in a person's life—which I think is really important, I think there has to be a balance—but for a young student, whether it is a male or a female, the father image or the male image is so important in building and helping to build relationships and helping to build character in individuals, so that they do have an understanding of that.

I just wonder if the minister could comment on that. I guarantee after that, I only have one more question.

Mrs. McIntosh: Mr. Chairman, the government and the department have an Affirmative Action Policy; divisions are not required to have one, but many do. Winnipeg No. 1, I believe, has a policy of affirmative action that sees them working very hard to ensure that aboriginal students have role models in the classroom, for example, to whom they can relate.

I just spent the noon hour at the Children of the Earth School, which I have visited before a couple of times, but

I was seeing it today because I had gone with the Prince of Wales to the Children of the Earth School, and I was looking at it through his perspective, trying to think, now I wonder what the Prince of Wales thinks of this school. You do see it differently when you are in the presence of somebody like that, and saw the role modelling and so on that is going on there for the students and the positive impacts that come out of that.

So Winnipeg No.1 has worked in that area to try to address the kind of requirement I think you are asking. A lot of boards, whether they have a policy to do that or not, will still move internally to try to get that balance. You see a lot of divisions now really encouraging their female teachers to apply for administrative positions. They will say, you know, you are a really good teacher and you have got a lot of skills, why do you not consider applying to be a vice-principal, and they will solicit applications from women or other people in the division that they think might serve as good role models, not to say that they always get the job, but they encourage them to start thinking of moving forward in that way.

One thing where I think school divisions should really be aware of student's needs is in terms of children who have lived their preschool years and their early school years with a single mom and miss the father modelling. Some divisions have started to encourage men into kindergarten and primary school teaching positions, but that is not happening to the degree that I would like to see. I think divisions have gone a long way in terms of encouraging women into administrative positions, but there still seems to be an understanding that those teachers who teach kindergarten or Grade 1, 2 or 3 should be primarily female.

I think that it would be wonderful for children to have a male image, a male role model at the front of the room, particularly when there are so many single families headed by women. I think that could give the child the male bonding that is required for full and healthy psychological development.

So I am hoping that we will see more young men consider teaching careers in the early childhood portion of learning. I think they would find great satisfaction from teaching at that level, and it would be very, very good for the children to see the mix and to be exposed to a healthy, positive relationship with a man, particularly

if they do not have that opportunity to any great degree in their personal lives outside of school.

I do not know if that answers your question, but I think it touches on what your concern was.

Mr. McAlpine: The only comment I would make is that I guess it is entirely up to the divisions and rightly so. They should be the ones to determine whom they should be hiring through the interview process. I certainly have all confidence in that, and I certainly would not want to take any responsibility away from them.

I guess I would have to offer encouragement to the department to ensure that that message is given to divisions, or to be at least conscious of it so that they know that they are serving the students with that aspect of it. From that point, you know, I think that the more we can do as legislators along that line and without making the decisions for these people, that we could go a long way in the education process.

I will let the minister—I know she is anxious to respond to that, and I will ask her one more question after that on another matter.

Mrs. McIntosh: I just cannot resist responding because—the member is correct. One source of irritation I have always had—and I keep saying this to trustees and teachers when we get talking about this particular topic. It irritates me when I hear the kindergarten to Grade 8 area talked about as somehow not as significant as the Grade 9 to Senior 4 experience. They will say, you are moving up into a higher stratosphere when you are teaching high school or you have had to go back and teach elementary school.

* (1610)

If education moves continuum, then, of course, you are always moving forward and up to higher levels of learning, but the skill that is needed to take the little five-year-olds, six-year-olds, seven-year-olds, eight-year-olds and give them a really solid foundation is incredibly important because, if they do not achieve well and feel good about those first years of learning, they will not have the foundation to learn better and better as they go on, and they will not achieve the final skills and things they need in Grade 12 if they have shot themselves in the

foot, so to speak, in the primary grades. So I think, of all the levels of learning, to me it is critical that those first years, those early years, be solid and thorough and be taught by highly skilled people.

I wish people would see that more as highly significant. I wish that men would see that as a challenging and interesting area to enter and that people would stop seeing it as sort of the lesser part of education. I just had to make the comments, sorry.

Mr. McAlpine: That raises another aspect, and I just make this comment because you are absolutely right, Madam Minister. I can say that from personal experience as a partner in McAlpine Nursery and Kindergarten many years ago, when we would have children of two and a half to six years of age in a private nursery and kindergarten. My wife was the main partner in this. I was just sort of the person who went along for the ride. But anytime that I was to go into that environment and to the classroom and to the kindergarten and nursery and work with those young students, you could certainly see what was going through their minds and how attached they would get to you, and only because of the male image that was there and was prevalent to them. It was so important to them.

I think that is really the point that I wish to make. I know the minister is on the same wavelength with regard to that. I guess it could be carried over into the older ages but especially at that point. This was not in an area of people that were doing without. These parents paid for their children to be in this environment, so they were able to afford that, but still it was a situation that was so obvious, and that brings that to mind as the minister was speaking.

Another area that I wish to talk on, and I do not know whether there is any direction on this, but I would like the minister and the department, if at all possible, to—as the minister knows, we come from an area where, in the last 15 years, we have closed 15 schools, which has been a real concern. It has been a real challenge for the people in the areas that we represent, especially of going through the hardship of uprooting their communities and closing these schools down.

I guess if we look back over the past 25 years, certainly hindsight is better than 20/20 vision often, but we may have done some things differently that may not have put

the communities through these difficult times. I throw this caution out at this point to other areas where there is development, say, in the areas where student enrollment is increasing to the point where the school cannot keep up with the numbers, people, and they are having to bus and those sorts of things, which is an additional cost coming into the equation.

I am just wondering, in view of that, and in these areas, has there been any consideration to entering into the year-round education and bringing communities into the framework or the understanding of the year-round education so that the students can continue to be educated and taught within their own communities and at the same schools?

Mrs. McIntosh: Some years ago, apparently, the department did take a look at that particular issue and they spent a fair bit of time delving into it and concluded at the end of that that it was not a way they wanted to go for a variety of reasons, the basic reasons being that the public, parents, students, teachers felt that they just did not want to see that occur.

Having said that, of course, we do have summer school. We have summer courses which in the main are used for remedial work. Students will often take a course to improve a mark or to repeat something that they had not accomplished during the academic year and, in a sense, you are talking about someone who is then going year-round. Maybe even picking up an extra course would be possible in those circumstances.

I know that is not what you are talking about. You are talking about actually having the regular curriculum running. We have not discussed that in the department since some years ago when they raised it at that time. It has not come up again as a topic for discussion.

It does get raised from time to time the way you are raising it. Somebody will ask the question, but the response has always been, we have not discussed it at this time.

Mr. McAlpine: I only want to comment on this from the aspect of year-round education, really it is not maybe what the minister is suggesting here. Year-round education is one where they still have their breaks in the summertime, but maybe a shorter break. I think that,

from the experience that I have had with the year-round education and, granted, it is limited, there are far more benefits in terms of the quality of the education and the learning that the students are gaining from this. The teachers, once they understand the concept of year-round education, are buying into it as well because of the fact that, when they go through their cycle in terms of—and the community is the one that takes the responsibility in determining as to whether or not they want to buy into the year-round education.

When they weigh the alternatives, the year-round education is a very positive alternative. It is certainly from our aspect, as far as government is concerned, when we consider having to go and build another school to the extent of millions and millions of dollars and bearing in mind what we have gone through as a community in closing 15 schools and not getting very much in terms of the true value for those when we have to sell them or close them, for whatever reason, I think that the department should take a very strong and serious look at that aspect and, especially, in the areas where there is a need and where there are increasing enrollments, where the capacity of the school is being challenged.

Years ago, I think that maybe year-round education did not fit in terms of people's lifestyles, because they look at it from the aspect—when you look at the economics of it. Summer camps, as an example, well, you do not have to have summer camps only during the summer months. You can have them year-round. It gives an opportunity for those economics to improve and to develop. It also gives an opportunity for more teachers to be involved. There is just no end to the number of advantages. I think that if we are going to take—and I do not mean this in a derogatory way—but a narrow vision, I think that we really have to be open to the opportunities that are offered and can benefit. Because the experience that I had in terms of students and what has been reported to me as far as the year-round education program, I mean, this is practised in places where there are ghettos and the students are far better educated. Their delinquency level has dropped to unbelievable levels.

All those things, all those positive things are happening, and it just seems that with all these things that we are facing and the challenges as far as the number of students in classes and the increased enrollments and schools being pushed to the limits as far as the size in the

enrollments, I think that is something we should, rather than building schools, I would invite the minister and the department to really look at that very seriously because I think there are economies there that we are not recognizing. Just because we have been doing the things that we are doing for a hundred years does not necessarily mean that we are doing it right. I have challenged the minister and the department to look at that very seriously.

* (1620)

Mrs. McIntosh: I thank the member for his suggestion, and, as I indicated, we have not undertaken any recent dialogue on this topic. I have received the question you have asked much the way you have asked it from sources from time to time. You have presented some rationality or question that has merit, that is meritorious. Right now with all that we have got on our plates, so to speak, we have some pretty mammoth changes coming into education. We are always willing to look at new ideas and agree with the member that we do not need to keep doing things the way we do them just because we always have done them that way. As the member knows, we are not afraid to make big bold changes if we think they are needed, and we are not afraid to explore new ideas or new concepts.

The idea and the concept he has proposed, if he has additional literature or reading on it, we would be pleased to take a look at it. Maybe it is something we should talk about someday. I think right now the timing—we can always look at new ideas and talk about them and start to research them and look at them and weigh pros and cons. In terms of major initiatives right now, my sense is that we have so many major initiatives going on right now that we need to space and time decision making so that we do not burn out all the people who are researching and studying.

Anything we have read on the points you have raised do support some of the benefits that you have cited in your question. Most year-round education that we are aware of that operates well, operates well or better in large urban settings as opposed to more sparsely populated rural settings, but I must confess that I do not have an in-depth knowledge on all the pros and cons of this particular topic, because I have not spent a lot of time myself looking at it. But the member is most welcome to continue putting forth thoughts on that, and

if you have, as I say, any literature or readings on the subject you think that might be useful for us to see, we would be pleased to read it—once the session is over, not right at this very moment because of time constraints.

I just want to say one last thing before I finish, and that is that whether or not we adopt this particular initiative, that is the kind of creative thinking that we want to hear from elected MLAs, from educators, from people of Manitoba. What are the creative ideas out there that might help make education more cost-effective, more ultimately beneficial, might help students fast-track their education if they are fast learners and want to get on with the job? We need to blue sky and brainstorm and talk about ideas that may seem at first glance away from the norm or unusual or sometimes even at first glance unworkable. We need to look at all of those things. Only by getting springboards for discussion—one idea sparks another idea and out of that kind of think tank kind of dialogue, good ideas can pop out that are seen and recognized when they might never have surfaced otherwise, so I thank you.

Mr. McAlpine: Just one more comment, Mr. Chairman, and I would just say that I am not expecting the department necessarily to take the lead on this aspect as far as year-round education, because I think that is the wrong message that I am giving, because I firmly believe that responsibility begins at home. I think that the community is the one that has to take the responsibility, but I think if the department would suggest to these communities to look at the alternative or the opportunities that are available with year-round education, where that may fit—I come away with somewhat of an impression that, well, we looked at it, we did not like it years ago, so we are not going to even consider it today. I would not want the department to have that idea instilled in their mind today, because I think there is an opportunity, and I firmly believe that.

But I still maintain that it is the community. Give the community the responsibility to determine if that is what they want or not, and after they do a thorough study and a thorough understanding of that, because there are lots of places—I mean, we only have to go to Calgary just within the last couple of years where they have gone to year-round education because of that very reason, the high enrollments of students. Granted, we may not have that challenge here in the city of Winnipeg with not

having the same developments, but I just put that caution out to the department and to the minister, and hopefully they would give that message to the communities and the divisions and to the areas that may be able to benefit from it. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mrs. McIntosh: Mr. Chairman, I have the statistics the member was requesting in his first question, and if I could just read them into the record and then that will conclude, I think, that particular question.

They did a survey of graduates from the Faculty of Education in 1995—the survey was done in 1995. They surveyed all the Faculty of Education graduates at the University of Winnipeg, University of Manitoba, St. Boniface and Brandon. In total, they surveyed 872 graduates; 531 responded; 341 did not respond. Of those who responded, 83 percent or 445 were employed, and the rest were not employed as teachers. They may have been employed but not employed as teachers. That 83 percent, again I indicate, was of the ones who did respond. So I do not know if those statistics are ones that will help him, but there they are.

Ms. Marianne Cerilli (Radisson): Mr. Chairperson, I appreciate the chance to ask some questions of the minister on this line in the Education Estimates. I am going to deal specifically with the government's policy related to the Boundaries Review that has been done.

Is that on? Do I have to repeat what I was saying earlier?

An Honourable Member: Yes, you do.

Ms. Cerilli: Okay. I was just, by way of introduction, saying that I appreciate the chance to ask some questions, and I am going to focus on the Boundaries Review and the issue around the potential of having a reduction in the number of boundaries in the city of Winnipeg. This is an important issue in the area that I represent. The school divisions of River East and Transcona-Springfield are in the boundary of Radisson constituency, and I have had meetings, along with a number of my MLA colleagues, with the school boards of both divisions, and this was on the agenda, to talk about boundaries. There is a forum next week at a school in River East School Division where the parents have initiated specifically to speak to this issue. I know that one of the other local MLAs for

the area, the Minister of Labour (Mr. Toews), will be participating.

I want to also preface my remarks by saying that I am going to be raising some of the concerns that have been raised with me by teachers, trustees, parents in the school divisions in around where I live and represent. I am hoping that the minister will respond to those issues.

(Mr. Gerry McAlpine, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair)

* (1630)

I also want to emphasize how important it is that during the Estimates process we do have this discussion and debate, because it is a way for the public to get more specific information than they otherwise would have. So our role in opposition is in fact to do this on behalf of the school divisions and the students and the community that we represent.

To begin with, I want to start by raising, I guess, the largest concern in the area that I represent, this proposal that is before the government for the Boundaries Review. For those of us that believe very strongly in public education, it is going to make the system more inequitable. It is going to increase the disparity by increasing for those divisions and areas of the city that have and reduce the resources for those areas of the city that do not have. That was stated to me very clearly in a meeting I had with the principal, and that was something that was initiated by the principal. It was not something that I initiated. That is the real sense of the community in the area that I represent, that this is going to create really very much a two-tiered system. It is going to exacerbate the inequities that already exist. When I look at the way that the school division funding comes from the property tax assessment in areas like Transcona that have a higher mill rate, that have a greater proportion of homes that are of less assessed value, and you combine that with the way that the government is also reducing funding and putting more responsibility on the local school divisions to raise money through the property assessment, combining that with these boundary changes, is going to very much exacerbate that inequity. That is one of the issues that I would like for the minister to respond to.

One of the comments that was made by one of the trustees in the area was a question that this is going to

create a very much affluent school division in the southwest part of the city, and they made the comment that that school division has, I think, five cabinet ministers in it. I understand that this proposal is not, as the minister may say, the government's proposal per se, but that is noticed by members of the community that I represent, and they are very concerned about that.

One of the things that they also mention is that it is not going to do what it is intended to do. They are concerned that it is not going to reduce spending on administration. They were very specific in pointing out that the administration through superintendents, the proportion, is recommended to be four superintendents, each in an area that would have 33,000 to 35,000 students. When you break this down, this works out to what exists almost exactly in the Transcona-Springfield School Division, where there is one superintendent for 8,300 students.

Mrs. McIntosh: I wonder, could you just run that by me again? I heard you, but I just did not get the figures there. Would you mind very much repeating just that last little bit for me.

Ms. Cerilli: As I understand it, the recommendation is that there would be a ratio with the superintendents of four in areas where there would be 33,000 to 35,000 students, and that is equivalent to the current ratio that exists now in the Transcona-Springfield School Division, where there is one superintendent for 8,300 students. There were a number of other examples where it is not going to, in fact, reduce bureaucracy or administration, but it will create a new large bureaucracy in the delivery of education at school division level.

Further to that, they had some very clear recommendations for what the department should be encouraging and what school divisions should do, and those were that there could be the opportunity for school divisions that chose to amalgamate. Specifically, this could occur in rural school divisions where, in some cases, there are less than a thousand students, and there could be other things that are available or that school divisions could also do in lieu of amalgamating. There is a point made—I forget what year it was, but not that long ago—Transcona-Springfield was created by the fact that the Springfield area chose to amalgamate with Transcona.

The other things that they are recommending should happen are joint purchasing and waving of fees, or

permeable boundaries, because I think that is one of the things that is disconcerting to the public, why students cannot, in a public system, move from school to school. I think that also goes back to the way that the school divisions generate their revenue from local, municipal taxes. That perhaps is one of the reasons that this system has evolved.

There are other ways that school divisions can share resources, co-operate and do all the positive things that the boundaries amalgamations are said to create without making such huge changes in the school division administration.

The main thing that they recommend in dealing with all of these issues is that we need to change the funding formula for school division funding. Again, I will refer back to the way that the mill rate works and the disparity in the school divisions and the difference in the assessments and the inequities across the city in being able to fund education. Even in the area that I represent, the difference between the River East School Division and the Transcona-Springfield School Division where, in the River East School Division, the total budget for this year is going to be over \$69.5 million and in Transcona-Springfield it is over \$43.5 million dollars. The Transcona School Division has had to have a much larger increase in their mill rate and in their taxation in order to deal with the funding cuts from the provincial government.

I guess to start to close, I would like for the minister to respond to those key issues, the fact that there are other things that the divisions could do to achieve the ends of the boundaries changes and in fact they will not do what they purport to achieve.

Mrs. McIntosh: The member has indeed raised some valid points in her question. I thank her for repeating that part of her question because I thought I had heard her mention the breakdown in Transcona-Springfield but was not quite sure. I thank her for repeating that because that is a very interesting figure for us to put into our mix for our discussion.

Many of the points that have been brought up by the member are ones that we have heard and that we are examining. I appreciate her bringing forward on behalf of her constituents their specific feelings around those

issues. The comments about the funding formula will require some re-examination as we move more into electronic communications and delivery systems changing via technology, that type of thing.

* (1640)

That type of request we could properly make through the advisory council on educational finance. But the funding formula, as the member is probably aware was just recently changed—when I say recently, within the last few years—to upgrade it from the previous system. As I say, as we get more into the electronics and distance education, there will probably be some factors that need looking at as well. If boundaries amalgamate, then that, too, would probably necessitate looking to see that as a funding formula fits with different configurations other than the ones that currently exist.

We have not made any conclusions, and some of the MLAs have been in through Estimates to ask questions maybe differing in the types of concerns but similar in nature to the member for Radisson (Ms. Cerilli) who is putting forward concerns from her constituency about boundaries. My response has been that all concerns brought forward will be discussed and considered as we are doing right now.

(Mr. Deputy Chairperson in the Chair)

In fact, this is part of the discussion, I suppose, this whole series of Estimates questions. But as government now moves to decide what does it do with the Norrie commission report, then these kinds of comments are very helpful and particularly when I pick up, as I did today from you, one new piece of information that I had not heard before, that is most helpful.

There are other perspectives that proponents of Norrie would indicate and that is that if there were fewer boards and a greater ratio of trustees to electors and fewer central office administrators—now there is the if, which is the assumption but if that assumption held true—then there would be a new method of division and administration that could be required and could work. Through school councils at the local level, you could empower more local input and establish effective linkages between advisory councils and school boards.

Again, as with the recommendations from Norrie, there are certain assumptions built in, and I think what the member has indicated today is there is no guarantee that those assumptions will become realities. I hear what she has said. I am not able to give a definitive answer at this point to what our conclusions will be but certainly information and commentaries such as she has provided today is helpful to the decision-makers on this side of the House.

Ms. Cerilli: I am just going to recommend perhaps that you make a response regarding the issue of equity and equitability across the city in provision of educational programs and services. That was the other big part of the question.

Mrs. McIntosh: One of the things that the Norrie commission wanted to achieve and certainly it is one thing that government wants to achieve is equity in the system. There will be a variety of ways that people will recommend equity be achieved. Some of them may be more effective than others, but our desire as government is to see that every child in the city has equal opportunity. Specific programs will be determined in large measure by local school boards. That is something whether it is the existing school division or a new amalgamated school division or some other configuration, ultimately, those men and women who get elected to sit on the board of trustees will have authority in law to make decisions as to whether or not they wish to have, say, a nursery program, which was one of the concerns posed by Winnipeg trustees. So they will make those decisions, hopefully, reflecting community interest, what they believe their constituents want and require. Presumably, if they do not provide what the constituents want and require, they would be replaced in another round of trustee elections. But there is no guarantee that I can give at this time that any board of trustees, whether it be the existing board or a new board, would guarantee certain programs wanted by certain groups in any given division, because that authority does rest with school trustees. I am not sure if that answers the question that was posed.

Ms. Cerilli: Not really. I mean, the MLA for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen), our Education critic, and I were just saying that there has to be the tax base in the local area to support it, and we know that choice is going to come with fiscal opportunity, or financial opportunity, I should say. There can be quite a difference between Wellington

Crescent and Furby Street, which is in the constituency of Wolseley where our Education critic is from, or Keenleyside which is in my constituency or Plessis Road which is in my constituency, where there may be quite a different level of financial ability to pay.

I want to go on to raise a few other issues and to sort of put it into the context of we are talking about an education system here and we want to make it—similarly, I guess, the members from the minister's party often talk about efficiency. Well, I often look at effectiveness, and we want an effective system; we want a functional system, not a dysfunctional system, so we have to look at how all the other initiatives that the government has are going to interplay with the boundaries initiative. We also have to look at the impact of the boundaries review and changes on amalgamation of school divisions on areas that I want to touch on such as programs and transportation, and then I want to talk a little bit about neighbourhood integrity and community, as well as urban sprawl.

First of all, I will start with programs, because the minister had made reference to assumptions that are made with the intention of the boundaries amalgamation, and I think that one of the myths is that it is going to increase access to programs. I will give you another specific example from the area that I represent. I do not think Transcona-Springfield has an IB program. River East School Division does. The River East School Division IB program cannot handle any more students, even if there are more students who can then go to that program from Transcona-Springfield, so it is still going to rely on the availability of resources to create that equity and opportunity.

The same can be said for the fact that the size of the division may not relate proportionately to the quality or the delivery of a specific educational program, and that can be seen in some of the ways that the different school divisions—and again a specific example in the area that I represent would be in French Immersion where one division has milieu and one does not.

All of these issues are going to get raised with this amalgamation, and I hope that the minister will be able to comment on how the proposal will deal with that.

The other area that I want to spend some time drawing her attention to is with transportation. We know that

with a larger school division there is going to be more migration. It is going to further increase the demand for transportation. I have raised with the minister a number of times how the policy for transportation needs to take into account the availability of public transit and work at the civic level to ensure that there is going to either be school busing or public transit if in fact we are going to be availing young people to move to a school that is even further away from their home.

* (1650)

In the River East School Division, I know last year, because of the other policy changes the government has made, they lost \$78,000 in terms of their transit busing because of the elimination of what I call now the unicity clause in the school bus transit policy. We have the experience in Transcona-Springfield where there is one-quarter real rural school division, and there has been a huge reduction. I think it is six buses are being lost.

So, if we are going to have the government continue to reduce the busing provision and the formula that is going to reduce the busing availability to areas like Transcona-Springfield where they have lost, in south Transcona, busing because it is no longer considered rural, then we are going to have huge problems where children are put in unsafe situations. In larger school divisions there is going to be the increased temptation or opportunity or necessity in some cases for them to walk longer distances, to hitchhike, to perhaps take other rides to and from school that are not safe.

I think that that is another big concern in the division, that this may be another area that we are not giving careful enough consideration to that I would like the minister's response.

The last area I want to look at is how this policy is going to affect neighbourhoods and community, because there is going to be even more of a tendency for children on a given street to go to five different schools. That is really affecting the sense of neighbourhood in a given neighbourhood, the sense that children know the people on their street and that families then know the people on their street because they often tend to meet their neighbours through their children and the interaction of their children.

There is a real concern that, as we are creating this sort of shopping mall approach to the education system, that we are affecting communities in a way that is irreparable. Some may say that the children will just increase the number of peers that they have, but I think that there is a lot more that goes on in a community when children live and go to school in a local school. There is a real sense of community and neighbourhood that develops.

The final issue I want the minister to respond to has to deal with urban sprawl and how this school division amalgamation proposal is going to exacerbate the problems of urban sprawl. It is related to transportation and migrancy but, especially, we are familiar with this in an area like Radisson where Dugald Road goes out to Anola and those communities and we have a lot of traffic that comes into the Transcona-Springfield School Division.

But I am concerned that the new boundaries will create in the southeast quadrant or division another school division that is going to have a large rural component and that this is going to impact on urban sprawl and the tendency for people to come from the rural areas into the city. I think that is going to have effects then on the neighbourhood and community aspects of those rural communities. So I am wondering if the minister or the group that is reviewing the boundaries proposal has looked at that issue and the impacts that the boundaries amalgamation would have on urban sprawl. Thank you.

Mrs. McIntosh: Mr. Chairman, I will try to answer this fairly simply if I can. There are a number of things that were looked at, but all of them it seems to me revolve back around three central issues: one being the tax base and equity, the administrative efficiency and effectiveness, and the community of interest—whatever term people use—the decision preferences, the desired programming in a particular area. Each of these is important, but none of them can really be examined in isolation from each other. They all fall back on each other. So we can look at taxation, for example, ability to pay which is determined by the local assessment and provincial funding formula effects as well. The goal is not sameness or specifically being identical because that is not possible or achievable in the real world, but the goal in equity is to be as fair and even and similar as possible as you can make it to be.

It is a relative issue but the attempt to reach towards similarity and fairness and as close as possible the same kinds of financial opportunities is one that I think that Norrie's commission sought to achieve. It is one that we want and it is one that I know the opposition wishes as well. Certainly, it is one the people want. They do not want to be feeling that they are falling way behind in one area of the city or the province if other people are serging ahead or be perceived to be serging ahead.

One of the items that Norrie identified and that some people believe to be accurate is that a driving reason for amalgamation would be to create a larger pool of taxing capacity so as to provide greater equity or more equitable sources in a new and larger reason. Norrie makes reference to that fairly often in his report, but that, in and of itself, would not be an issue sufficient to inspire amalgamation because, as I said before, these issues are all intertwined. The administration issue where you have a certain ratio of trustees to the electorate, the distances that people might have to travel not just to school but for school trustees in some areas to school board meetings, population density across a division.

The member's constituency and my constituency are similar in this regard in that they both have urban and rural components where the member for Radisson (Ms. Cerilli) experiences a densely populated urban area and then a rural area and similarly so do I in my constituency. The chairman has the same configuration in his, so you have really sort of two different kinds of communities within one constituency. In my case, they happen to be the school division as well and partly true as well in the Transcona-Springfield School Division in Radisson. So distance and equity and transportation and equity in those school divisions are questions that exist now. I hear the member saying she does not want to see those exacerbated, and appreciate why she is saying that, because of her experience with the current situation. I know she has brought forward to me, on a couple of occasions, the concern with transportation in her area and the decisions the city might be making with regard to city transit. So I know what her concerns are.

But equality of roads to and from schools, are they equitable now in our various divisions? The communications aspect in the communities of interest, we have people who wish to see certain value systems in their schools, certain religious bents in their schools, and

where the schools are all similar, or not too unlike, boards may be able to achieve some of those things. We are conscious of those desires to have similar goals be contained in a similar configuration.

* (1700)

Mr. Gregory Dewar (Selkirk): Mr. Chairman, I want to just read into the record some comments provided to me by the board of trustees of the Lord Selkirk—[interjection]

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Excuse me. Is that mike on?

Mr. Dewar: I do not know. Do you want me to give that speech again?

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Pull a little closer, or find another one that is—[interjection]

Mr. Dewar: Anyway, getting back to my discussion, I want to just talk a bit about the proposed changes, in particular, the concerns raised to me by the board of trustees of Lord Selkirk School Division No. 11. The Lord Selkirk School Division No. 11 consists of the provincial constituency of Selkirk but also takes in part of the provincial constituency of Lac du Bonnet and Gimli.

As the minister is aware, the proposed Agassiz/Lord Selkirk School Division No. 14 will have more than 8,000 students and more than two dozen schools. It would include the areas of Pointe du Bois, Pinawa, Pine Falls, Powerview, Lac du Bonnet, Whitemouth, Seven Sisters, Reynolds, Beausejour, Garson, Tyndall, Lockport, Selkirk, East Selkirk, Clandeboye, Petersfield, Grand Marais, and every other area in between.

They presented me with a letter and I would just like to, if I could, read that into the record: The Board is concerned about the following aspects of the proposed boundary review. Any contemplated changes to existing school division boundaries must benefit students. Changes should be based on sound, educational, economic, and demographic rationale, and those data and rationale should be shared with school divisions. New boundaries must be congruent with the boundaries of rural municipalities and the jurisdictions served by the

provincial departments of Health, Justice, and Family Services. Of particular concern is the gap that exists between the southern boundaries of Lord Selkirk School Division No. 11 and the R.M. of St. Andrews.

On the southern tip of the R.M. of St. Andrews, there is an area between Highway No. 27 and Lot 1, Park Cove, and currently that belongs to the Seven Oaks School Division, but in fact it is part of the R.M. of St. Andrews. Lord Selkirk School Division would be willing to take in those additional lands as part of their boundaries. Changes to school division boundaries should reflect the natural flow of traffic and trade in the area. We feel in Selkirk that we have more in common with the Interlake—and it is a natural flow of traffic and trade—rather than eastern Manitoba.

Decisions regarding the location of central school offices should be based on a variety of criteria including population density, existing business hubs and proximity to schools. The realignment of school division boundaries must not result in economic penalties to the taxpayer. Before any boundary changes are affected, there must be a cost-analysis and an impact study conducted for each amalgamated school division. The final point is that the government must first develop a clear, detailed and incremental plan to assist school divisions to move smoothly into the new alignment.

I want to put those comments on the record, and I just look forward to the minister's response. Thank you.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Before I go to the minister, I would ask all members sitting around the table carrying on a conversation, if they could keep it to a lower volume, I would appreciate it.

Mrs. McIntosh: In response to the member for Selkirk's question, I first of all want to thank him for putting forward so clearly the concerns of his constituents. I actually would like to expand that a bit to say that I have been impressed today with the way the opposition members have brought forward, specifically on this issue, their constituents' concerns on boundaries. I will give again the same response I have given to the others. I do not mean to sound repetitive or that I am going over same ground, but the decision is in the process of being examined. We are attempting to now do our duty in terms of responding to Norrie's commission, having now

received the report, by looking at the issues and trying to determine what is the right thing to do with the commission's report. So, in that sense, the points that have been brought forward are ones that will be looked at as useful information presented to the minister and through the minister to my colleagues in government.

Some of the concerns that have come forward today are ones that we have heard from the constituents directly, but there have been one or two other things brought forward today that are of interest to us in terms of a desire to take a look at those points. The member identifies concerns that are, in some sense, generic to some of the other divisions as well but in others specific to his locale.

I can say to him that those points will be looked at, and we will try to move in a timely fashion so that we do not have the field waiting for too much longer for a decision. Sometime this spring is what I have been saying, because it is impossible for me to tighten the time down more specifically than that. Everything that comes forward will form part of our discussions, and so through him to his constituents, we appreciate receiving that expression of concern on those particular items for examination.

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): Mr. Chairman, I, too, want to continue on the issue of boundaries and to place some comments on the record on the other submissions which were made to the second Norrie commission.

One of the difficulties, I think, that we have had as a community, and I mean Manitoba, is that that second boundary commission, or the final report as the minister calls it, were all written submissions. There were no public hearings or discussions, and there was a very short time period for people in the various constituencies to have public meetings in order to have a general discussion about this although some, and Lord Selkirk, in fact, was one of them which was able to have that kind of public discussion. So I want to suggest to the minister that there are concerns, that people feel that second boundary commission, the final report, was very limited in its discussion of the representations that had been made to it.

My colleagues have raised the issue of Fort Rouge School, and they have raised the issue of the concerns of Lord Selkirk, and Mr. Norrie chose not to respond specifically to each of the ones that had been raised. So

I wanted to put on the record some of the concerns in the first instance from rural Manitoba that were raised with the second Norrie commission. This is people reacting essentially to the map that he presented to them and to the rationale that he gave.

If we start in the southeast with the new proposed division, Southeast No. 6, the Boundary School Division, in writing to Norrie noted that the 1960 amalgamation of school districts came at a time of low inflation, high economic growth and when enrollments were increasing, and they pointed out to him that none of these factors are present there now. This division noted that it is concerned about the loss of small schools. It disagrees with the loss of La Salle, Le des Chenes, St. Adolphe and Lorette whose tax base, they argue, should stay with rural divisions. Falcon Beach School preferred to remain within Frontier Division, one of the many protests which the supplementary report does not discuss. Seine River School Division pointed to an Ontario study of the amalgamation of Windsor and Essex counties that demonstrated that the creation of super boards is an expensive exercise. They suggested a period of more gradual amalgamation. Parents of Bothwell School did not want to see these boundary changes. They are concerned that extra power to determine catchment areas is accruing to the minister.

* (1710)

In South Central District No. 6, the new proposed Central South 6, the Garden Valley School Division and its parent advisory council are adamantly opposed to the amalgamation. Western School Division supports voluntary amalgamation, but they also said, and I quote: We remain unconvinced of either the need or the desirability of amalgamation for the students, parents and ratepayers of Western School Division. The town of Carman opposed consolidation. The town of Starbuck wanted to remain as part of a rural division, with a rural lifestyle. Morris-MacDonald School Division opposed divisions that were too big, which they defined as over 9,000 students, and offered the commission three alternatives to which in part the commission did respond in its creation of Division 5A Red River.

Rhineland School Division, like so many, wanted some indication of the costs to be incurred in amalgamation. Like others, they oppose the commission's desire to make

school boundaries coterminous with municipal boundaries. That is one of the commission's basic principles, and it is one I want to pick up with the minister later on. They argued that, and I quote: Schools are not only buildings where students are prepared for the future, but where community is fostered and practiced in the present.

They believe, as many others did, that trade patterns and associations are important to rural Manitoba, more important than arbitrary groupings of 9,000 students. Rhineland, in particular, wanted the commission to take into account ethnic, historic and community differences, trading areas and existing partnerships. They noted that school choice is increasing and they see difficulties ahead in accommodating students.

Midland School Division, like Rhineland and others, wants to see voluntary slower amalgamation and asks particularly for, and I quote: A fair process that provides for dialogue and consultation.

Moving to Southwest Central No. 7, the new proposed 7, three divisions here have been co-operating for some time and are prepared to work together towards amalgamation. But I wanted to underline for the minister that their acceptance is in part because they assume there will be a flexible and co-operative approach to the drawing of the actual boundary lines. The trustees of Pembina Valley, Mountain and Tiger Hills, and I quote: Recommend that within a township or a range where the majority of residents do not wish to belong to the proposed division, that the boundaries be adjusted accordingly.

In the same area, from Cartwright, the chair of the small schools association wrote that they were, quote, **adamantly** opposed to wholesale change in division size. The councils of the villages of Roblin and Cartwright wrote separately that they could see no economies and asked for more evidence of such savings. The R.M. of Cartwright argued that to increase the size of divisions goes against the philosophy of decentralization. Thus, even in the areas, I think, where there is a willingness to proceed, there are areas of caution that I want to underline for the minister and to underline for the minister that people believe—and I know she has been out meeting with them—certainly believe that these changes have the potential to damage some rural areas.

In Southwest No. 8, the R.M. of Edward is opposed to changes at the Antler River School Division, reiterates the concerns of many about local jobs, the longer transport times, the impact of school closures. They believe that although there is an aging population, their communities can survive. In fact, they said, and I quote, the only destabilizing effect is that of the provincial government threatening to amalgamate municipalities and school divisions, end of quote. They argue that their strength lies in small communities which offer safety. Do not waste our time and money with structural changes, they said, but they asked for help in technology in co-operative ventures and believe that changes should not be forced on people.

The Turtle Mountain School Division argued that the critical factor in education is parental involvement, and a contact here, they thought, might be lost with larger divisions. The commission's recommendations, they felt, were too arbitrary. They asked to see the report of Dr. Rounds, which had been prepared for the commission and into which had been much local input. The study, they believe, showed that restructuring would not be of assistance in the development of cost-effective services.

The town of Virden supported amalgamation but suggested that it be begun in Winnipeg, where they believe there were greater savings to be made.

Turtle Mountain School Division underlined that for public acceptance of the commission's proposals, the commission would need to show both savings and improvements in education. They emphasized that there is need for technological support in a provincial plan for distance education.

Fort La Bosse trustees believe the proposals are too drastic, that alignment—and again this same issue came up—of municipal and school division boundaries is not a good ideal and that pilot projects on a gradual basis should be the order of the day.

Forty-five letters were received from Oakland, underlining for the commission that these proposals will increase their taxes and offer them less choice. So, again, I think there is a specific issue there for the minister to be aware of.

The commission responded to the concerns of Lenore, and Mr. Norrie, in his final report, did alter the proposed

boundaries, but he did not directly respond to the other concerns that were raised by this whole region.

Brandon, No. 9 division, of course, remains largely unchanged, but the trustees there suggested to the commission that they were moving far too fast, and they made some useful proposals for appeal boards for regular 10-year reviews and for a way to deal with the Oakland issue.

Yellowhead No. 10, the Pelly Trail School Division, believed no rationale has been presented for amalgamation. Rural pilot projects over a five-year period, they said, would be more acceptable.

Strathclair home and school said the restructuring is too radical, and the division is too big.

Rolling River School Division rejected amalgamation. It rejects the principle that alignment with municipal boundaries is best, believes that boards should decide on the number of trustees, not the minister, and that issues of school choice, fee transfers and busing can be dealt with without the restructuring of divisions.

The R.M. of Cornwallis is opposed; the village of Erickson opposed and suggested change could be achieved by other means. Municipal boundaries were not the best guide for their area, they suggested. The parent council of one school in this region supported boundary changes, yet the parents and teachers of Sandy Lake pointed out that they had sat in the Brandon hearings and had heard the majority speak in opposition to large school divisions, a point they said that was, and I quote, made loud and clear. Our response, they said, quote, comes straight from the heart. It was contained in our brief, and our views have not changed, end of quote. The fundamental issues were ones of representation of small communities on the larger boards and, again, I quote, the quality of life in rural Manitoba.

Elton Collegiate and Douglas School parents reiterate many similar positions. They support smaller schools and school divisions. Consolidation, they believe, does not mean economy.

Birdtail River School Division opposed the reduction in school divisions and is concerned that the commission has given so little attention to the issues of transport under the new proposals.

Beautiful Plains-Pine Creek, the new No. 11—Beautiful Plains School Division believes the proposal is too extreme and there is no demonstrated cost saving. They want to see a slower implementation.

Portage la Prairie—Mr. Norrie responded to Portage la Prairie and altered the boundaries of this and the new No. 13.

The Interlake-White Horse Plain, the new No. 13—the White Horse Plain School Division objected to being included with the Interlake and they made comparisons on ethnic and cultural grounds for being closer to Portage la Prairie.

Stonewall School Division rejected the commissions linking it with White Horse Plain. They believe that their portion of the Interlake is expanding and should be considered in a different light. And again, there were no specific responses to that.

Agassiz-Lord Selkirk No. 14—Lord Selkirk School Division held a public forum and reported its findings. People equated larger school divisions with higher taxes, they said. They believe that there should be longer term planning for these changes and that 21 is not a magic number. The number of trustees should be determined locally and, again, that was something which came up quite frequently. An Ombudsman should be appointed for appeals and mediation, again an interesting suggestion, I think, that was hinted at by others. A major point of Lord Selkirk was that amalgamation cannot be done with existing dollars. There must be additional provincial financial assistance. And they attached 137 signatures in a petition from residents of St. Andrews who would like to be attached to that Lord Selkirk School Division.

Agassiz School Division said clearly, and I quote: We are at present an optimum sized division. We see no reason for such a merger and maintain our original positions. End of quote.

They had not been convinced that there were demonstrable savings. They were concerned with the loss of representation in larger divisions.

Lakeshore-Evergreen School Division, the new No. 15, argued, and the Evergreen portion of that argued

forcefully that it is, and I quote, imperative for the Boundaries Review Commission and the province to endorse the right of school divisions to decide their fate at a local level, end of quote.

Twenty-one school divisions is too few for Manitoba. Evergreen thinks the government should be focusing on municipal boundaries, again a common theme in some other presentations, and upon a better co-ordination of services such as distance education and post-secondary education and a more effective implementation of curriculum. Finally, they cannot see how amalgamation will benefit their students.

Lakeshore School Division had serious concerns about the process of the supplementary review. They wanted to involve their communities in a response to the commission's original proposals. The public has little knowledge of this, nor do they yet understand the possible impact, they believed. Restructuring advantages have not been proven. I quote: We must answer the question of costs with respect to the harmonizing of collective agreements and the economic impact on small communities that may be threatened with the loss of their division office.

* (1720)

In Eriksdale, for example, the loss of jobs at divisional office, they believed, would mean the loss of over \$200,000 annually in wages. Lakeshore does not believe that 9 trustees are enough in such a large division. The division notes that it has offered the department a pilot project for the evaluation of school board governance, shared services and the impact of amalgamation but had had no response at the time of writing.

They are proud of their innovative, co-operative programs with other divisions. Lundar School Advisory Council wrote to oppose amalgamation and the LGD of Grahamdale supported the position taken by Lakeshore Division and asked the commission to reconsider amalgamation.

In the Parkland, No. 16, the Dauphin-Ochre school area asked for evidence that amalgamation will be cost-effective. Thirteen rural divisions are too few. The Parkland proposal is for too large an area and, quote, we oppose it. End of quote.

Trustee travel would be so extensive that it is likely that only day meetings could be held and this would limit the range of people able to seek election. Dauphin-Ochre River divisions in southern Manitoba advise that municipal boundaries, and I quote, do not always recognize the natural and established traffic patterns between communities. It is important that communities be allowed to follow these economic and traffic patterns. End of quote.

They are concerned about who will bear the cost of restructuring and believe that it should be done over a longer period of time. Their basic question remains that of so many others. What will be the savings and where are the benefits?

Grandview School's parent advisory council wrote with their concerns about the loss of school board offices and the prospect of losing their high school.

Having only nine trustees would make it unlikely that Grandview would be represented in a larger division, and I quote: We in rural Manitoba are being asked to sacrifice our communities. Having our children attend a small school may far outweigh any fiscal benefits that may result from school closures. Grandview feels the commission is attempting to separate education in the community. Rural communities are struggling to maintain population. The proposed plan only exacerbates the problem.

Mr. Chairman, those are my summaries from the rural areas. I would like at a later time to talk about the North and the city, although I think both my colleagues from St. James (Ms. Mihychuk) and from Flin Flon (Mr. Jennissen) have alluded to some of these in earlier submissions.

What I want to do for, I think, the public record because I think the minister is aware of these issues—I know that she and other MLAs have been out talking to people in rural and southern Manitoba. So I do not think that any of these issues are new, but I do not think they have been on the public record, and that is really what I wanted to do at the moment—

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Order, please. I have allowed the member for Wolseley to go considerably over the reasons. It seemed to me that you wanted to get this

information on the record. I did allow that, although I could have been called on a point of order for it. I would only ask that a little leeway be given to me by the committee from time to time. Where I see that kind of thing, I will try to allow it, and then give the minister an amount of time equal to that, if necessary, to answer it. The honourable member—minister, pardon me.

Mrs. McIntosh: I am a member, too, so you are safe. Yes, and certainly, Mr. Chairman, I do not have any objection to the extension of time, because I recognize there was sort of a block of thought that the member was trying to get in as a block of thought. Certainly, if we feel that is being taken advantage of we have the opportunity for a point of order on it, so that is no trouble.

I just want to indicate in terms of the second round of Norrie, as it has become called colloquially, the second round was never intended to be a repeat of the original process or a rehearing of the hearings or a study of the study. The second round came into existence simply because when Norrie presented his report, there were a lot of people who then began to write in and say, I did make a presentation to the commission but now that I have seen the report there is now a new thing in existence that I would like to respond to, so here are some comments on it.

When we realized that we were getting a fair number of responses like that, we thought maybe we had better let people know that if they are reading the report and they do not like what they see and it sparked a new response from them, that we will formalize the process of them getting that information back, and we will ask the Norrie commission to take a look at these responses to see if in any way they have had points raised to them based upon their actual recommendations that might cause them to rethink their position. So we allowed a few months for that to occur.

That was occurring anyhow. We simply put the Norrie commission back in the loop to give them an opportunity in case some new ideas had come up that would spark a change in them. That was the rationale for it, and that is why it did not repeat the process. It was simply another opportunity that we felt might be useful and helpful to people and to the commission.

The member is correct. We have been out in the field, and I have met with the people from Eriksdale, for

example. I have been out to Eriksdale and talked to the board and talked to the parent council and talked to the teachers and talked to the municipal councillors in Eriksdale about the location of the board office, all of those things. We have done that in a fair number of communities around Manitoba. As well, as I have indicated, I think at this point I have met with all but a very few boards individually as one by one they have come in to see me, and many parent groups, et cetera. As well, we have received a very wide return of correspondence. People have written in on this issue in great numbers, so we have a wide variety of opinion before us.

I understand and am aware of the views that the member has read into the record. I understand why she thought it was important for it to be in the record, and I appreciate that, but I just want to indicate that, as the member has shown in her commentary, views around the province do vary, because some do support amalgamation, forced or not forced, and they may have thoughts about implementation which we should consider. Basically, some will say, yes, we want amalgamation; some will say we support voluntary amalgamation; some will say we do not support amalgamation at all, so we have a wide variety of opinion.

Some people have said amalgamate only in the city; some people have said amalgamate only in rural Manitoba, and the rationales for those have been do not amalgamate in rural Manitoba because distances are so great, amalgamate in the city where distances are smaller. The flip side of the coin is that people have said amalgamate in rural Manitoba because populations are smaller and do not amalgamate in the city because school divisions are already too large in terms of number of students. So we are getting such a wide variety of opinion coming in, and I just mention that to say that each of those views will have merit attached to them. They are significant, but all of them underscore why a decision must be arrived at not on a local or parochial basis but must stem from a set of clear, fair, accepted principles of taxation equity, administrative efficiency and effectiveness, community choices, local views, religious, cultural considerations, educational preferences and so on. We are trying to find the balance. We are trying to find how those three twined together could be most effective for the benefit of the students of Manitoba. I see my time is up.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Thank you, Madam Minister.

The hour now being 5:30 p.m., I am interrupting the proceedings of the committee. The committee will now be recessed until 9 a.m. tomorrow (Friday).

* (1440)

HEALTH

Mr. Chairperson (Marcel Laurendeau): Would the Committee of Supply come to order, please. This section of the Committee of Supply has been dealing with the Estimates of the Department of Health. We are in item 1.(b)(1) and the item before the committee is the motion of the honourable member for Kildonan. Question?

Voice Vote

Mr. Chairperson: All those in favour of the motion, please say yea.

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Mr. Chairperson: All those opposed, please say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Mr. Chairperson: In my opinion, the Nays have it.

Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader): On division.

Mr. Chairperson: On division.

At this time we would invite the minister's staff, if they are present, to come in and—[interjection] We can recess for a minute, if you want. Order, please. We might recess for just a little while until we—[interjection] Okay.

At this time we are dealing with item 1.(b)(1).

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Mr. Chairperson, in the Estimates the government has allocated \$38 million for transition in the hospital sector. My question to the minister is very specific. Who is controlling those funds? How is it being designated and can he provide us and

table documentations about the transition funding and how it will be utilized?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): Mr. Chairman, the expenditure of that \$38 million will be carried out throughout the course of a good part of the fiscal year, because the fiscal year began on April 1, and we have not yet begun to act on any of the recommendations, for example, of the urban planning partnership or the KPMG or any of those mechanisms. A responsible thing to do is to have that \$38 million there, so that those \$38 million are presently being used today to fund the operations of Winnipeg hospitals which have not yet been impacted by any change. If you are going to save \$53 million, you kind of need to start on the first day of the year, because that is a large sum of money. Knowing that we cannot do that because we have not made decisions about the recommendations from the design team, recommendations concerning geriatric care, for example, because we cannot do that right from the beginning of the year, we do need to have that bridge funding. So that basically answers the honourable member's question about how that money will be spent. It is being spent to fund the operations that have not yet changed prior to the end of the fiscal year 1996-97.

Mr. Chomiak: I thank the minister for that response. Does the minister have guidelines with respect to that funding and information that would help members in the Legislature determine what parameters and under what conditions that money will be utilized, as well as to trace the factors of control on the expenditure of that sum of money?

Mr. McCrae: My staff are busy, Mr. Chairman, so I cannot really answer the question right at the moment, but I will undertake to discuss this with staff and attempt to respond at a later time.

Mr. Chomiak: I again thank the minister for that response. With respect to the \$53 million that the minister mentioned in his preceding answer, is there a breakdown between how much it is determined is going to be saved within the urban hospitals, including Winnipeg and Brandon and those outside of Winnipeg and Brandon? As I understand it, when the deputy minister had occasion to speak to the urban planning team, he indicated that there would be a breakdown of something in the vicinity of—when the original

designation was at \$75 million—a \$43-32 million breakdown. Can the minister give us a breakdown of the \$53 million?

Mr. McCrae: I hope someone is keeping track. Maybe the honourable member can write these questions down because you see, Mr. Chairman, my staff are very busy. They are trying to make sure that the home care clients of this province get the service they need at a time when we are in a labour disruption supported by the honourable member. My staff will be here a little later and maybe we can answer these questions at that time.

(Mr. Mike Radcliffe, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair)

Mr. Chomiak: Since we are dealing with item 1.(b) as it relates to the deputy minister's office, can the minister indicate, and it is normal practice that the deputy minister is made available for this section of the Estimates, whether or not the deputy minister will be available?

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Radcliffe): Would the honourable member for Kildonan please summarize his last question.

Mr. Chomiak: It is an item of appropriations and it specifically deals with Executive Support and specifically deals with the office of the deputy minister. Normally the deputy minister is available to answer questions under this appropriation, so I am wondering whether or not the deputy minister will be available to deal with questions under this particular appropriation.

* (1450)

Mr. McCrae: Not today, Mr. Chairperson. Because we are in the Estimates, I am not able to be with the deputy minister on the trip to Ottawa, federal-provincial-territorial Ministers of Health meeting. The agenda items are very, very important. Dr. Wade needed to be part of that process because I was not able to, so I do not expect that he will be able to be here today.

Mr. Chomiak: Can the minister table a position paper that the province has taken with respect to the meetings in Ottawa, so that we can familiarize ourselves with the positions that are being taken by the deputy minister at those particular meetings in Ottawa?

Mr. McCrae: Number one on the list for the agenda for the discussions is the Canadian blood supply. The Vision of Health Care for the Future is next on the agenda there, has to do with Manitoba's leadership role in working with all of the other provinces and territories in the federal government in developing some kind of a common vision for health care in the future.

We are all worried the federal government's vision is pretty blurred when it comes to health care, and it is a problem because Canadians from coast to coast are very concerned about the future of health care what with all of the cutbacks that are happening in funding from the federal government. If you can all understand the cutbacks, I think some people can, and I would not blame them if they could, but there has to be some kind of partnership here if we are going to have a national health care system from coast to coast to coast, so that is on the agenda.

Aboriginal health issues are on the agenda for discussion, and I do not have the agenda in front of me but I think there was one other item. But those are the types of issues that ministers from across the country—oh, doctor-physician remuneration issues are also a part of the agenda, an important matter. There is a growing recognition that we need to do something in that area, Mr. Chairman, because there seems to be a general commitment across the country, an enduring commitment to our health system in our country.

There are some though in the country who want to face the realities that we live in in the '90s and some who do not, and it is those who do that are gathering together to try to address the challenges that we face if we do want to preserve our health system. I am sure that is exactly what we want to do. So those are the kinds of things that are on the agenda. I do not have any position papers to offer the honourable member today.

Mr. Chomiak: I thank the minister for that response. Will the minister table, when he has opportunity, those position papers so we can have an opportunity to acquaint ourselves with the positions that will be taken by the province of Manitoba with respect to these very fundamental issues affecting national health?

Mr. McCrae: The kinds of positions that we take are usually—the vision we have is basically shared by

everybody. Everybody agrees that we want to have a health system that we can preserve for the future. Everybody agrees that if we go back to the system we had in the first place that we will not have a health system. Everybody who is in a position to take part in these discussions agrees that is not something that we can do as a country. The honourable member sort of sees these various jurisdictions coming together and some of them ganging up on the other or something like that. That is not the way these conferences work. There is really quite a high level of working together and co-operation that goes on between the various jurisdictions.

I will review the question with my deputy minister and see what kinds of information we can make available for the honourable member.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, in the minister's preceding response he talked about remuneration to physicians as a topic or an item, I understand. On that very point, I note in the Estimates there is a \$10-million fund set aside from the existing fee-for-service pool to be used to establish alternative physician funding mechanisms. I wonder if the minister might outline for us precisely what that fund is meant to do and how it is to be applied and implemented.

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Radcliffe): At this point I am advised that the minister's staff are in the antechamber, and I would inquire whether it is appropriate to invite them in at this time. Would the minister's staff please enter the Chamber.

The honourable Minister of Health to be responsive to the question that was put.

Mr. McCrae: Could we get the last part of the question again, Mr. Chairman?

Mr. Chomiak: Yes, the Estimates indicate \$10 million is being set aside from the existing fee-for-service pool to be used to establish alternative physician funding mechanisms. I wonder if the minister might outline what that mechanism is, how it would be applied, and what the process is for the application of those funds.

Mr. McCrae: I apologize, Mr. Chairman, for the delays. The delays are occasioned because we, in our department, take our responsibilities to our home care

clients very seriously. When 3,000 people decide after listening to their union bosses that they are persuaded by those union bosses, cajoled, threatened, intimidated, whatever, not to go to work and provide service to their clients, that leaves us in the position where we have to do our level best to make sure our clients are getting the care that they need. So I hope the honourable member will understand that that is what we are trying to do. He shakes his head in the negative. He supports us not doing that and allowing clients to go without service. Let him explain that to the people of Manitoba.

The honourable member asked about the \$10-million appropriation. We also have issues to deal with with respect to certain specialties in medicine and certain geographic deficiencies in our province when it comes to the delivery of medical services, and we need that as an amount that we can use to address those issues.

* (1500)

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, for the record, let it be clear that the minister was spending considerable time in private conversation with the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Praznik) after I had asked the question. The minister is here to deal with very important questions relating to health and was having a private conversation with the Minister of Labour, so let us not let the minister go off and try to attribute motives and try to misconstrue the actual facts as to what happened in this Chamber. It is one thing for the minister to say that his staff are preoccupied with the strike, and we have been very accommodating and very accepting to the minister on that point. It is another thing for the minister to be engaged in a private conversation with another member of this Chamber and not answering questions from this side of the House.

Point of Order

Mr. McCrae: Mr. Chairman, the honourable member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) is suggesting a discussion that I had over on this side of the Chamber with the honourable Minister responsible for, oh, a lot of things, Northern Affairs, Native Affairs, Energy, languages, a very busy minister, but the honourable minister and I were discussing issues related to home care, and the honourable member calls it a private discussion, and indeed that is what it was, but I think the honourable

member might be interested to know that the honourable Minister of Energy has constituents who require home care services just like the rest of us. The honourable member wants to stop us from trying to provide services to the clients of home care? I am sorry, I am not going to let him stop us.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, the minister did not even make one scintilla, one single bit of evidence towards a point of order and went on and tried to debate a point. He has ample opportunity. Clearly the minister did not have any motivation whatsoever to raise that as a point of order.

Mr. McCrae: Wisdom, sir.

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Radcliffe): Thank you very much, most honourable members. The Chair would rule at this point that this was a dispute on the facts and would invite the honourable members to continue with the examination at hand.

* * *

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, there is a specific appropriation—[interjection] I would think that the Minister of Health would have ample opportunity to converse with his cabinet colleagues in cabinet or other occasions and would perhaps devote and pay some attention to the questioning in this Chamber. It is only respect for other members of this House that will permit us to deal with this expeditiously and permit us to go forward. After all, we are working on behalf of the constituents of Manitoba. My specific question to the Minister of Health (McCrae)—[interjection] If the Minister of Labour (Mr. Toews) continues, perhaps the Minister of Labour would like to answer questions.

Point of Order

Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Labour): On a point of order, is the member asking that I ask questions directly of the Minister of Health, because I am certainly prepared to ask questions of the Minister of Health this afternoon.

Mr. Chomiak: Yes, Mr. Chairman, on the same point of order, my point is that if the Minister of Labour and the Minister of Health wish to have private conversations

they should do so outside of the Chamber and not use up valuable committee time having private conversation during the course of our discussions.

Mr. McCrae: For the last number of weeks I have sat, quietly I hope, most of the time and listened to what is going on in this Chamber. I repeatedly listened to honourable members in the New Democratic Party somehow trying to impose their will not only on the Chair in this place, but also on other honourable members by insisting that they answer questions in a certain way, that they stand up, that they sit down, that they shut up. Honourable members opposite ought to know that freedom of the individual has to do with a little bit of respect for the other individual, too. If we could see a little bit of that from honourable members opposite, I think we might move things along somewhat better in this Estimates process.

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Radcliffe): The Chair thanks most honourable members for the point of order that has been raised by the Minister of Labour, finds that the Minister of Labour did not have a point of order and would invite the honourable members to continue with the examination at hand.

* * *

Mr. Chomiak: I again reiterate my question that I had asked previous, and that is, a \$10-million fund has been set aside to be used to establish alternate physician funding mechanism. This is a very specific new addition to the Estimates process. It is a very specific fund. It affects dramatically physicians in the way the remuneration is paid. Can the minister outline what are criteria for that fund and how is it being applied?

Mr. McCrae: Mr. Chairman, there are certain programs in Health in Manitoba relating to medical services such as the northern medical unit services in areas where we are having trouble accessing medical services. The government needs to have the ability to begin to look seriously at alternatives to straight fee for service in our province. There is general support for such a thing. I think there support residing amongst honourable members opposite. As a matter of fact, I think they have said that the fee-for-service system ought to be looked at very carefully.

I know that the Manitoba Nurses' Union has said that and other organizations as well. In fact, very shortly after I was appointed Minister of Health I remember being at a forum at which the present Deputy Minister of Health was there. He was not deputy minister then. He did not work for the government at that time. A friend of mine, a former deputy leader of the Liberal Party, Mr. Jim Carr, was also present, and I think about 150 family practitioners, and there was quite a discussion going on. Either Jim Carr or Dr. John Wade rose and said: How many would be interested in working on a salary? It was estimated that something over 60 percent of these doctors raised their hands. A lot of them were younger people, too, and it was a bit of a surprise for myself. Of course, everything surprised me at that point because I did not know that much about what was going in Health, having been just newly appointed. I think Dr. Wade and Jim Carr were surprised at that result.

Of course, the next question did not get asked, like, what should the level of that salary be, but, as a matter of principle, all those family practitioners or a large number of those family practitioners were indeed interested in the opportunities that an alternative method of remuneration might provide those physicians. Not only those physicians but also their practice and their patients might well benefit from a review of the present fee-for-service system.

It was the fee-for-service system which basically was the foundation of the medicare program, so we have to be respectful of that when we address change because there are some physicians who have worked many years with the fee-for-service system, and that is the only one they really want to continue working with. I think we have to bear that in mind as we look at opportunities for change.

At the same time, there are clinics in Manitoba where some are doing well and others not doing very well, and it is claimed by some that it is the system of remuneration that lay behind some of the problems. So I think we have to be open minded. I think we have to be pragmatic about this. I do not think that any one system, to the exclusion of all the other systems, is the appropriate way to go for the future. I think the future will see more than one system of remuneration; indeed we have it now.

* (1510)

We have some physicians in Manitoba working under salaried arrangements. In some places where that

happens there is a very positive feeling about it, a positive response in the community, and the physicians are happy with it as well. In other areas, it might work out that a block funding approach could indeed resolve some problems. Contractual arrangements for the delivery of services could be looked at. I have found in my travels, which have been fairly extensive in the province, that there is an open-minded approach being taken by everybody.

I remember, last Fall, when there was a minister's meeting and the release of a report about physician remuneration, that the National Family Practitioners Association, if I have that name right, put out a press release, and they were very concerned that, oh, everything was going to get changed overnight. It was a bit of an early reaction because, at that point, the ministers were simply talking about exploring alternatives, and we still are. I think that we have come to some appropriate alternative arrangements that time and evaluation, it is hoped, will demonstrate have been the right thing to do. It is that sort of issue that we are wanting to address. There is no one way, I am satisfied of that, to remunerate physicians.

The other one is the concept of the capitation method, where you sort of divide up the number of dollars amongst the number of population that you have, and you pay the doctors accordingly. That is another way to look at it, too, and it has been suggested by some that that is an excellent system. Well, it might be in some applications; it might not in some others. So that is why it is important that none of us get our mind focused only on one particular system, because I think the world is so diverse these days, and circumstances differ from place to place so much, that an open-minded and pragmatic approach would be the wisest kind of approach to be taking.

Mr. Chomiak: Would it be a correct observation to state that the remuneration under the fee-for-service medical has been reduced by approximately \$10 million and the sessional fees and medical salaries are up by approximately \$10 million, so that is the trade off? It has gone from fee for service to the salary area. Is that a correct observation?

Mr. McCrae: That is correct, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chomiak: Thank you, minister, for that response. Would it be also correct to assume that the \$2-million or \$3-million savings on the elimination of eye examination for asymptomatic people for the ages of 19 to 64 is an area that has been reduced under that \$10-million category, and then corresponding funds moved into the salaried item?

Mr. McCrae: There is a reduction of \$750,000 in the medical fee-for-service schedule, and that represents the reduction that the ophthalmology section of it would experience as a result of that change in insurance policy. The \$2,250,000 would represent the optometrists part of that. If you take those together, it is about \$3 million.

Mr. Chomiak: Can the minister give some indication as to where the other \$7-million reduction will take place?

Mr. McCrae: No, Mr. Chairman. At this time, the Medical Services Council continues its review of the schedule or the medical fee schedule and they have been working, as the honourable member knows, on certain initiatives, if you want to call them that, relating to the physical examination, for example, relating to the special house call. We do not have final recommendations on those things yet. That might account for some of it. If the recommendations after further evaluation have come through in such a way that the health of Manitobans is not negatively affected, then we could look at those, but we have not got those yet.

Mr. Chomiak: I thank the minister for that response. Mr. Chairperson, I was going to return to the line of questions that I had posed earlier when staff were not in. It relates to the reduction of \$53-million reduction to hospitals. I wonder if the minister can outline for us a breakdown, as best as possible, as how that \$53 million is seen by the department to be allocated over the upcoming fiscal year.

Mr. McCrae: Mr. Chairman, the design teams have been working. I think the honourable member referred to a number that Dr. Wade had used some time back, and the \$53 million is kind of the expectation towards the achievement of which is what the design team have been working toward, so we do not know yet.

The honourable member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) is often asking us about, for example, the Seven Oaks

Hospital; or the member for Kildonan, (Mr. Chomiak) I forget which hospital he is working for these days, but he is working for Seven Oaks, I know, and for Misericordia and I guess any other hospital where there might be any possible change—he will be working against that.

The point is it is that whole exercise that the honourable member is very familiar with that has to do with this \$53 million. The \$38 million is there to make the transition as smooth as possible, and at this point, until we get further information from the urban planning partnership, with the assistance of the KPMG Consulting organization, those announcements will be coming in due course.

Mr. Chomiak: The \$53 million is a specific and a relatively specific figure and I have been able to extrapolate based on funding announcements and funding reductions and the rolling budgets that are given to hospitals to a percentage or a number. I have been able to extrapolate that from the public announcements of each of the urban hospitals, roughly accounting for some of those funds.

* (1520)

I have been roughly able to accommodate for something in the neighbourhood of \$25 million out of the \$53 million based on reductions already previously announced by the government with respect to most of the urban hospitals in Winnipeg. Does the minister have any figures, similar to the lines of the figures given by the deputy minister previous, as to a breakdown between urban and rural, for example?

Mr. McCrae: No.

Mr. Chomiak: So the minister is saying that the \$53 million is based on what therefore—where did the \$53-million figure come from? Is it a percentage? Is it a percentage of overall expenditures? Is it based on target figures based on ability of hospitals to operate services? Where does the \$53 million come from?

Mr. McCrae: The people involved in the process have an expectation that \$53 million is an amount that can be worked with, but they do not need to work with that much. They can work with a smaller figure because there are some items that really do not have anything to do with

their work, items like interest costs and things like that. The design teams really do not have to work with that. So really \$43 million to \$45 million is what we are talking about.

I know the honourable member is probably looking for something more specific than that, and I am not able to give it to him at this time, because it is simply not available. It is the reasonable expectation of all of the people with whom we work that \$43 million can be taken from hospital budgets, but not overnight, and that is why you need to have that kind of transition fund in place, to help us make that transition. That transition would have to do with making sure services are there for patients, making sure that replacement services are available in the community, making sure that we can continue to make the transition as smooth as we can for the staff of our hospital system.

I would like to give an example. The honourable member for Brandon East has raised the issue of the speech therapy services at Brandon General Hospital and a proposal by Brandon General Hospital to stop providing that service. It conjures up in the mind of the honourable member for Brandon East the kind of worry that, oh, there will not be any service anymore. Then, of course, you go out and you do your lobbying out there in the public and whip up as much attention and emotion as you can that, oh, there are not going to be any speech language services for people in southwestern Manitoba. That is what happens when members opposite get out there with information before decisions are made, before the work has been done.

I guess the reason that it gets out is that we have such an extremely open process in Manitoba. The government and the hospitals are involved in a lot of consultation. My opponent in the last election was involved in one of those processes. It had to do with the panelled beds at the Assiniboine Centre at Brandon General. This person was asked to be involved because of his medical expertise, to be involved in a committee that is discussing how we are going to deal with this situation at Brandon General Hospital. As soon as he gets a piece of paper or any hint of information that something might change at Brandon General, he is out there proclaiming to the world that this is what is going on, organizing black ribbon campaigns and having public meetings and all the rest of it.

That is what happens when you politicize health care to the extent that, in this case, it was my New Democratic opponent that I am talking about that politicized it so very much. The whole health debate in the city of Brandon. It is unfortunate too, because there are a lot of really decent people in the city of Brandon and southwestern Manitoba who care a lot about their health system, but they do not want to be working from information of the type that comes out in the way it came out. This happens and this is the kind of environment we work in.

I think of the likes of Michael Decter. Michael Decter was the clerk of the Executive Council in the Pawley-Doer government. Michael Decter, after they were unceremoniously thrown out of office back in 1988, Michael Decter sought his fortune east of here, where there was a New Democratic government under Bob Rae, and Mr. Decter became Deputy Minister of Health there. It was in Ontario under Mr. Decter's leadership in the Health department that they closed 10,000-10,000, Mr. Chairman—acute care hospital beds in the province of Ontario.

It is interesting. I know the honourable member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) does his homework, he does his reading and everything like that. One of the books he reads is by Michael Rachlis. All I am saying is that you should read Michael Decter. He is, like, joined at the head to people like the honourable member for Kildonan, or at least he was.

Interestingly, too, after he finished his term as Deputy Minister of Health, after shutting down all those hospital beds in Ontario, Connie Curran comes along and says, Michael, will you be my chief person in Canada? We need a Connie Curran Canada leader, and we would like you, Michael Decter, to do that. That is what he did. He accepted that job. He is the top person in Canada for Connie Curran Canada. Members opposite sometimes do not like being reminded about that. [interjection]

Mr. McCrae: I personally have never met Connie Curran, but I am sure Michael Decter has and knows her very well.

But it is just the kind of things that misinformation can do. It is bad enough everywhere else. We can live with it, I guess, or we have to. We have to live with it here,

too. It is not for me that I am so concerned, Mr. Chairman; it is a lot of vulnerable people in our society who, when they are fed this sort of drivel, they get frightened.

Picture yourself—I know it is hard for you to do this because you are such a robust, strong, energetic person but think of yourself as a somewhat more fragile, vulnerable person, living at home, relying on a home care attendant to come and help you with your toileting, for example, and your bathing and your feeding and your dressing and moving you from your chair to your bed and that sort of thing. Your worker, prior to the strike, is told by his union boss friends to go and tell you that tomorrow you will not get any care unless you pay user fees. Put yourself in that position. This is the kind of stuff that my friend opposite here supports.

He has been out there himself. He was the person who began the story in the first place about the changes, this honourable member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak), yet he is proud of it. Well, so be it, power to him. That is not a problem for me. I have no quarrel if the honourable member for Kildonan comes across some information from whatever source and wants to go and get his name in the newspaper. That is his business, but the thing that bothers me is he accompanies his outbursts that day with the threat of the user fees and the cuts in service.

I mean, if the truth were known, it is an NDP report that they, the Doer-Pawley NDP government, commissioned. [interjection] Pawley-Doer, Doer-Pawley, what is the difference?

An Honourable Member: Well, nothing, neither of them did anything.

* (1530)

Mr. McCrae: Well, one of them is the real union boss. That is the Doer part, the member for Concordia part. But that group commissioned a study. They like studies, Mr. Chairman. They put a lot of reliance on studies and reports.

Here we have one from Price Waterhouse. I do not know how many millions and millions of dollars the NDP paid for this, and I do not know how many American people were involved in the production of this

report—probably quite a few. But on page xix—these are little x's and i's—it says: the program should require regional program managers to manage their budgets more actively and to stay within approved levels and should give programs staff greater discretion over service levels per client; i.e., permitting dilution of services—this is NDP policy—in order to achieve budget targets.

Another one: the program should give consideration to introducing measures that would serve to encourage clients to meet their needs through their own resources, e.g., user fees, waiting periods prior to receiving nonprofessional services, user fees during the initial period of service and limiting hours in which services are provided.

Maybe the honourable member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) can tell us how many millions the NDP paid for that advice?

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, I am really sorry. I thought we were making progress during the course of these Estimates with respect to answering questions, and I am really sorry the minister has again gone off on tangents, and I feel compelled—[interjection]

Mr. McCrae: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman, as I made known a little while ago, we have something important to do with respect to the delivery of home care services, and I am asking if we can have a recess for 15 minutes.

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Radcliffe): This is not a point of order, but if it is the will of the committee to recess for 15 minutes—agreed? [agreed]

The committee shall recess for 15 minutes to reconvene at 3:45.

The committee recessed at 15:32 p.m.

After Recess

The committee resumed at 15:49 p.m.

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Radcliffe): The committee will resume after the recess.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, I feel compelled to respond to some of the comments of the minister prior to recess. He made reference to the member for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans) who has an impeccable record of constituency representation.

I can indicate to the minister that one of the reasons the member for Brandon East brought it to the attention of the minister is he was asked to by constituents, by the public, by consumers and by individuals who had an opportunity to take part in that particular service. So he was doing his duty as a duly elected member of the Chamber in raising that issue, something that I think members of this Chamber could learn something from. Perhaps that speaks to the reason as to why that member has been elected year after year after year with increasing majorities and why he is so well respected, Mr. Chairperson. So for the minister to suggest that his raising it was anything but a reflection and a response to his constituents is inaccurate.

* (1550)

I also find it very curious that the minister constantly wants to refer to his good consulting friend/firm of Connie Curran, and perhaps it is a question of trying to ascertain why that money was wasted. Perhaps that is why the minister brings it up, but I am surprised the minister constantly refers to Connie Curran.

But, more importantly, Mr. Chairperson, the minister again deals with the Price Waterhouse report, both the minister and the Premier (Mr. Filmon), and it is now part of a Tory text and dogma to repeat that report. I just point out to the minister, I gave some instructions and some advice to the minister last week about dealing with the Price Waterhouse report, and I advised him that he had an implementation team. I do not believe the minister was aware of that, but I was able to inform him that he had his own implementation team concerning that report.

I just want to add for the minister that the report was tabled in the Legislature by the Honourable Don Orchard on October 6, 1988, and I want to quote into the record, Mr. Chairperson, what the Honourable Don Orchard had to say, and I quote: This report is a comprehensive attempt to analyse the strengths and weaknesses of this very important program and to prescribe the changes

which will be required to ensure the needs of Manitoba can be met in the future.

What was the result of that, Mr. Chairperson? The minister set up an implementation team chaired by Frank Maynard. That committee has been meeting on a regular basis to implement, and I ask the minister, will he bring members of that committee here to deal with how the minister is implementing and dealing with his Price Waterhouse report? The minister might want to turn it around and try to twist the facts and try to put up some little bit of defence with respect to his privatization scheme but, as weak as that defence is, I again urge the minister, bring forward the recommendations of your own implementation committee. Now that you know you have one, bring it forward, bring it to this House, let us ask them questions.

Further, I again reiterate to the minister. I have a full copy of the report. I know the minister only has a photocopy of the executive summary that he refers to. I am prepared to forward to you the whole report to read, Mr. Chairperson, so the minister will know of what he is speaking, as he constantly refers to this report in only a partial way and in a very distorted way, on a regular basis in this Chamber, as an attempt to deflect attention away from what is a fundamental issue with respect to home care, and that is the lack of any data, the lack of any analysis, the lack of any substance to the government's argument as to why they are privatizing home care.

I felt compelled, despite the fact that we were making some progress with respect to moving along in the Estimates process, the minister did make some rather inaccurate statements, and I feel compelled to correct the record. In that regard, returning to the Estimates book, I note that this year we are increasing the funding for blood transfusion services by \$2 million. I wonder if the minister, given that that very issue was on the agenda of the minister's meeting taking place in Ottawa, might outline for me what the proposal and plans are for that additional \$2-million funding to blood transfusion services as indicated in this year's appropriations.

Mr. McCrae: The honourable member referred at length in his question to the Price Waterhouse report which his colleagues Mr. Pawley and the member for Concordia (Mr. Doer) ordered. We do not know how much they spent for probably multimillions of dollars. In any event,

he dealt with at length and he has compelled me to respond.

Indeed the Price Waterhouse report as set out by my predecessor, the Honourable Mr. Donald Orchard, in his comments about it was quite correct. I have had an opportunity to review the Price Waterhouse report and the honourable member for Kildonan wants to sort of cherry-pick a word here or a phrase there or a recommendation here or a finding there, and that is okay. The thing is there is a multitude of them to choose from, Mr. Chairman. The honourable member's policy on home care is very simply put by him as the Health critic for the New Democratic Party, and that is go back to the system we had in the first place.

What we had in the first place was, indeed, looked at by the Price Waterhouse study commissioned by the NDP, and as I pointed out on page xix, there are a couple of recommendations that the NDP received from that study that it paid so many dollars for dealing with allowing services to be diluted, and allowing user fees, and allowing delays, and allowing cuts, vicious cuts in services. Well, the NDP might well stand for that, Mr. Chairman. When you look at the performance of NDP governments, that performance bears out what I have just said.

The member, his policy is to go back to the system we had in the first place, and here is what we had as set out in Price Waterhouse, and I quote: The review found that the mandate of the program has drifted as the program is increasingly used to serve a hospital replacement function. If the program is to adequately fulfill this additional role, it will have to place a greater emphasis on guaranteeing the availability and delivery of complex care services.

The member now says, as his policy shifts from day to day, go back to what we had. He wants to go back to a system where we cannot guarantee the availability and delivery of complex care services just at a time when we need to be able to guarantee the availability and delivery of complex care services, just at a time when the honourable member knows everyone is looking at the hospital system in the city of Winnipeg. Everyone says we have got way too many hospital beds—although the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) only says we should cut either a hundred or 700, and we are not sure which

one, he has not said that how many beds we should take out. He said at one point that we should take 700 beds out of the system in Winnipeg. He has not told us where or how or anything like that, just hack and slash.

Well, that is not good enough, Mr. Chairman. It may be okay for an opposition member to want to hack and slash or another opposition member to want to go back to what we had in the first place, but I suggest it is not good enough for the clients of our system not to have guarantees of availability and delivery of complex care services. If we do not have that, we cannot address the issue of the hospital situation in Winnipeg. Even though the member for Inkster does not agree with some of the recommendations that are coming out, he does agree that there is a need for some change. I hope, at least, I am correct in saying that much.

* (1600)

Back to Price Waterhouse, the multimillion-dollar, I am told, multimillion-dollar report commissioned by the NDP which ultimately recommends user fees and dilution and cuts in services, I quote from page iii: It also identified a need for a comprehensive quality assurance program that would gather and report information on service quality across all regions.

No requirement for consistency, if you ask the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak), because he just says let us go back to what we had in the first place—which his own report says does not have comprehensive quality assurance. We need that. He says, no, you do not need that; let us go back to what we had in the first place.

The Price Waterhouse report says that the review identified that the program lacks a comprehensive information system that collects and reports client service management and financial data on an automated basis. It also says there is no strategic date of plan. It also says the open-ended nature of the program raises questions as to whether there is a need for appropriate mechanisms for capping costs or services. It also says the review found that there are inadequate hospital discharge planning practices which lead to inappropriate discharges to home care, lack of proper discharge preparation and, Mr. Chairman, get this, potentially unsafe client situations.

The Health critic for the New Democratic party says as a matter of policy for the NDP, go back to what we had

in the first place. Well, Mr. Chairman, what we had in the first place, according to the NDP itself through its Price Waterhouse report, were potentially unsafe client situations.

What kind of philosophy is it that says let us go back to potentially unsafe client situations? Is this the way the New Democrats would go about doing the business of running a health care system if, and this is a big if, they ever had an opportunity again in the future of this province to do so?

Mr. Chairman, if I were your constituent or the constituent of the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak), my face would just tighten up immediately in concern that we could ever even think of electing a group of people who want us to go back to potentially unsafe client situations. Why should I really want to listen very hard to the member for Kildonan and his bleatings and urgings when he wants us to go back to potentially unsafe client situations? I cannot see that as a responsible position. I cannot stand here as the Minister of Health and say I will knowingly and willingly return our home care program to a point where we have potentially unsafe client situations.

It was enough of a worry this week and last week when the member for Kildonan and his friends wanted to remove services from our clients, that we have very much concern as we try to cope with labour disruption brought out by the leadership of the union movement, with the full endorsement of the New Democratic Party. That concerns me enough as it is, that they should be like that, but I certainly am not going to take very seriously the urgings of the member for Kildonan when he wants us to go back to potentially unsafe client situations.

Well, it does not end there. If you look further to little v, little i, that is the page number, in this Price Waterhouse report commissioned by the—this is in the executive summary of that report—New Democrats, word has it that it is multimillions of dollars that they paid for that. We do not know, and they have not told us. They do not want to come clean with this information. Do you know why? Because it is a big cover-up. They are really afraid that the real New Democratic spirit for elderly and infirmed people in our province will become known. This is a big fear, so they sit on that kind of information and hide it and keep it from the public.

But this report which I have, which they commissioned, which recommends user fees, dilution of service and drastic cuts in services and waiting periods for home care services—imagine, the NDP wants to have waiting periods for home care at a time when our hospitals desperately need to be—how do you put it?—unplugged in the sense of we have people in those hospitals that would be receiving better care at home. The NDP does not want that to happen, and it causes me great concern that that should be the position of a political party that calls itself responsible and ready to embrace the '90s and beyond.

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Radcliffe): The honourable member for Kildonan, on a point of order?

Mr. Chomiak: No. I thought the minister's time was up.

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Radcliffe): The honourable minister, having had about 30 seconds to go. I was just giving him some advance warning.

Mr. Chomiak: I almost hesitate to rise at this point to deal with the minister because the minister has been so contradictory in his tirade during the last 10 minutes that I think any objective reader of this debate—it is interesting. Let us deal with this. The minister says that we want to go back to the old ways. The minister accuses us of wanting to implement all these recommendations of his report that had his implementation committee, that was tabled by his minister.

Then he says, we want to go back to the old ways of the report that made these recommendations that we somehow supposedly supported. At the same time, the minister is indicating that he would not have implemented those particular recommendations despite the fact that he has an implementation team.

It is contradiction after contradiction, but, more important, the real issue here is the minister's December 16 Treasury Board document, signed off by the minister, James McCrae, submitted to cabinet. What did that document say? That document said user fees would be imposed in the home care field. The minister has yet to deal with that. He can go on, and he can talk about 10-year-old reports or 15-year-old reports. He can talk about Connie Curran all that he likes, but he will not deal with

the fundamental issue as to why his own Treasury Board submission said user fees would be imposed on home care in the future in Manitoba under his government. It says that. The minister ought to have been more careful before he signed off that document, if he wanted to argue that there were no user fees.

So, Mr. Chairperson, the minister can blow long and the minister can blow hard about a report in the 1980s by the NDP, and he can say we want to go back. What we want to go back to is a public system. We want a public system, not a private system, that is the point, and that is the point the minister fails to get. We do not want a system with user fees. Do we have user fees? Which government imposed user fees in home care?

If the minister would only pay attention, what government imposed user fees in home care? This government. Home care equipment. The minister can say all that he wants. They imposed use fees on home care equipment and home care supplies. The minister can talk all they want and now they want to impose user fees on home care, per se, because it is in their own Treasury Board document.

The Deputy Premier can say all that he wants, but it is his document, signed by his minister in his cabinet that says we will impose user fees. So try as you might, it is in black and white. If we did not have the document, you could have gotten away with it, but you cannot get away with it because we have the document signed off by your Minister of Health, approved by your cabinet, saying there is going to be user fees imposed in home care. So the minister can try to deflect attention away from the issue, and the minister can try to argue all of the old reports that he wants, and he can try to misconstrue and move the items around, but the bottom line is this government, this minister has failed to even acknowledge their own Treasury Board documents signed off by the minister saying that user fees will be imposed.

I tabled the document, Mr. Chairperson. I tabled it. I was hoping that the government might photocopy it and present it to the backbenchers who I believe were not aware of this particular submission and this particular government policy.

The minister can try all the tactics that he wants to deflect attention away from the reality, Mr. Chairperson,

but it will not work, because the document says in black and white, the document submitted by the minister, that there will be user fees imposed on core services. So if elderly patients are concerned, and if the public is concerned, and if the home care workers are concerned, they have good cause and good reason to be, because the government has said it in its own document: what will be will be user fees imposed on core health services.

* (1610)

(Mr. Chairperson in the Chair)

I do not expect the minister to change his line of defence which is to go back to the issue of the Price Waterhouse report. No one is buying it, Mr. Chairperson. No one attributes any credibility to that line of argument, but it is a defence for you, I recognize that. It is sort of a little thing that you can hang onto to try to defend your position. The fact of the matter is you have yet to deal with the issue as to why your Treasury Board document talked about the imposition of user fees. You have yet to deal with the contradiction as to why your document said that the service would be given over wholly in rural Manitoba, effective April 1, 1997, to the regional boards. You have to deal with the document where it says a Crown corporation or agency would be set up to control the provision of these private services, and you have yet to do that.

You have to deal with the fact that the day we released the document publicly, the minister confirmed that it was a go. A few days later, they put out a press release saying it was little bit different. A few days later the policy was a little bit different. A few days later the policy changed. Now, the line they are trying to say is it is only 25 percent. The Premier (Mr. Filmon) said, oh, it is only 25 percent. You are also privatizing completely. You are also putting out the tender completely, the nursing component, but, no, you do not like to say that.

Twenty-five percent, now they are saying of a demonstration project. The only reason that the Treasury Board document states that you are proceeding to privatize this year a portion and that the Department of Health policy that all service will be delivered by nonpublic health, that it would be privatized completely. Your own document says it, divestiture of all service delivery. You have yet not once, in this three weeks of

debate, has the minister been willing, and it is very interesting, the minister has been unwilling and unable to defend his own Treasury Board document. He has been completely avoiding it. He has avoided the user fee issue and he has avoided the rural Manitoba issue and he has avoided the Crown corporation issue.

Why is that? Because it is indefensible. Because the minister knows what it says, he does not want to defend it and, further, he has no documentation to back up his decision, and that is the other issue, why the minister signed that document off and handed it out to his colleagues and they approved in cabinet.

Why did he do that without proper evidence, without proper facts? Where are the arguments, where is the data, where is the cost analysis that had the Minister of Finance say there would be a saving of \$10 million. The Premier said \$10 million, the minister said no saving and the associate deputy minister of Health said, well, do not count on it, we are not sure.

Is that any way to run a department? How can we trust this minister and this government to implement health care policy when they cannot even get their own propaganda straight? The Premier says one thing, the minister says another thing, the deputy minister says something else. How can anyone have confidence in the ability of this government and this minister to deliver on this policy in face of those contradictions? In light of the fact that the minister has refused to deal, and I challenge the minister, I challenge the minister to come forward and to deal with the questions we have asked over and over again concerning his Treasury Board document, his submission, signed off by him, given out.

I am proud of the fact that we made it public, because I am afraid that the government would not have and that the government would have slipped in this policy over the summertime and not advised the public as to what they were doing. We did a great public service by releasing this document to the public and allowing for public discussion, because the Minister of Health, who is not even prepared to talk about the document, I dare say would have hoped that he could have slipped in the policy in the middle of the summertime without having members of the public have access to this information.

Let not the minister go off on tangents contradicting himself about Price Waterhouse reports and go off into

other jurisdictions and other provinces. Will the minister not deal with the facts as they relate to the Province of Manitoba, as they relate to his own Treasury Board document that it is very clear as to where they want to go on home care. Defend that policy. If it is defensible, defend it; if it is not defensible, then give it up. Give it up if it is not defensible.

There is nothing wrong with admitting you made a mistake. In fact, we on this side of the House would be the first to laud you if you were to recognize your error and if you were to recognize the fact that for whatever reason you have made an error and you are prepared to go back on that, we would laud you on that. Are you prepared to deal with your own Treasury Board document, Mr. Chairperson?

Mr. McCrae: Well, if the honourable member is offering to actually support something, in my eight years in government, I can attest it would be the first time, and I would have a hard time believing—we could offer the honourable member virtually everything he ever asked for and he would still suggest, if there was a vote to be found anywhere in the province or a union to please anywhere in the province, he would be quick to jump on such things, but he would certainly not ever admit that this government had done something that he approves of.

Frankly, the fact that the honourable member is so riled up about this tells me that it is just another piece of evidence that we must be on the right track, because I know what CKY television said at the time of the release of the report on the Seven Oaks project. CKY television reported, and I quote, the patients love it, the NDP hates it.

That sort of tells me where the NDP's priorities are, but I would be quick to say that that would be only one measure that I would use. We would like to use all the traditional ones, as well, but if the honourable member for Kildonan likes it, look at it hard, Mr. Chairman, before you decide to implement something like that.

The member talks about avoiding issues. I asked for this information last week from him and Mr. Doer and Mr. Pawley and whoever it is within the New Democratic Party that can bring me this information. I asked how much the Price Waterhouse report cost. I asked how many Americans were working on the Price Waterhouse

project. They have not told us, so I can only assume that most of the people involved come from Dallas, Oklahoma City, Kansas City, Denver, New York, places like that, and probably places in Louisiana and California, as well.

I can only assume that because of the cover-up on the part of the New Democratic Party. They have avoided this Price Waterhouse report like the plague because they know it exposes them for what they really are, but those things need to be exposed. The people of Manitoba need to know what the NDP really stands for. There was some discussion yesterday about what the NDP stands for, and, of course, it was reported in the newspapers today about their support for the union movement and some of the tactics that the union movement resorts to, and that is all in the public record today and still no denial, no standing on their hind legs and saying, you know, we condemn this horrible, horrible behaviour on the part of the union bosses.

The NDP would never do that, but I heard somebody over on the opposite side use that awful expression, bought and paid for. Maybe they should look in the mirror once in a while when they make those kinds of comments, and maybe they will see looking back at them Peter Olfert, Bernie Christophe, people like that, Daryl Bean. We all remember Daryl Bean. We know what Daryl Bean stands for. He stands for abusing little, old female persons. There were two grandmothers at the time of—and, you know, Sharon Carstairs would not even stand up and condemn that sort of behaviour, but Daryl Bean wanted to either hang or drown little old ladies who wanted to go to work when Daryl Bean was having a precious strike, Mr. Chairman.

Point of Order

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, notwithstanding that we in this Chamber have liability for statements we make in this House, I think it is completely inappropriate for a member of the Crown to suggest that any individual would want to drown or hang someone.

Mr. Chairperson, I think it is completely inappropriate and unparliamentary for a minister of the Crown, notwithstanding he has liability to this Chamber, to suggest that, and I ask you to ask the minister to withdraw those comments.

Mr. McCrae: There he goes again, Mr. Chairman, defending Daryl Bean, the man who puts in writing the way he feels about people who want to go to work for a living. He quotes Jack London, a writer from earlier this century, who said that people who go to work when there is a strike on should be either hanged or drowned, and now the member for Kildonan stands in his place under the guise of a point of order to defend that sort of mentality.

Well, let him defend that sort of mentality, but maybe he ought not to do it under the guise of a point of order.

Mr. Chairperson: Order, please. I thank the honourable members for their advice. Just give me a minute.

Order, please. The honourable member for Kildonan does not have a point of order, but I would caution all honourable members to choose their words very carefully. Hypothetical cases should not be brought forward, as well as conveying direct imputations toward individuals, should not be entering into the debate at this time. The honourable minister, to conclude his statement.

* * *

Mr. McCrae: Mr. Chairman, I cannot help but observe that it is awfully interesting how quick you can get a New Democrat to his feet. All you have to do is say something nasty about somebody like Daryl Bean and they are right in there just as quick as it can be to defend the behaviour of those people. I remember the situation very well. I wrote to Mr. Bean, I asked that he resign because of his attitude towards elderly women working in the public service of Canada, and, of course, he sent back some long-winded defence of his indefensible behaviour.

What is really telling is Sharon Carstairs—Senator Carstairs today—sat over on the other side of this Chamber and refused to come to the aid of those two grandmothers who were really seeking the aid of politicians and others in leadership positions across our country in their plight, facing threats like that from people like Daryl Bean, supported by members of the New Democratic Party and acquiesced in, I guess, by members of the Liberal Party, because they never did speak up. Do you know why? Because the Liberals in those days—

Point of Order

Mr. Chomiak: Yes, Mr. Chairperson, I believe I posed the question to the minister concerning the Treasury Board submission as relating to Home Care or as it relates to these particular Estimates. I fail to see what a labour dispute or a relationship to Senator Sharon Carstairs is even remotely connected, is relevant to the minister's answers.

Mr. McCrae: Mr. Chairman, I am not sure what the honourable member's point of order is this time either. I suggest maybe you will not be too clear on it in your ultimate ruling for which we will all have respect. The point is the honourable member knows the rules of this House, he knows he cannot bully people on this side of the House to fit into his little Procrustes box.

Mr. Chairperson: Order, please. I would ask the honourable minister to retract the phrase he just used. "Bully" has been ruled out of order in the past. He is at this time, during his point of order, baiting the honourable member, and I would appreciate if he retracted that and refrained from that angle and speak to the point of order.

Mr. McCrae: Of course, if it is unparliamentary I would withdraw it, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairperson: To the point of order.

* * *

Mr. McCrae: You ask us to try to choose our words. I am working very hard, wracking my brain, to try to figure out a better word than "bully," and I will continue to try to find a better word than "bully" to describe the behaviour of members opposite when they try to force members on this side of the House to answer only in the way that they want to have the answer to come out, or to address themselves to this part of my question or that part of my question. It would not matter if you had 16 ideas thrown into a preamble to a question.

Mr. Chairperson: I thank the honourable members for the advice. The honourable member for Kildonan did have a point of order. Under Rule No. 70. (3), speeches in Committee of the Whole must be strictly relevant to the item or clause under discussion. I had been carefully

listening to the minister for six and a half minutes, and I would ask the minister to attempt to be a little bit more relevant towards the question.

* * *

Mr. McCrae: Mr. Chairman, I respect your ruling, of course. We are on item 1.(b), which is Executive Support. If the honourable member has a question about Executive Support. I guess I could answer that. I understand item 1.(b) allows a kind of a latitude, not just for the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak), but for anybody else who is taking part in the debate on item 1.(b), including me. so I hope that is what you meant when you were making your ruling, of course, which I respect and would without hesitation humbly obey.

The honourable member for Kildonan asks questions about home care. I am trying to deal with home care. He cites documents which I have already told him was not a Treasury Board submission. keeps calling it that. I am not going to answer questions about his idea of what something is. We know what his idea is. It is from some other planet, Mr. Chairman. This report is not from some other planet. This is a report that has been commissioned by the New Democrats.

If he wants to compare policies, that is what politics is all about. I have got a policy, he has got one. This is Parliament. This is the Legislature. That is what you do, you talk about these policies. His policy, Mr. Chairman, is go back to the system we had in the first place, which I hope brings it all into the realm of relevancy to the point at hand.

The Price Waterhouse should not be left out of this. Who knows how many millions the NDP paid for it, so do not tell me it is not relevant, I say, to the honourable member for Kildonan. He would like it very much if this was totally forgotten and that the people of Manitoba never had to pay for this or that the people of Manitoba never had anything to do with it. He certainly wishes the NDP never had anything to do with it because it exposes their agenda, their secret agenda, I suggest, their secret agenda for user fees and massive hacking and slashing in the Home Care program. I mean, that is the wrong place for that sort of thing, because it is a program which our policy, as clearly set out in our budget documents over eight years, is to support to a very, very significant extent.

Speaking of that, I will refer to those levels of support in detail, Mr. Chairman, to remind honourable members about that, because we keep hearing suggestions to the contrary by honourable members in the New Democratic party.

In the meantime, back to Price Waterhouse. The member's policy is to go back to the system we had in the first place. The system we had in the first place, as set out by Price Waterhouse, which was paid for by the New Democrats and has a lot to do with the way they see the world, quotes on page vi of the executive summary: It also found gaps in services that are outside the scope of the Continuing Care Program.

* (1630)

This is just after the part that I referred to a while ago where it appears that the NDP want us to go back to potentially unsafe client conditions. I disagree with that policy and this is the right place for me to say that. It says it also found gaps in services that are outside the scope of the Continuing Care Program. In some regions the Continuing Care Program is perceived as the deepest pocket program and is being used to fill some of these gaps. This results in serious departures from program guidelines, inconsistencies among regions and a sense of unfairness among staff and clients in those regions that are complying with the program's scope.

I would like to read that again, because this is what the honourable member stands for when he says we should go back to the system we had in the first place. This is what the honourable member wants: serious departures from program guidelines, inconsistencies among regions and a sense of unfairness among staff and clients in those regions that are complying with the program scope.

Mr. Chairman, I was going to say I am sorry, but I am not sorry. I just do not accept that as a policy and I quite unabashedly would stand on the rooftops and tell the people of Manitoba that being NDP policy, I have no time for it, I do not want that. Why does the honourable member want staff and clients to have a sense of unfairness about the program? Why do they want that? What useful purpose could that possibly serve, and how could it possibly improve the Home Care program? Maybe there is something we should be taking from the NDP that is not being said in words. It has to do with inefficiency.

I have this theory, Mr. Chairman. Maybe this is not the place for theories, but here goes anyway. My theory is that the NDP likes inefficiency. Now, I would like the honourable member to defend that theory of mine or to refute that theory of mine, I should say, because he probably does not want to go and tell the world he likes inefficiency, but almost everything I have ever seen a New Democrat do in my lifetime has inefficiency written all over it. In fact, if you look in the dictionary under the word "inefficiency," you would probably see a picture of Howard Pawley sitting right there.

Mr. Chairman, I will let the honourable member take over for awhile.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): I have a few words that I would like to talk about with respect to home care services. In fact, last time I had the opportunity to ask some questions, I had mentioned to the minister that I was going to deal with some hospital questions, followed then by home care.

I want to make reference to what I believe the minister had and that was options. I see a number of options that the minister should have given more serious consideration.

First and foremost, the option that this government chose to take was the one where we see the government say, well, we have an idea, we have not talked to anyone or consulted with anyone about it, because we never heard anything about it until the government made some sort of an announcement, but it fits nicely with our philosophy, and it is something which cabinet is going to ultimately approve, and they brought it forward, and, now as a result of that, ultimately today we are in a strike situation.

The government ultimately will put the blame on home care workers, that the government had nothing to do with the home care workers actually going on strike. Mr. Chairperson, I do believe the government is being most unfair to the home care workers and is, in fact, somewhat misleading the clients of home care services.

That is one of the options, the option which the government chose. There are other options, and I want to make reference to three other options that came to mind. The first option—and this is an option which the

government can still take today. It has been suggested. It would end the strike, and that option would see a one-year moratorium put on the privatization of home care services.

Mr. Chairperson, if the minister was prepared to take that option, I believe ultimately what should have been done in the first place would, in fact, be allowed to occur, and that would have seen the government actually consulting with clients and home care workers, with Manitobans, with health care experts, with those individuals who have an interest and want to be able to participate in providing input to the government. It is not totally new to the government. I can recall the Parents' Forum on Education. What they actually did with the results of it one might question, but the idea of getting people involved in a process that will lead to a much better system is, in fact, something which we believe would have been far more legitimate, and for the government, it is not late to take that particular option.

The Minister of Health could stand up in response to my stating the option that has been put on the table for a number of days already, and say: The one-year moratorium is on, and we are going to consult. The strike will, in essence, come to an end, and the clients, our first priority, will in fact be the biggest benefactors.

Another option would have been, no doubt, the status quo. The status quo, as pointed out from the Minister of Health, is not a viable option. We in the Liberal Party also believe the status quo is not a viable option. The minister makes reference to the Price Waterhouse report, and the Price Waterhouse is no doubt the only tool that can be used to measure the need for change.

Another option, of course, is that if the government is not prepared to do what is right— that is, institute a one-year moratorium—will they, at the very least, demonstrate flexibility, open up the government's mind, collective mind, if you like, and listen and put together alternatives that might at least attempt to appease those individuals that are watching very closely in terms of what the government is doing?

One of those, for example, is the preferential treatment. We have indicated to the government that preferential treatment to nonprofit organizations such as the Victorian Order of Nurses is a viable alternative and something that

should be given by the government if they feel that they have to move towards privatization.

These are the types of options the government has chosen. My question simply to the Minister of Health is: Is the Minister of Health prepared to accept that there are other ways at resolving this particular issue that is in front of us today, other than the one that he is taking currently?

Mr. McCrae: Well, the honourable member has really piqued my curiosity on this one because he has raised it now. He must have thought this through quite a bit, because he has raised it on a number of occasions now that somehow nonprofit organizations, as they approach the tendering process, should be granted special treatment or some kind of preferential treatment. I would like to know what form the honourable member is suggesting that preferential treatment ought to take. If I knew that, I might be in a better position to respond to what he—[interjection]

My colleague here on this side suggests the member simply wants to gerrymander the system and achieve the same system we have, which is the same policy as the NDP's, which is to go back to the system we had in the first place. Well, if that is not what he is saying, that is fine; let him explain that. But I would like the honourable member to tell us what form that special preferential treatment ought to take, and does he not think the preferential treatment they already have is not sufficient?

* (1640)

When nonprofits approach the tendering process, they will do so without having to factor in any profit margin, as businesses do, which mark up the cost of their labour, mark up the cost of their supplies and their equipment and their administration and whatever else they have, which is the direct cost. Then, at the end of it all, they put in what they think they can achieve by way of profit. Well, the nonprofits approach the same exercise, and they have to do all the same stuff, except for that last one. They do not have to put in their tender documents, the bids, any percentage or anything like that for profit, so they already have an advantage over the profit makers in the system.

I assume the honourable member had that one figured out, so there is already a preferential treatment in place for nonprofit organizations. I am asking the member what additional special treatment he would accord nonprofit organizations, knowing they already have preferential and an advantageous situation as they go in to the tendering process. So the honourable member will, no doubt, use his next question to clear that little matter up. The reason I am not able to agree with him is because I do not know what it is he is proposing. They already have that preferential treatment, and I am just wondering what more.

If we add something else like—I do not know what it is; I guess I can only guess—that the nonprofits get a grant or something—I do not know. The honourable member can explain that to us because it is his proposal, not mine. I am saying that they already have a preferential treatment because they do not have to factor in any profits, unless the profit organizations want to become nonprofit ones, which would suit the New Democrats just fine because they do not really care about expansion of anything. You see, that is how things happen in this world. Profits are made, and then there is expansion.

There is one company that gets referred to more often than the others. It is the We Care Home Health Company. That company has indeed expanded over the years to the point where it now employs some 4,000 people and has about 40 franchises across the country. I simply say, how does a company do that with no customers? If they provide such bad service as the New Democrats would suggest, how come this happened?

The member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) says, this is not wieners we are selling. Well, I agree it is not wieners, but let us look at a company that sells wieners, if you like, and they are working on a profit motive. The more wieners they sell, the better wiener they produce, the more likelihood of some kind of a success in the system, the more likelihood that they can stay in business. By keeping the customer satisfied, that is simply good for business and good for the customer, in this case, the client. I have to be thinking about the member for Kildonan who has some philosophical objection to the word “customer.”

I have been in business places where they have a sign on the wall, in this establishment, the customer is king,

or, in this establishment, everything we do, we do to please the customer, or, in other businesses I have been in, the customer is always right. Those are positive statements about the client, the patient, the focus of all of the things that we are trying to do. Our friends in the New Democratic party have this almost religious distrust of anybody out there who wants to make a living unless it is made through the public system.

The honourable member for Radisson (Ms. Cerilli) said it all very clearly for us, and set out NDP policy in quoting Karl Marx, when she quoted Karl Marx as having said that: from each according to his ability, to each according to his need. Then the member for Radisson said this was a very fine, fine man that said this.

I think I know where the NDP is coming from, but I am having a little more trouble figuring out where the Liberals are coming from, because they want to add on more preferential treatment to the preferential treatment that is already there. I hope the honourable member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) will be clearer about that when he asks his next question, because I believe this place is a place to analyze and debate over different proposals. He is making a proposal. I would like to understand it better.

Mr. Lamoureux: Following along the line of the question and wanting to answer, and hopefully if I demonstrate the general will to answer a question directly, the minister will do likewise when I pose a question.

When you establish the criteria, you can give so-called special treatment. It can be done in many different ways. For example, if you say in the criteria prior to going to tendering that you can only provide core services at no cost, you cannot provide extra services at a cost, I would imagine that the private sector would be quite disappointed with that, and that would have an impact on their bid. Will it have more of an impact than it would on a nonprofit organization? My argument would be that, yes, it would have more of an impact.

When you look at the core services in which the minister has been reluctant to respond to, what in essence is the nonprofit sector, if you like, going to be competing against? Well, We Care and other for-profit private

companies are looking for the cream of the home care services, and that is going to be found in the extra services being provided.

You use the core services as the bait, if you like, to attract the clients. Once you have the clients, then you sell and promote and possibly even give commission incentives for the client to buy into those extra services. The extra services are where you are going to have that much more of a higher rate of a return. That is what is going to be motivating the for-profit organizations, private companies. That is why ultimately we will argue from within the Liberal Party that, if you are going to privatize home care services, and you are not prepared to consult with the clients, the home care providers and other Manitobans in advance to privatizing, then at the very least give a concession and say that we are prepared to give special treatment to nonprofit organizations.

If you are prepared to do that, then ultimately what we are likely going to see is better services if the nonprofit sector is allowed the opportunity to participate in a more significant way. I believe ultimately that the Minister of Health even recognizes—as I say, I gave a fairly direct answer to his question; hopefully, he will give an equally direct answer to this question: Does the Minister of Health concur that a nonprofit home care service such as the VON is in a better position to be able to provide a higher quality of core services for home care work than a private sector? Are they not in a better position to be able to do that? If the answer to that is yes, then why does he not allow them to do that?

Mr. McCrae: Sometimes, when members are asking their questions, I am also engaged in a couple of other matters at the same time. I do not always hear all the parts of the question. The honourable member may well have put his policy on the record, and we will have to review Hansard to make sure that we understand what it is he said, but he did make one point which—I have another question for him. He said that he did not think there should be any extra services at extra cost beyond the core. That is a big problem in our country because what he said is a little bit akin to the position taken by his federal colleagues, that being that those who want more should not be allowed to have more, kind of an imposed mediocrity—maybe that is the right expression.

It sounds to me what the honourable member is trying to do is impose limitations on what the client can get.

Again, the client is not the focus here to the Liberals, and that disturbs me. I think that we have probably the best program in the country, and I think that we have the best standards in the country, the best variety and menu or services paid for by government in the country. Yet there might be somebody out there who says, well, you know, I think I would like more. In fact, I am going to try to get more, so they can go to the appeal panel for home care and have their assessment reviewed by people involved in care delivery and fellow consumers of home care services. That is what our home care panel is all about. It has had a very good impact on our Home Care program

* (1650)

Even then, if the client fails to convince the program that they should get more services, but they want more—let us say the program allows for a bath three times a week and you want four or you want five baths in a week. Why should you not be able to have four or five baths in a week? Why is the honourable member for Inkster so insistent upon denying people the number of baths that they want, but the program says you can have three, and the government pays for that, but you want four or five, and the member for Inkster says, no way, you cannot have that. Why? Is it, as has been suggested, that the honourable member for Inkster is all wet? I do not know.

I think we are into another philosophical fight because, you see, the federal Liberals want so much to put the kibosh on anything that you can pay for yourself. They do not mind that you can drive your car or fly your own Lear jet, which the member for Elmwood might be able to do with his—I do not know if he has a Lear jet or not, but we know he does very well, and all the power to him. The member for Elmwood might want to get in his Lear jet or rent one or whatever and fly to Minneapolis and have some kind of service done that cannot be done here or is not quick enough to suit him or whatever it happens to be.

I do not know why the federal Liberals want to put a stop to that. They do not like it. They cannot stop it, by the way, but they do not like it, and that is why they say to the Province of Alberta, any clinic that is subsidized by government in any way ought not to impose any additional fee on the patient. Well, I can see some good

intentions involved there, but I do not see the logic. The Gimbel Eye clinic is often used as an example for this argument. There are people who are against government having any part to play in the Gimbel clinic because they charge these tray fees and whatnot like that.

We respect the five principles of medicare, and we are trying to work our way through this little dispute that we have got going with the federal people, and Alberta and some other provinces, as well, because we do not want to be fined by the federal government all the time. My problem is that there is some narrow thinking going on in this whole debate because Ottawa does not understand health care. The reason it does not understand health care is it is not in the business of health care delivery. The provinces are. The federal government is a funder, and they say, we got this Canada Health Act that Monique Bégin or Pierre Trudeau or somebody wrote up, or whoever it was before that, and, by golly, it does not matter that this is the '90s and we cannot afford it anymore. You are going to fit in that box that we have crafted for you.

Well, it is generally agreed amongst provinces that the federal interpretation of what that box is all about is not always the same as everybody else's. What do the federal people know about it anyway because they are not in the business of delivering health services. We would like to think we know a little more about it because we are into it day in and day out.

That is the nature of that discussion. I digressed a little bit but not very much because the honourable member is talking that same mentality here with this point where he says that you should not be able to get extra services at extra cost. I am saying, why not? I am saying, why not, whether it be from a nonprofit agency or from a profitable agency? Oh, I think the honourable member will come back with some argument: why should the private people be able to get their foot in the door by working in a publicly funded program so that then they can get more business? He shakes his head in the negative, so he is not saying that. So I do not understand that one.

I just, off the top, want to tell the honourable member that I do not agree that somebody who wants more services than the core services should not be able to get them. I do not agree with that, and I do not mind saying so. There are people in Manitoba who want more and

can afford to pay more. The difference between the member for Inkster and me is that he is saying no. Those who can afford to pay more should accept what they would see as enforced mediocrity. I am not saying that I think the core of our services is a mediocre core of services, but there are some people for whom that level of services, for their own reasons, is not good enough. Why should they not be entitled to get more? Can the honourable member explain that to me?

Meanwhile, everybody else gets services that are appropriate to their needs, as suggested by the member for Radisson (Ms. Cerilli), who quotes Karl Marx and says that everybody should get what they need from those who can afford to give more. I mean, it is the old NDP, communist, whatever, make-the-rich-pay formula. That is okay. It is all right for her to believe in that. As a matter of policy—[interjection]

The honourable member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway), I have got his attention. Now, see, you go digressing for the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux), and then the member for Elmwood wants to get in the act. He asks why the member for Thompson and he should be criticized for joining the picket lines in 1987 when there were all these things going on that were talked about so broadly and recently. Why should he not have been able to be part of taking things out of people's shopping baskets and throwing it on the ground and sneering and all these things? Why should I not be able to do that? Well, you can do that. It is your business if that is what you want to do, just it does not seem very appropriate for publicly elected persons to be engaged in activities like that, that really, really represent the—[interjection] He says he is showing support for workers. If you have to show support for that kind of behaviour to do it, there is something wrong with our system, Mr. Chairman, when the member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway) has to sit there and from his seat suggest he should be able to do those things. Well, there is no law, I guess. He did not break any laws, so he can go and just be a genuine nuisance out there and be an unpleasant person all he wants.

I am telling you, my friends and neighbours and fellow citizens think that is goonery and thuggery and all those things, and it is not very nice, to come right down to it, to make it as clear as I can. It is just simply not very civilized behaviour. Honourable members in the NDP

want to defend uncivilized behaviour. Let them go ahead; let them go ahead.

My point is, back to the honourable member for Inkster who asked the question after all, I want to know why it is he is against allowing people to pay more and get more, why it is he is against that. This is not a Canada Health Act program and is not going to be. There is not a Health minister in the country who would agree to that. That being the case, why is it that the honourable member wants to deny people the right to have additional services if they want them?

Mr. Lamoureux: It is not a question of denying individuals the right that have the economic means to purchase extra benefits through home care services, through We Care, other outside organizations or even from within. The minister makes reference to the baths. He says, well, look, if you have a client that—let us say the care is set at three times a week, and then you have someone, using his example, that wants to have a bath done five times a week. Well, ultimately, if you privatize for profit, what you will find is that anyone within the business world who wants to be able to make a profit, who wants to be able to get as much of a rate of return as possible, is going to encourage, is going to say, look, at such and such a fee, you will be able to get an additional two baths a week.

* (1700)

Who, then, is going to be in a better position to be able to get that extra service? Well, those individuals that have the economic means, obviously, are going to be in a better position to be able to get that extra service. Well, why do I have some concern with respect to that? Primarily because what will happen in the private sector is, you have your employees, you have a certain amount of transition that occurs. Where you have the core services and those individuals that are simply taking the core services and nothing more than the core services, there might be a tendency from private, for-profit companies to have the trainees or the individuals that are going to be, maybe not sticking it out as long as those that are more inclined to make a career, those that are going to be receiving a bit better of a wage, those that as they hit the higher scale, those individuals will, in fact, be sent to those clients that are requesting the extra service. After all, that is where these private companies are going

to be making more money. That is what gives them a bit better of that competitive edge, to a certain degree, over the nonprofit groups.

That is why the question I posed to the minister and was hoping to get a very direct, short, simplistic as possible, response from the Minister of Health, and that is: Does the Minister of Health believe that a nonprofit home care service delivery does provide a greater opportunity to have more equal client service treatment than a private, for-profit company. Would he not concur with that?

Mr. McCrac: No, Mr. Chairman. The important thing to think about here is the standards that all of these vendors, these providers, are bound to work within or exceed. That is what we are talking about here. If we do not get what we need from a nonprofit or a profit agency, they are not going to be working for us for very long. If the MGEU decides to accept our offer and put in a bid, and they decide that they do not want to provide the services up to the standards that we insist on, they will not get the contract next time, guaranteed, or they will lose their contract midstream. We are going to make sure that there is appropriate contract cancellation language in the contract so that we can boot them out if they are not going to a good enough job.

That is necessary and should be there at all times if you are going to put the clients first. You should protect the clients and your own integrity as a contracting agent here to build that kind of language into a contract. You know, the honourable member surprises me sometimes because either he is not thinking clearly or he is taking a massive step to the left. Maybe he thinks that is what he needs to do for whatever is going on in the Liberal Party these days. He does not want extra services for extra costs. Where was he from Day One when he was elected in this House on the issue of the public wards in the hospitals, the private rooms and the semiprivate rooms, where you pay extra if you want to have a semiprivate or private room? Where has he been on that point all this time? Have not heard from him.

An Honourable Member: What did Sharon have to say?

Mr. McCrae: Yes, what did Sharon have to say? That is a good point. What did Sharon have to say? She

wanted to charge for a lot of things, but now the member for Inkster wants to distance himself from that sort of point of view. She wanted to kick everybody out of the personal care homes; he is not saying that, I am sure.

What about this analogy that someone should be considered? What is different here, what is different in what the honourable member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) is asking from the situation where the honourable member—well, let us not use him for an example. Mr. Smith and Mrs. Smith are looking at the necessity for Mrs. Smith to go to hospital and have an operation. They are of upper middle income, and Mr. and Mrs. Smith talk about this, and Mrs. Smith says, well, you know, I think I would kind of like to have a private room. Could we do that? They check their resources and they say, yes, we could do that, we do not have to pay very much, but we have to pay some to get a private room.

What is the honourable member's position on that? Should we be changing our policy in our hospitals?

Mr. Lamoureux: At times I have fallen into a trap, and that trap is answering the questions that the Minister of Health quite often poses. To a certain degree I enjoy the questions and, therefore, I do not mind giving my own personal insights to it. Hopefully, there will be a kind of quid pro quo, like, I answer some, and then maybe you answer some, kind of a novel idea. Sounds pretty good to the Minister of Health. Let me attempt to address that.

I guess in essence, I am not overly concerned in terms of if you are paying an extra fee in order to have a television inside the hospital room or a private, semiprivate room and so forth. I tell you where I would be concerned, and that is, for example, there was a study from the Fraser Institute, and the Fraser Institute said with respect to cardiovascular surgery under the urgent category in the province of Manitoba, average wait was 12 weeks. Now, this is back June 28. In fact, we had posed some questions regarding this particular issue. The minister says there has been some improvement, and I hope and trust that there has been.

Where I would have a problem, would I rely on the Minister of Health's comments? Well, it is debatable. Rely on Fraser Institute's research? No, I never assume everything that is in print is actually accurate. At times

you need to further look into it, and that is why we raised the issue in Question Period last June.

Mr. Chairperson, where I would have a problem is if, in fact, a Manitoban could say, well, here is \$2,000, instead of the 12-week wait, now I only have to have a four-week. In other words, they could be bumped ahead. I see that as entirely different from paying an extra fee for a television at your bedside—big difference.

Getting back to home care services, does the private sector have a role, private, for-profit sector have a role? I would feel a lot more comfortable in talking about this issue if the Minister of Health had provided some sort of a forum for input from Manitobans, from clients, from home care service workers.

You know, I am not prepared on behalf of the Liberal Party to say, this is the direction in which government has to go prior to not seeing studies and reports and consultation myself. That is why we asked the minister for hours, endless hours in regard to, let us see the type of information that specifically recommended that private-for-profit is the way to go. The Minister of Health has not provided us that, and if he believes he has, not only table it, indicate which page it is that I should read where it will actually say that that is in fact the direction that we should be going in.

I look at it and, trying to be as objective as possible, if you are not going to give that one-year moratorium and allow for that input, Mr. Chairperson, at the very least before you put out the tenders, because the criteria are absolutely essential and the standards that the minister himself alludes to are absolutely essential, demonstrate to the Chamber, and the best time is right now during the Health Estimates, that there is no benefit in giving special treatment to nonprofit organizations. It is not a question of denying extra services. VONs and nonprofits can also provide extra services, but their motivation is going to be entirely different than the private sector. The private sector's primary motivation is going to be profit, rate of return on investment. That is their primary motivation.

The primary motivation for a nonprofit group is more community and client based, and I believe, ultimately, that if in fact the nonprofit community is prepared to take on this particular issue—the Minister of Health, I heard him on CJOB commenting and saying, look, let us see

the nurses get more involved, form groups or whatever else might be available and participate in the process. From his seat, he says, right on. Well, to say it is one thing, Mr. Chairperson, to actually mean it is another thing. If the minister is true to his statements, then why is he not prepared to make that extra step and see if in fact there are things that can be done to allow nonprofit organizations, in particular, such as the Victorian Order of Nurses the opportunity, or community clinics, whatever that might be out there? We do not know, because the minister has not gone out and consulted. Why does he not provide that opportunity? Does he not see the difference?

I answered the question on hospitals. I would wonder if the minister would answer the question with respect to this?

* (1710)

Mr. McCrae: Mr. Chairman, with all due respect, I do not think the honourable member has defended his point of view very well. Somebody must have told him to come in here and ask for that sort of a thing, and it is there. There is a built-in advantage for nonprofit agencies, because they do not need to make any profit, so they can come in with a lower bid or they can come in with a bid that is the same and prove they can do a better job and then use whatever money they do not need to finance other operations or whatever. That is what can happen. The honourable member did not really deal with the inconsistency in his proposal where he says that clients ought not to be able to get any extra services and pay extra cost for them.

Why? I mean, this is a free country the last I checked. It is supposed to be one of the freest countries in the world, and now he wants to turn us into some kind of a system where people are told, you cannot have this, you cannot have that, even if you can afford to pay for it. I mean, surely to goodness, he has got to re-examine that, especially if he wants to put his policies in front of the public of this province to be properly examined.

See, what he does, he lets those New Democrats set little traps for him, and then he just lively walks into them. He should be careful. This is political advice now, Mr. Chairman, which is relevant to the point, but maybe he does not want to take any advice from me.

Why would a Liberal in the 1990s want to watch what the NDP do and then just do what they do, or say what they say? Really, that is not original, obviously. It does not take much effort, I know that, but do they not want to play a more meaningful role in representing the people of this province than simply watching what the NDP does and then doing the same thing. Surely there is more to a Liberal in the '90s than that.

I sense it sometimes when I look at the federal government and see the odd thing coming out of there that they did not pick up from the New Democrats.

Trudeau is finished. He is gone. Those days are over, and our country is stronger for it, I must say, so that when we do see some things coming out of Ottawa that, whether they are good or bad, at least they are original. They are not borrowed from a left-leaning group like the honourable members opposite in this House—so a short little lecture for the honourable member on politics. Maybe he does not appreciate it, but the fact is I do not think he should go to the public with this suggestion of his that we should impose mediocrity on the public of this province.

We are a very positive bunch of people here in Manitoba, and the economic performance of the last few years demonstrates that Manitobans will not be held back by the kind of thinking that is being put forward by the member for Inkster today. Manitobans are much prouder than that; they are much more expansive than that.

Someday the honourable member, he might have a nice big MLA pension and all that stuff, and he might need home care services so that he can live comfortably at home. He might say, three baths a week, gee, I wish I could have four. He might not mind if his home care worker said, well, you know, Mr. Lamoureux, you can have four, if you really want that. For an additional charge you can have four. Why does he not want four baths? If he can afford it and wants it, why can he not have it? Why are we going to have a publicly run system impose those kinds of limits on our fellow citizens who want something more?

So that is the one thing that separates us is the sense of imposed mediocrity. I am not trying to say that our program is mediocre, but for the honourable member to suggest that the program that you get is what you get and

you do not get anything else, even if you want to, I mean it is an open invitation for some people to leave the country, is really what it is.

Why are you wanting to kick people out of Canada? This is the most wonderful country in the world. Why do you want to make our country limit our growth, limit our ability to fulfill our ambitions and our aspirations and our dreams? Why? Why do Liberals want to do that? Why do New Democrats? Why are New Democrats so afraid of everything? That is why I am not a New Democrat, because I am not quite so afraid as they are, afraid of anything big, afraid of anything successful, envious of anybody else's achievements. I just find that totally strange to my way of things.

I find that there are a number of colleagues on this side of the House who share that particular approach, who see the opportunities in this province and in this country something that is boundless, that only your imagination might limit where you can go in this country and what you can do and achieve and get if you go out there and work for it and want it bad enough. So I hope the honourable member will review that more and come out with something to present to the people of Manitoba that is just a little more positive than that.

You know, think about it this way too. The more people rely on their own resources in the conduct of a country, the more resources can also be made available for those who cannot, simply cannot provide for themselves.

See, what the philosophy the honourable member is putting forward leads us to down the road again is a system we cannot afford, which is what we encountered just a few years back and we have been trying to address. So we will get right back into that cycle espoused by the New Democrats especially, but now I see the Liberals hanging on to their coattails. That is the philosophy that says, let us just kind of keep going the way we have been going or, as the honourable member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) says, go back to the system we had in the first place and, well, we will not have any system in less than generation, any system at all. It will go back to survival of the fittest.

Those who are weak can beg in the streets, and those who are strong will be just fine, thank you very much. Is

that what you really want? Is that what honourable members opposite really want? I do not think it is, frankly, but why do they not think it through? Why do they not use a little bit of vision? You do not even have to be a genius to see that the proposals of the New Democrats would destroy the country we know and love here in Canada.

* (1720)

The honourable member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) might try to be consistent. If he wants to preserve a nonprofit system, let him bring forward something that can justify such an argument, because he has not done it yet.

Mr. Lamoureux: I guess ultimately what it is that we would want to advocate is that there is a one-tier system of home care service delivery. In a one-tier system you still can have extra services being delivered over and above, Mr. Chairperson. That happens today and there is no reason why we cannot prevent that from happening in the future for many of the reasons which the Minister of Health has alluded to. The concern of course is that the direction that the government is prepared to take home care services ultimately I believe and the Liberal party believes will lead us into a two-tier system of home care service delivery. That is where the concern comes from. I beg to differ with the Minister of Health in terms of, well, have we been successful or the opposition as a whole been successful in pointing out some of the flaws in what the government is doing. I believe that there are a number of flaws in the way in which the government is addressing this particular issue.

Again, I want to reinforce the position which we have taken on this is to see the one-year moratorium put in place with the government making a commitment to consulting with the clients, the workers and other interested Manitobans that want to be able to contribute to what sort of a system would be best able to provide not only current home care recipients but future generations of home care recipients, the best quality service that is going to be available. I am not convinced. The minister has not convinced me with all of the waxing that he has done, and skating around, that private, for-profit is the way to go. I still maintain that it will be a mistake if we go private, for-profit. Until the minister is able to prove to not only me but, I would ultimately argue, a majority of Manitobans that this is the direction to go, that the

minister has an obligation to put it on hold and to consult, to work with those individuals that want to be able to participate, as I have indicated, in this particular decision.

Having said that, Mr. Chairperson, I want to get back to this whole tendering process. The minister is, at some point in time, going to issue a tender. When, I am not too sure. What I am hoping is that the minister does have in place some standards, the criteria that is going to be incorporated into this whole tendering process. I would like, and would appreciate very much, having a copy of what the minister has in place today or what he is working on prior to the issuing of the tender itself. Thereby, or hopefully therefore, we will have the opportunity to point out where the government might want to make some modifications. Failing the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) providing the opposition this information, I would look for a commitment from the Minister of Health that in fact there will be a sincere attempt by this government to consult with individuals that are clients, that are home care workers and other individual Manitobans that in fact the criteria that the minister is putting together, along with the standards, is not one based on political philosophy, but rather it is based on what is in Manitoba's best interest for the client.

Mr. Chairperson, that to me would be most beneficial and most productive, at the very least, if the Minister of Health would make a commitment to sharing that valuable information with us that would include things such as the core services. After all, the private companies, whether they are for profit or not for profit, need to know what the core services are. Will the minister share with us and make the commitment that he will share with us that information in advance of the tendering going out?

I do not want to receive, whether it is the Victorian Order of Nurses or from We Care, the standards and the criteria and the core services. I would like to be given some advance notification of what this government is in fact looking at in terms of those core services so that in fact it would be nice if we could actually have a debate inside the Chamber before the government actually issues it. I think, for the Manitobans, in particular for the clients, that that sort of debate would be most useful, and I would request that the Minister of Health give that, not only consideration, but see fit to allow that to take place.

After all, he is the only individual out of the 57 MLAs that has that opportunity to do just that.

If he was to give that sort of a concession, at least we could say that today was somewhat productive or more productive than previous days in terms of the Health Estimates. I wonder, because I know there is not too much time, maybe the minister could keep the answer as short as possible, and then we could possibly get another question.

Mr. McCrae: Considering that the proceedings in this committee will last precisely three more minutes, a little less than three minutes, my answer will of necessity be brief.

Yes, Mr. Chairman, the tender documents will be public documents. This minister will play no role in the evaluation of any bids that come forward because for obvious reasons the members of the union movement, Peter Olfert in particular, through innuendo has made certain incorrect, but nonetheless made them, comments about my association with a particular company. So I will have no role in the evaluation of bids or in the decision as to which nonprofit or profit agency will be the successful bidders when this all happens.

The honourable member referred to the tiers. Yes, we have a two-tier system in many ways, and there is nothing new about that. Up until a few years ago, there was not any system so we had to start somewhere. What we have started with is a two-tier system, and that is what the honourable member wants to put an end to. I think I have argued that matter with the honourable member. I disagree with his point of view. We have a one-tier system in our hospitals, and a one-tier system in our Home Care program in regard to those services that are required. That is what you call the core services. Beyond that, we have two tiers and that is a reality; it exists. The honourable member wants to do away with it. I do not because I cannot understand the concept of taking people's freedom away.

Every time I speak, it is to try to preserve the freedoms of the people of our country. Members in the New Democratic party and the Liberal party want to limit people's freedoms and I do not.

Mr. Lamoureux: Would the Minister of Health table or provide us information prior to the actual issuing of the tender regarding the standards criteria core services?

Mr. McCrae: I have said, that there will be the requirement as set out in the tender documents about what services are being tendered for, and there is a requirement with respect to the fact that those services will be very closely monitored and evaluated. There are standards that must be met or exceeded. Those standards will be referred to in the tender documents.

When those documents are ready and the public sees them, the honourable member will see them, too. So he is talking about special treatment for him in the same way he wants special treatment for nonprofit agencies, which they already have special treatment, but he wants more special treatment for them. The fact is these tender documents are public documents, and the honourable member will see them when everybody else does.

Mr. Lamoureux: What I am looking for is the opportunity to be able to debate a very important issue prior to the actual tendering going out. Would the minister not concur that it is, in fact, in Manitoba's best interests if we have that information on the table so we can actually talk about it before a decision is made?

Mr. McCrae: That is about all we have been doing around this place for the last, is it a month now—three weeks or so. This province is debating exactly what the honourable member wants to debate more. Well, we will debate this until the floodwaters stop and maybe beyond, we will see.

Mr. Chairperson: Order, please. The hour being 5:30 p.m., this committee is recessed until tomorrow morning (Friday) at 9 a.m.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, April 25, 1996

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