



HANSARD

Second Session - Thirty-Sixth Legislature

of the

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS
(Hansard)**

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The Honourable Louise M. Dacquay
Speaker*



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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Sixth Legislature

Members, Constituencies and Political Affiliation

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, May 15, 1996

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Home Care Services

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): Madam Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Margaret Klassen, Olive Bayluk, Carole Arklie and others requesting the Premier (Mr. Filmon) and the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) 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 Selkirk (Mr. Dewar). It complies with the rules and practices of the House. 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 Elmwood (Mr. Maloway). 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.

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

An Honourable Member: Yes.

Madam Speaker: The Clerk will read.

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

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.

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister of Highways and Transportation): Madam Speaker, I would like to table

the Supplementary Estimates of the Department of Highways and Transportation for '96-97.

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Energy and Mines): Madam Speaker, I would like to table the Supplementary Information for Legislative Review for 1996-97 Departmental Expenditure Estimates for the Department of Energy and Mines.

Hon. Vic Toews (Minister charged with the administration of The Civil Service Act): Madam Speaker, I would like to table the 1996-97 Departmental Expenditure Estimates for the Department of Civil Service Commission, along with a separate report of Employee Benefits and Other Payments.

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, I would like to table the 1996-97 Departmental Expenditure Estimates for the Department of Finance.

* (1335)

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 27—The Museum of Man and Nature Amendment and Consequential Amendments Act

Hon. Harold Gilleshammer (Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Urban Affairs (Mr. Reimer), that leave be given to introduce Bill 27, The Museum of Man and Nature Amendment and Consequential Amendments Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur le Musée de l'Homme et de la Nature et apportant des modifications corrélatives), and that the same be now received and read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 28—The Winnipeg Stock Exchange Act

Hon. Jim Ernst (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings), that leave be given to introduce Bill 28, The Winnipeg Stock Exchange Act; Loi sur la Bourse de Winnipeg, and that the same be now received and read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 29—The Winnipeg Commodity Exchange Act

Hon. Jim Ernst (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): I move, seconded by the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae), that leave be given to introduce Bill 29, The Winnipeg Commodity Exchange Act; Loi sur la Bourse des marchandises de Winnipeg, and that the same be now received and read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 30—The Dairy Act

Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Agriculture): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Driedger), that leave be given to introduce Bill 30, The Dairy Act (Loi sur les produits laitiers), and that the same be now received and read a first time.

His Honour the Lieutenant Governor, having been made aware of this act, recommends it to the House, and I would like to table the Lieutenant Governor's message with the Page.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 31—The Livestock Industry Diversification and Consequential Amendments Act

Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Agriculture): Madam Speaker, I would like to move, seconded by the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Downey), that leave be given to introduce Bill 31, The Livestock Industry Diversification and Consequential Amendments Act (Loi sur la diversification de l'industrie du bétail et apportant des modifications corrélatives), and that the same be now received and read a first time.

His Honour the Lieutenant Governor, having been advised of the contents of this bill, does recommend it to the House. I have tabled His Honour's message with the Clerk.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 32—The Council on Post-Secondary Education Act

Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Education and Training): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the

Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mr. Ernst), that leave be given to introduce Bill 32, The Council on Post-Secondary Education Act; Loi sur le Conseil de l'enseignement postsecondaire, and that the same be now received and read a first time.

His Honour the Lieutenant Governor, having been advised of the contents of this bill, recommends it to the House, and I am pleased to table His Honour's message.

Motion agreed to.

* (1340)

Bill 33—The Education Administration Amendment Act

Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Education and Training): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mr. Ernst), that leave be given to introduce Bill 33, The Education Administration Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'administration scolaire, and that the same be now received and read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 34—The Contaminated Sites Remediation and Consequential Amendments Act

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Rural Development (Mr. Derkach), that leave be given to introduce Bill 34, The Contaminated Sites Remediation and Consequential Amendments Act (Loi concernant l'assainissement des lieux contaminés et apportant des modifications corrélatives), (and that the same be now received and read a first time).

His Honour the Lieutenant Governor, having been advised of the contents, recommends this to the House, and I wish to table his message.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 36—The Social Allowances Amendment and Consequential Amendments Act

Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister of Family Services): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the

Minister of Urban Affairs and Housing (Mr. Reimer), that leave be given to introduce Bill 36, The Social Allowances Amendment and Consequential Amendments Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'aide sociale et apportant des modifications corrélatives), and that the same now be received and read a first time.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill 37—The Ambulance Services Amendment Act

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Mitchelson), that leave be given to introduce Bill 37, The Ambulance Services Amendment Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur les services d'ambulance), and that the same be now received and read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 38—The Health Services Insurance Amendment Act (2)

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Deputy Premier (Mr. Downey), that leave be given to introduce Bill 38, The Health Services Insurance Amendment Act (2) (Loi no 2 modifiant la Loi sur l'assurance-maladie), and that the same be now received and read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 39—The Pari-Mutuel Levy and Consequential Amendments Act

Hon. James Downey (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson), that leave be given to introduce Bill 39, The Pari-Mutuel Levy and Consequential Amendments Act (Loi concernant les prélèvements sur les mises de pari mutuel et apportant des modifications corrélatives), and that the same be now received and read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

* (1345)

Bill 40—The Pension Benefits Amendment Act

Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Labour): I move, seconded by the Minister of Government Services (Mr. Pallister), that leave be given to introduce Bill 40, The Pension Benefits Amendment Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur les prestations de pension), and that the same be now received and read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 41—The Fisheries Amendment Act

Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Natural Resources): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Enns), that leave be given to introduce Bill 41, The Fisheries Amendment Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur la pêche), and that the same be now received and read a first time.

His Honour the Lieutenant Governor, having been advised of the contents of this bill, reconunends it to the House. I would like to table his message.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 42—The Northern Affairs Amendment Act

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Northern Affairs): Madam Speaker, I would move, seconded by the honourable Minister of Urban Affairs and Housing (Mr. Reimer), that leave be given to introduce Bill 42, The Northern Affairs Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les Affaires du Nord, and that the same be now received and read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 43—The Municipal Assessment Amendment, City of Winnipeg Amendment and Assessment Validation Act

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Rural Development): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Urban Affairs (Mr. Reimer), that leave be given to introduce Bill 43, The Municipal Assessment Amendment, City of Winnipeg Amendment and

Assessment Validation Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'évaluation municipale et la Loi sur la Ville de Winnipeg et validant certaines évaluations), and that the same be now received and read a first time.)

His Honour the Lieutenant Governor having been advised of the contents of the bill, recommends it to the House. I would like to table his message.

Motion agreed to.

* (1350)

Bill 44—The City of Winnipeg Amendment and Consequential Amendments Act

Hon. Jack Reimer (Minister of Urban Affairs): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Energy and Mines (Mr. Praznik), that leave be given to introduce Bill 44, The City of Winnipeg Amendment and Consequential Amendments Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur la Ville de Winnipeg et apportant des modifications corrélatives), and that the same be now received and read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

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 this afternoon eighteen Grade 4 students from Richard School under the direction of Mrs. Jocelyn Benoit. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Gladstone (Mr. Rocan).

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 Acting Premier. We are certainly pleased that a long-overdue tentative settlement has been reached dealing with home care and the clients of Manitoba.

I would like to ask the government and continue to ask the government questions dealing with matters that arose out of the Treasury Board document called Strategic Redirection of Home Care, Treasury Board presentation of December 16. In that document, which I believe precipitated a considerable amount of public outrage and concern and concern by the workers and clients, the Manitoba Health policy was redirected to provide for divestiture of all service delivery to nongovernmental organizations in the home care area.

I would like to ask the Deputy Premier (Mr. Downey), is that still the policy of the provincial government as articulated in the Treasury Board document of December 16?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): I join with the Leader of the Opposition in expressing pleasure that we have reached a point in negotiations where we now have a tentative agreement. It is my hope that ratification will happen in due course and that working with the employees and with the union we can have services restored to our clients just as soon as possible. While I am at it, I might offer that I appreciate that the union is working with us to restore that service on an expedited basis. There are clients in the system who I am sure will be pleased to know that. Whatever will happen in the future will have to be consistent with the agreement arrived at, and as that becomes known, then it will become clearer as to the future direction.

Mr. Doer: Madam Speaker, again the government did not answer the question posed to them. The public concern across this province, since the Treasury Board document has been released and since the Minister of Health and the Premier (Mr. Filmon) and the Deputy Premier (Mr. Downey) endorsed this policy to move to private profit home care, the public debate that has been in the public policy area is tremendous public opposition to the plans of the provincial government to privatize and introduce profit in a dramatic way in our home care area.

I would like to ask the Deputy Premier who is in charge of policy of the provincial government, is the policy of the provincial government to divest of all service delivery in home care to private firms, private profit firms? Is that the policy of the government today, or can the Deputy Premier please advise Manitobans of where this issue of private and profit home care services is going?

Mr. McCrae: The honourable member draws quite a distinction between profit and nonprofit and in some aspects of our system there is an appropriate difference between the two or a different approach to be taken between the two.

Madam Speaker, the home care system of the future will be more responsive than the home care system of the past. It will be more flexible in meeting clients' needs than it has been. It will be more responsive, as I said. It will be more flexible and we need it to be more efficient because it is going to grow. The number of clients is going to grow; the number of people working in the home care system is going to grow in the future. We know that because we are committed to a health care system, and no health care system in the next century and in the last part of this one is complete without a well-functioning home care program.

* (1355)

Mr. Doer: Again to the Acting Premier. The Minister of Health, with the greatest of respect, did not answer the question posed in this Chamber for the second time. Our question is very clear. The public, the minister's advisory committee, Dr. Evelyn Shapiro, clients of home care services, people all across this province in letters and petitions, the people in this province were saying to us and saying to members opposite that they did not want to move to a profit private home care system in the health care system.

I would like to ask the government, in light of the fact that their own Treasury Board document requires or articulates three profit firms and one private nonprofit firm as part of the home care service plan, the redirection of the Department of Health, which was not debated at all in the provincial election, will the public be involved in the future of home care? Will the public be involved in the future of whether we are going to have a profit private system or a nonprofit system, and when will the government allow the people of Manitoba to get involved in their health care system and their home care system, Madam Speaker, as they have been asking and pleading for from this government for the last four months?

Hon. James Downey (Deputy Premier): Madam Speaker, not accepting the reference to the document as being a Treasury Board document, I would like to

respond to the member by saying—and as well as my colleague, acknowledging the tentative agreement that has been reached between the home care workers and the government—say that this government is very pragmatic and very positive in its approach to looking after and prioritizing the needs of the people of Manitoba in health care, in education and family services. They are three extremely important areas that this government has prioritized.

When it comes to the health care budget of the Province of Manitoba, there is a greater share of health care spending in Manitoba than any other province in the country. I believe in the neighbourhood of 34 percent of our budget is spent on health care. We have increased our home care spending from \$38 million to over \$90 million since we were first elected. Our priorities are to make sure the clients of home care and those people who are in need of services obtain them in the best, most efficient way.

Home Care Program Privatization

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Madam Speaker, the government has politicized thousands and thousands of Manitobans who have said, we will not stand for these government cuts, we will not stand for government privatization. Home care workers have stood up, women have stood up, clients have stood up and said, we will not stand for this government's plans on health care.

My question to the Minister of Health is, has the Minister of Health learned anything from this situation about how not to implement health care policy in this province?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, one thing I have known for a long time—I did not learn it but it became very apparent over time—is that the more you listen to the New Democrats, the more damage you do to the health care system, so we are not going to be doing that unless they offer something constructive. If the honourable member can find it in his heart and in his caucus to be constructive as we move forward with health services and health reforms in Manitoba, then we will be working with the honourable member. There is little evidence of that to this point. We will wait. We will be hopeful, and we will have faith that

the honourable member will indeed come forward with constructive ideas.

Mr. Chomiak: Madam Speaker, I thank the minister for that comment.

Privatization—Public Hearings

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Will the minister today commit that they will not embark on their privatization plans without holding full-scale public hearings to allow the public of Manitoba to have a say in their privatization plan, and will he today denounce their own Treasury Board submission that said they are going to do privatization by the back door without consulting Manitobans?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, as the Deputy Premier (Mr. Downey) pointed out, within the space of about eight years in government, the Home Care program funding has grown by some 111 percent in this province. That tells me that the growth has been extremely significant. The commitment to the program has been significant. Our plans and the things that we are doing today call for a publicly funded home care system. That is what we have. That is what we will have in the future.

* (1400)

Privatization—Nursing Service

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Madam Speaker, notwithstanding the agreement that has been tentatively entered into between the government, the home care workers and the MGEU, can the minister today tell this House that they will not be privatizing the whole major other aspect of home care, that is the nursing service, that they are planning to privatize and effectively take VON out of the business? Will he assure the House that they will not privatize the nursing service without public hearings and without consulting the public?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): We will not be proceeding on a philosophical basis, Madam Speaker. We will be proceeding on the basis of what is felt will deliver the best product for the largest number of clients of our home care system in the future. The honourable members opposite have made no secret of

their approach. It is a philosophical one. On this side of the House, we put the clients ahead of philosophy.

Manitoba Telephone System Privatization

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): Madam Speaker, we have been raising many questions about the government's handling of the Manitoba Telephone System. It has been very clear from previous dealings with this government that they have not dealt properly with the assets of the public of Manitoba, as was confirmed yesterday by the Ernst & Young report.

The minister continues to refuse to answer questions about when the decision was made. I would like to ask when the decision to sell off MTS, the entire MTS, was made and, in particular, whether there was any discussion whatsoever with the Board of MTS over that sale.

Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister responsible for the administration of The Manitoba Telephone Act): Madam Speaker, the member has been made aware that we had become aware over the course of time that changes had been happening in the industry between competition, technology, those sorts of factors. We endeavoured to get further information and had some evaluations done which came to government as the owner of that corporation, and we determined that the right decision was to allow the company to be free of the shackles of government in the future, and free up to allow them to respond quickly and aggressively in the competitive telecommunications market. The announcement that the member is talking about was made, I believe, two weeks ago tomorrow, on the Thursday, if I am not mistaken. The decision to get on with it was made a few days prior to that.

Mr. Ashton: Madam Speaker, then I will ask my question once again because the minister said, we decided. I want to determine who that "we" was. Was it the cabinet? Was it the caucus? In particular, when did they discuss this, or did they even discuss this with the Board of MTS?

Mr. Findlay: Madam Speaker, the board is there to operate MTS from a senior management point of view. The government is the owner. The decision, obviously,

in this sort of situation, the government is here elected by the people and the decision—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. The honourable minister responsible, to complete his response.

Mr. Findlay: The government through the cabinet makes those kinds of decisions.

Mr. Ashton: Madam Speaker, is the minister then saying, after criticizing the slowness of the decision-making process, that in a matter of days the cabinet and the cabinet alone, without consulting, involving Manitobans generally, they did not even consult the Board of MTS? Did they not even raise that with the Board of MTS, this very major decision, the privatization of MTS?

Mr. Findlay: Madam Speaker, the discussion on this particular issue has been going on for some time. The comments were made back, I believe it was in December that we had to evaluate the circumstances that MTS faced and evaluate what the best decision would be to maximize MTS's ability to deliver the very best cost-effective services to all Manitobans in the form of telecommunications.

The member knows that I have made comments over the course of time that the study was underway, that there are some serious considerations that have to be given. He has made comments which obviously are opposed to what we are doing, but we believe the decision we have made is for the betterment of Manitobans, to allow Manitobans the priority position in a public offering to own Manitoba Telephone System, allow the telephone system to recapitalize for the big investments they are going to have to make in the future to stay current with the technology that all Manitobans want to have available to them as they live in this global economy that we are in today.

Manitoba Telephone System Cable Assets

Mr. Tim Sale (Crescentwood): Madam Speaker, this is an appalling situation. The expertise in Manitoba to run its telephone system involved hiring brand new

executives from eastern Canada, involves a board of directors of so-called competent people, involves hundreds of competent specialists in the area of telecommunications, and this government did not consult any of them about whether it should keep or sell the telephone system. It is an appalling record.

Madam Speaker, the minister yesterday tried to defend his sale of the cable system in spite of the fact that it brings in annually more than \$8 million in revenue—it did before they sold it—and we are now open to losing \$300 million in revenue as a result of that sale, as stated by MTS's own documents.

Does he still want to sell that system for peanuts? Does he still defend that decision?

Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister responsible for the administration of The Manitoba Telephone Act): Madam Speaker, it is unfortunate the member opposite wants to create an impression that does not exist. Manitoba Telephone System, as I told him yesterday, is the only telephone company in all of Canada to own a cable system to a home. He talks about strategic value. The strategic value is if you have a broadcast licence. Manitoba Telephone System did not have a broadcast licence; therefore, there is no strategic value to that cable into the home. Further—[interjection] Well, the member opposite does not want to hear the facts and that is unfortunate he represents his constituents that way.

On June 27, 1985, the federal cabinet passed, and I will quote, broadcasting licences may not be issued and renewals of broadcasting licences may not be granted to applicants of the following classes: Her Majesty in right of any province, agents of Her Majesty in the right of any province.

So not only did MTS not have a broadcast licence, the federal decision was that they could not get one in the future; therefore, the strategic value the member talks about is nonexistent.

Mr. Sale: Madam Speaker, now the minister seems to know more than Ernst & Young, more than his own staff, more than the experts in this whole business.

Will the minister tell the House just how much these cable companies who were supposedly complaining

about the quality of the cable asset that they bought for peanuts, will he tell the House how much the cable companies have spent upgrading that supposedly run-down system since they bought it, and will he admit they have spent nothing?

Mr. Findlay: Madam Speaker, I am very glad the member asked that question, very glad indeed. I would like to table a letter I received today from the Manitoba Cable Television Association which clearly identifies—
[interjection]

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Findlay: Madam Speaker, I want to read from the letter—of course, the member does not want to hear this—“Last year alone, operators spent \$17 million on capital projects and this year, the Winnipeg operators have begun a major fibre optic upgrade that will, in the future, provide cable customers with more choice and control of programming services as well as high speed internet access and interactive TV.”

Madam Speaker, modernizing the system. The commitment in the agreement was to spend \$32 million over five years; \$17 million was spent in the last year.

* (1410)

Mr. Sale: Madam Speaker, the minister knows very well that the money that was spent was spent on the cable's own assets, not on the cable bought from MTS. That has long been established. There is nothing new about that.

Madam Speaker, why did the minister yesterday attempt to mislead the press suggesting that the Ernst & Young study dealt only with American examples when he knows it dealt with United Kingdom and Canadian, specifically Bell Canada Enterprises and Quebec examples? Why did he try to mislead the press?

Mr. Findlay: Madam Speaker, I looked at the document the member sent over and it was U.S. this, U.S. that, U.S. the next thing. Those members often in this House are pretty anti-American, and now they bring forward a document from Seattle, Washington, by an American firm that has a whole litany of U.S. examples. The U.S. telephone companies have licences, which I have already indicated to the member Manitoba Telephone System does not have, cannot get because of federal regulations—very clear statement.

I would ask the member to read that letter and understand the degree of investment that cable operators are putting into the system in Manitoba to upgrade it. It clearly identifies a hundred million will be required to be invested. There is no way that the Manitoba Telephone System could or should invest in that asset because it is high risk to put cable in the ground when today the modern telecommunication systems allow an awful lot of that signal to come from satellites. It is a very competitive business, and I want the cable operators to be sure that they can deliver the best service in the long term to the citizens of Manitoba.

Home Care Program Privatization—Quality of Service

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Madam Speaker, the Liberal caucus is quite pleased to see that a tentative agreement at least has been achieved with the home care services. Having said that, we realize that the privatization for-profit ultimately is going to lead in the long term and short term to the detriment of the quality of service being delivered. I would like to table a document which clearly demonstrates that for-profit turnover is going to be at 49.9 percent in B.C. whereas unionized, it is at 32.6 percent. That particular table, if you like, demonstrates to the Minister of Health that there is going to be higher turnover as a direct result of for-profit privatization of home care services. How can the Minister of Health tell us that this move is not going to decrease the quality of home care services?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, the honourable member says that he is pleased that the parties have arrived, through negotiation, at a tentative agreement. I am too. Let us let that tentative agreement work.

Mr. Lamoureux: The specific question to the minister is, and we would appreciate to have a straightforward answer, how can the minister say that the quality of home care services is going to be there when you are seeing such a high turnover of private versus unionized? How can he say that the quality is going to be maintained?

Mr. McCrae: We fully expect to see quality maintained or exceeded as a result of changes that are taking place in our home care system. We are attempting to address those very issues that are quality issues, issues like an ability, which has been lacking in the past, to properly

schedule caregivers and arrival at homes of people requiring home care services. Scheduling, we think that the efficiency of the program will be improved in the future. We believe that we will be more responsive. The honourable member knows that there are areas where improvements are required, and the moves that are being made are with a view to making those kinds of improvements for our clients.

I am sorry the honourable member prefers a system that does not give us that kind of opportunity, but that is all right. We are responsible for the program, and we are going to make sure that services are as good or better than they have been in the past.

Privatization—Moratorium

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): The tentative agreement to the side, will the Minister of Health commit to the 12-month moratorium so that, in essence, what he would be able to do in the 12 months is to look at the possibility of things such as wage scales, things such as nonprofit groups being given special treatment, in the hopes that in the long term we will see a better quality service, not just a straight-out privatization for profit which, ultimately, as I say, as we believe, will lead to the deterioration of what is a good quality service that we provide today?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): Through negotiations leading to a collective agreement, we make commitments through the collective agreement which will be honoured. We also make commitments to our clients. In the past we have not been able to make commitments to our clients because we have not been able to guarantee service. The system that the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) wants us to return to did not have guarantees. We want guarantees for our clients. It is through mechanisms like the kind that will be set forth in the collective agreement and further improvements to the home care system, we will carry out that commitment, and we will be able to guarantee our service so that it can be more reliable for our clients.

Vehicle Inspection Program Reform

Mr. Gerard Jennissen (Flin Flon): My questions are for the Minister of Highways and Transportation. Last

July the minister implemented a used vehicle inspection program which, since its inception, has consistently been deficient in protecting the safety of Manitobans. On the latest occasion, cars that were previously written off have been repaired and sold to unsuspecting buyers even after these cars passed a so-called inspection program.

My question to the minister is, in light of the fact that the minister's vehicle inspection program has been tested on at least three separate occasions and on all three of these occasions the program failed miserably to safeguard Manitobans, will the minister now admit that the program is in fact a dismal failure and start over?

Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister of Highways and Transportation): The member is completely wrong. His idea is that we subject the Manitoba consumer to a number of unsafe vehicles to be bought. That is his position. Our position is quite opposite.

Across this country, we have a lot of provinces that have instituted like programs. What that does is prevent a lot of the junkers that are on the road from getting sold and reregistered, and they are off the road. So that is a very significant positive. In addition, jurisdictions across the country are looking for some place that there is no inspection so they can bring a car in and have it registered and then sell it. We have stopped that because they have to have that inspection certificate.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Findlay: Madam Speaker, I wonder if the members opposite when they ask questions really want an answer when they are always yapping from their seats. This is a very serious topic about safety for motorists on Manitoba highways, and we have progressively done significant activity to improve that safety. It is very unfortunate that the member opposite wants junkers on the road, cars brought to this province for registration that have no safety inspection. I am very unhappy, and unfortunately he takes that position.

Mr. Jennissen: We do not want gouging of the customers. Since the only noticeable result of the program has been the gouging of hundreds of Manitoba car owners with impunity, will he at least take action to deal with the victims of this program?

Mr. Findlay: Madam Speaker, the department does a lot of work to make sure that the program will work and continually improve. Inspection of over 800 stations has been done, the certification of those stations, reinspections and a ghost car program. They will respond to any citizen who has a complaint about an inspected car or an inspection station and respond to that customer's satisfaction with regard to that particular incident.

There are incidents. This is not a perfect world, and you have a lot of people out there who want to unload unsafe vehicles. We are definitely putting a retarder on the ability of those unsafe vehicles to get on the road and protecting not only the purchasers of those vehicles but the other drivers on the road that those vehicles may run into.

Mr. Jennissen: How can this minister claim that the program works when garages are certified, then suspended, then certified again simply to make it appear that the minister is finally doing something?

Mr. Findlay: Madam Speaker, I am really disappointed the member takes that low-ball approach. We have 800 inspection stations, probably 2,000 Manitobans involved in the inspection process, with the employees in those garages all doing a very credible job, and that member comes to the House and totally denigrates them all. That is shameful.

* (1420)

Correctional Facilities Temporary Absences

Mr. Gord Mackintosh (St. Johns): Madam Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Justice. Last Friday there was a tragic death of a senior at Inwood, Manitoba, and we understand that charges have now been laid in that incident. My question for the minister is, would she confirm our understanding that one of the persons charged was on a temporary absence or temporary pass from Headingley jail at the time of the incident?

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Madam Speaker, it is my understanding that a charge has now been laid and one of the individuals who has been charged was on a temporary absence from Headingley jail.

As Attorney General, I cannot speak specifically about the case, but I will tell the member that I have immediately requested from my department what decisions and why those decisions were made by correctional officials in this case.

Mr. Mackintosh: Will the Minister of Justice tell us now whether it is her understanding that all proper procedures were followed and the usual criteria applied in deciding to release this accused, and when was the temporary absence approved?

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Speaker, as I said, I have requested an immediate report from my department. I have said that that report must be available to me by tomorrow morning. When that happens, I will have then all the details about decisions made by correctional officials.

Mr. Mackintosh: In making her inquiries, Madam Speaker, would the minister also report to us on how many inmates have been released from provincial correctional institutions not because of the usual criteria but because of the riot and the resulting pressures on the provincial jail system?

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Speaker, I have asked for information from correctional officials regarding any individuals who may have been released. It is my information that some may have been released within approximately two weeks of their sentence completion. However, I have asked for that full report to be available to me.

Education System Labour Studies Curriculum

Ms. MaryAnn Mihychuk (St. James): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Education. In 1991-92, the Winnipeg School Division implemented a labour studies curriculum. This curriculum was an attempt to provide students with a responsible and balanced understanding of organized labour's role in our society, as well as an historical perspective on labour's development in Manitoba and Canada.

Would the minister consider expanding this curriculum to be included in the studies of all Manitoban students as a responsible measure towards assuring a better

understanding of our economy and our society with the perspectives receiving fair treatment by our education system?

Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Education and Training): Madam Speaker, as the member knows, in New Directions, in our blueprint for excellence, we are moving towards two compulsory subjects in Grades 11 and 12, or Senior 3 and Senior 4 as we call it now, those being mathematics and language arts. We also then have a list of options from which there are supplementary courses from which a certain number must be selected. We also, of course, have school-initiated courses and programs and student-initiated courses and programs, and as we move closer and closer to schools of choice and school plans, those are the very types of things that school councils and communities will now be able to ask to have made compulsory in their divisions if the community or the school catchment area population wishes to see them made so.

I believe those choices, for parents to be able to have courses more closely reflect what they would like to see taught in the schools, is a very important part of New Directions, and I think she might be very pleased to know that a capability will be there for those who wish it.

Ms. Mihychuk: Madam Speaker, in view of the lack of understanding of the labour issues shown by this cabinet across this House, would she consider taking the course herself along with the rest of her cabinet?

Mrs. McIntosh: I suppose, if we sat down and added up the number of labour relations courses that I have taken versus the number the member has taken, she may well be surprised that I have taken considerably more than she has. However, I should also indicate that this side of the House has shown itself very, very conscious of the needs of workers, of the needs of management—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Mrs. McIntosh: This side of the House is fully aware of the needs of workers, of the needs of management and of the needs and desires of unions. We have always striven to make sure that workers are not taken advantage of by bad management or by bad unions. That has been very

fundamental. We know that there are many very, very good working relationships between labour and management. We know that there are many, many good unions who act as a very effective conduit between labour and management. We know, as with every other kind of grouping in society, there are also those who grossly violate the basic principles they were struck to provide.

Minister of Education Removal

Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona): Madam Speaker, two weeks ago the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) accused the official opposition of standing for stealing of groceries out of shopping baskets, slashing tires and bombings. Yesterday, the Minister of Education stated in the Legislature to members of the official opposition, and I quote: You support bombings, slashing tires and murder.

This is an incredible, dishonourable statement from a minister of the Crown. I want to ask the Deputy Premier (Mr. Downey), has he contacted the Premier (Mr. Filmon), wherever he is, and recommended that the Minister of Education be removed as a minister of the Crown based on her highly offensive remarks and statements unbecoming a minister of the Crown?

Madam Speaker: Order, please. I would ask that the honourable member for Transcona please avoid making reference to the presence or absence of a member in this Chamber. It indeed is a Beauchesne rule and I would ask that he delete those comments from his question prior to recognizing the minister.

Mr. Reid: I delete those comments, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: I thank the honourable member for Transcona.

Hon. James Downey (Deputy Premier): Madam Speaker, first of all, I understand that you have taken the issues of yesterday under advisement as matters of points of order which were raised. I think it is unfortunate that a series of several events took place yesterday in the Chamber which I do not think any of us feel that good about on either side, and I hope that—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

An Honourable Member: I never said I said attempted murder.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. I would ask for the co-operation of all honourable members. The honourable Deputy Premier was asked a question and he was attempting to make a response. Once again, this is a very sensitive issue, and I would ask that all honourable members not continually disrupt the proceedings of the House. There are three points of order under advisement, maybe four, on this very issue.

Point of Order

Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader): On a point of order, Madam Speaker, I would like to add a fourth to this because the minister from her seat is now saying she did not say that we supported murderers, she said attempted murderers. Whether it is the comments she made about bombings or slashing tires or murderers or attempted murderers, the question raised yesterday applies. I raise this on a point of order again. This minister has no right to make any accusation of that kind against any member of this House.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. On the point of order by the honourable member for Thompson, I did not hear any comments being shouted across the Chamber. I will take the matter under advisement. I will listen to the tapes and I will check the Hansard and that is the procedure. Order, please.

What is ensuing now is exactly what caused the major disruption in the House yesterday afternoon. I would ask that all honourable members stop pointing fingers, stop making accusation back and forth across the Chamber.

* * *

Madam Speaker: Now, the honourable member for Transcona, I believe, was recognized for a question.

The honourable member for St. Johns, on a point of order.

* (1430)

Point of Order

Mr. Gord Mackintosh (St. Johns): Madam Speaker, on a point of order. I am wondering if you heard from your seat the remarks of the Minister of Government Services (Mr. Pallister) that the member for Thompson was a baldfaced liar.

Madam Speaker: On the point of order by the honourable member for St. Johns, no, I did not hear. In fact, it is very difficult for anyone to hear any comments when there is so much noise in this Chamber. Once again, I will take the matter under advisement, and I will listen to the tape and check Hansard and report back to the Chamber if necessary.

* * *

Mr. Downey: Madam Speaker, dealing with the question that was asked of me—

Madam Speaker: To quickly complete his response to the question posed.

Mr. Downey: Madam Speaker, not accepting any of the premise of the member who was just asked the question, you have taken under advisement the issues which the question refers to and we will await your judgment on that matter.

Mr. Reid: Madam Speaker, my supplementary question is to the Deputy Premier again.

I want to ask this Deputy Premier why he is supporting and defending the statements made yesterday by the Minister of Education instead of taking the necessary steps to remove this Minister of Education from her position for making statements that are unbecoming a minister of the Crown. Why are you defending this minister?

Mr. Downey: Madam Speaker, again, referring to the matters of yesterday of which you have under your judgment, one could make reference to another series of events that took place that I would ask a reverse question of the member. Is he happy with the actions of the member for Radisson (Ms. Cerilli) that took place right beside me and my desk?

I will stand beside and behind the Minister of Education (Mrs. McIntosh) in her actions and her activities and will await your judgment as it relates to the points of privilege in this House and the points of order.

McLeod School Closure

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Education. Manitoba has many good schools that are valued by parents and by their community, noted for their academic excellence, and one of those is McLeod School. Its fate under this Minister of Education is that it will be closing despite the protests of parents and students in its community.

I want to ask the Minister of Education if she is going to take any iota of responsibility for her funding cuts which have led to the closure of this school.

Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Education and Training): Madam Speaker, I will indicate to the member, as the member may realize, that there are school closure guidelines set down for the Province of Manitoba. These were set down by the Minister of Education during the NDP years of governing in Manitoba. They are very clear. Those are the guidelines that school boards follow to this day when they are closing schools. As a school division that suffered from declining funding during the Pawley administration, the school division I was a chairman of at that time, we closed schools using those same guidelines for those same reasons.

Madam Speaker: Time for Oral Questions has expired.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Manitoba Oil Museum Hall of Fame Inductees

Hon. James Downey (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism): Madam Speaker, I have a member's statement that I would like the opportunity to present to the House at this particular time.

Last night in Virden, Manitoba, my colleague the Minister of Energy and Mines (Mr. Praznik) and I had the opportunity to be at a very special event. The Manitoba Oil Museum honoured eight individuals for their special contributions to the petroleum industry in

Manitoba. These eight individuals will be inducted into the Manitoba Oil Museum's Hall of Fame in its inaugural year. The following were selected: Mr. Howard Armstrong, Tom Browning, John Clarke, Jack Hall, Steve Hegion, Grady Johnson and another individual who is with us this afternoon, Mr. Walter Kucharczyk and Lyle Lee.

These individuals were selected for various reasons. They have served in the petroleum industry in Manitoba with distinction for a number of years. They are well known and have earned the respect and recognition of their peers in the petroleum industry. They have made an outstanding contribution to the discovery, development or production of Manitoba's petroleum resources for their long-term dedication and leadership in promoting and developing the province's petroleum resources. They are key contributors to the community and the public's understanding of the petroleum industry and its importance and value to the economy of Manitoba.

As a member of the Legislature for the Arthur-Virden constituency, I am very pleased to congratulate these inductees.

Home Care

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): Madam Speaker, I want to pay tribute today to the many Manitobans who have been taking a stand in this province for a very important issue, and that is home care. I particularly want to pay tribute to the many people who have been speaking out on this issue, whether it be the home care clients or whether it be the home care workers or whether it be the many members of the public who have been involved in what, to my mind, has probably been a classic case of democracy in this province.

I want to reflect on the fact today of how much the rhetoric has changed from the government now that there is a tentative settlement, because we have heard, day in and day out, the kind of inflammatory rhetoric that has been made by members of this government, including the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae), about many of the people who have been doing nothing more than expressing their democratic right. Indeed, whether it has been the home care workers who made a democratic decision and took a stand for the home care system of this province or whether it be the clients who have come out, who came to the hearings last week or whether it be the

thousands of Manitobans who have joined a grassroots campaign to save our home care system, I pay tribute to them and their courage in the face of many of the kinds of attacks we have seen from members of this government.

I hope members of this government will learn from their experience. The bottom line in democracy is, you cannot ignore the people. This government made no reference in the last election to privatizing home care; they then announced it. Now I hope that with the tentative settlement, and hopefully with the chance that this government will have to reflect, that they will do the right thing and go one step further and listen to the people of Manitoba and stop any privatization of the home care system. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

* (1440)

**Morden Elementary School—Medieval Fest
Garden Valley Collegiate Choir**

Mr. Peter Dyck (Pembina): Five days ago I was invited to a very unique event at the Morden Elementary School. The Grade 8 class decided that they would hold a banquet but they wanted to do something just a little different. So, instead of borscht and zwieback, they decided to put on a medieval fest. It was held on May 10, and it was an authentic medieval fest in every sense of the word. They had gone to the work of researching what the dress of the day was; as a result, they were wearing the appropriate clothing. To complement their garb, they also spoke in the language of the time. They served a meal befitting the time, namely bread and stew. They had two sittings for this dinner and, in all, approximately 500 people were served not only a culinary delight, but also a cultural feast.

I attended this event, and I was thoroughly impressed with how hard the students and the staff had worked. Accordingly, it is my pleasure to stand in the House today and recognize those efforts.

I would also like to recognize Garden Valley Collegiate and the choir that has assembled, a choir which is currently on an extensive tour of the northern states of the U.S. On Monday, they sang at the Underwood High School and yesterday they sang in the Twin Cities of Minnesota. In fact, they sang O Canada! for the opening ceremony at the American League baseball game between the Toronto Blue Jays and the Minnesota Twins. Today they will be singing at a dinner theatre.

I want to thank the staff who prepared this trip well in advance and who ensured that the students would have a good time en route. I also take my hat off to all those involved, be they the staff or students who have practised so diligently. I thank the choir from Garden Valley Collegiate. Thank you for being such wonderful ambassadors for our province, and we wish you a safe trip home. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. I wonder if I could ask the co-operation of all honourable members who are having private meetings at the back of the Chamber to do so in the loge or outside the Chamber?

**Home Care Program
Privatization**

Ms. MaryAnn Mihychuk (St. James): Madam Speaker, this government has broken their promises on health care, home care, MTS, along with many others. In regard to the home care situation, this is not a question of competition versus monopoly. Unlike consumers, the individual patient will have no say in who delivers the service. They will receive care from a private monopoly instead of a public monopoly. The only people who stand to gain from this move to privatize are the owners of the home care companies, not the patients, not the workers and not the provincial coffers. This move by government created the home care dispute. When will this government listen to the needs of Manitobans, not just to the needs of their friends?

In the St. James area we have over 16,500 seniors, and we are proud of the number of seniors that we honour and respect, which is the largest concentration of seniors in Manitoba. Seniors are the largest group of people that will be affected by the privatization of home care, Madam Speaker. Many seniors rely on this service daily, on this publicly run operation which they are completely satisfied with. It has been recognized as the best home care service in North America and the most cost-effective. This is a service which was originally introduced by the NDP government, and we are proud of that service. It is now being torn apart by the present Tory government. This government is giving favours to their friends at the expense of all Manitobans. This government wants to privatize home care so that their friends can make large profits off the sick and elderly of this province, and we are ashamed. We ask them to reverse their stand on the privatization of home care.

Mr. Clif Evans (Interlake): Madam Speaker, home care is for the people, not for profit. The Premier (Mr. Filmon) and the Health minister have rightly faced a daily barrage of criticism for this government's plan to privatize the delivery of all home care. Even Connie Curran, the American health consultant who this government spent public money to hire, advised against privatization, warning that contracting all service delivery among multiple providers is not advisable due to difficulty ensuring quality of service and difficulty co-ordinating across multiple services.

The Health minister's plan will make a few millionaires while reducing wages of low-paid workers by 30 percent to 40 percent. The Manitoba NDP was the founder of provincially funded home care in Canada, and outside experts still point to Manitoba as having one of the best systems in the world. However, this present provincial government did not listen to the advice of others, acknowledge that the rest of Canada envies our home care system or even consult with the public when making this decision.

The fact that home care is not protected by the Canada Health Act gives this government an excuse to shift cost in a major way to consumers. This government would burden sick Manitobans financially without breaking the law. Patients who could not afford to pay for home care will wind up being admitted to hospital, needing a higher level of care and more expensive care than would be otherwise required. The private company that will be administering health care has no incentive to give proper care at a low cost.

It has taken a month of public support for the current system to force the government to negotiate with the workers. The unprecedented support for the workers by the users and the public has forced the government to negotiate. No one should be fooled on what this dispute is about. Manitobans have shown their strong opposition to using tax dollars for private profit from health care.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

House Business

Hon. Jim Ernst (Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, I wonder if the House might recess for five minutes while I have some discussions with regard to the Estimates process.

Madam Speaker: Is it the will of the House to have a five-minute recess while the House leaders have a quick meeting? Agreed. [agreed]

The House recessed at 2:44 p.m.

After Recess

The House resumed at 2:49 p.m.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. The House will reconvene.

Mr. Ernst: Madam Speaker, for the third committee of Estimates for tomorrow morning at 9 a.m., the order of Estimates will be Urban Affairs; Culture, Heritage and Citizenship; Government Services; and the Status of Women. That will be continuing through until tomorrow afternoon at 5:30 p.m.

Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship (Mr. Gilleshammer), that Madam Speaker do now leave the Chair, and the House resolve itself into a Committee of Supply 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.

* (1450)

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 the Committee of Supply, meeting in Room 255, will resume consideration of the Estimates of the Department of Education and Training.

When the committee last sat, it had been considering 5.(a) (1) on page 40 of the Estimates book. Shall the item pass?

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): Mr. Chairman, the last time we were here, we were looking at the private school grants. The minister had tabled a list of the grants to the private schools in the last fiscal year and she did not have the enrollment, obviously, for the '96-97 fiscal year but my question, perhaps, follows on from that.

What total amount is the minister budgeting in these Estimates for the private schools for next year? Even though she does not have the enrollment number and does not know the specific amount to each school, there must be a total amount.

Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Chairman, from July 1, 1996, to June 30, 1997, the amount will be \$30,168,000.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Chairman, could the minister tell us how, under the new formula of the agreement that the government has reached with the private schools, the per pupil grant will be 46 percent in the '96-97 year? It will be 46 percent of the public per pupil cost.

Could the minister tell us how that public school pupil cost is being determined?

Mrs. McIntosh: It is done in a series of steps. First you take the expenditures of the public school, the public school expenditure, then you weight the amount by taking the costs in each public division where the independent school exists. Then you derive a weighted average, you multiply it by 46.5 percent, and you end up with the amount given to the independent schools.

* (1500)

Ms. Friesen: I wonder if the minister could explain that again. She said the first step is you take the total of public school expenditures. Does that mean across the province, first of all?

Mrs. McIntosh: You take every area of the province where the independent school students live. You take the expenditures from those parts of the province, so it is across the province where independent school students

live. Then you weight that amount by taking the costs in each public division where there are independent schools. You derive a weighted average by multiplying times—you multiply by 46.5 percent. You end up then with the amount given to independent schools, and each independent school thus receives the same rate per pupil which in this year, through which we are currently living, is \$2,466.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Chairman, could we go over that again? The first step is to take the expenditures of school divisions where the students who attend private schools live. Now the list the minister gave me, I think, she actually said it had school divisions listed. I think the one the minister read from might have, but I do not think the one I got did. So could the minister give me an account of where those students are living who are going to private schools? How is the minister arriving at that? Which school divisions are being included in that list?

Mrs. McIntosh: Mr. Chairman, those addresses are provided by the schools that the students attend.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Chairman, could the minister then put on the public record what those school divisions are that have students attending private schools?

Mrs. McIntosh: Staff is obtaining that information. The member will note that the people who live in these areas, of course, are taxpayers for those areas and pay full education taxes and all other taxes to the local authority where they live. Staff is digging that information out for us, if you just give us a moment.

Mr. Chairman, Winnipeg School Division has 2,476; St. James-Assiniboia has 402; Assiniboine South has 1,522; St. Boniface has 288; Fort Garry has 672; St. Vital has 897; Norwood has 150; River East has 1,102; Seven Oaks has 811; Lord Selkirk has 102; Transcona has 670; Agassiz has 25; Seine River has 213; Hanover has 133; Boundary has 3; Red River has 3; Rhineland has 29; Morris-MacDonald has 40; White Horse Plain has 34; Interlake has 38; Evergreen has 57; Lakeshore has 7; Portage la Prairie has 171; Midland has 175; Garden Valley has 17; Pembina Valley has 34; Tiger Hills has 3; Pine Creek has 17; Beautiful Plains has 10; Turtle River has 2; Dauphin has 54; Duck Mountain has 2; Swan Valley has 55; Intermountain has 2; Birdtail River has 5; Rolling River has 19; Brandon has 180;

Souris Valley has 6; Antler River has 1; Turtle Mountain has 37; Kelsey has 5; Flin Flon has 5; Western has 6; Frontier has 13; Lynn Lake has 1; Mystery Lake has 4; Sprague has 1; Leaf Rapids has 1—for a total of 10,506.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Chairman, I think that is about 48 school divisions. So those school divisions, their cost per pupil will be averaged, so the minister will take the sum of all of the costs of each of those school divisions and will divide by 48. Okay. Could the minister explain that first step?

* (1510)

Mrs. McIntosh: When I indicate initially that, because the latest accurate figures are the ones we use, the figures we use for working out this formula, the ones that I am quoting her now are from two years ago, '93-94. It will be behind that way for accuracy purposes.

What you do is you take the total number of students who are in private school living in a particular division, taking Winnipeg No. 1 for an example. In Winnipeg No. 1, which I believe is the member's division, she has 2,474 students who attend private school who live in her area, who live in her division, so we count those. We take that number and we multiply it by the cost that it would cost us if we had to educate them in that particular public division, which would be, in Winnipeg No. 1 at the time of this enrollment, \$6,532. So we take the number of students who live in the division who attend private school, we multiply that by the cost of what we would have to pay to educate them per pupil if they actually went to the public school in that division, and we get a total. The total of this example would be \$16,175-million, \$16 million. Then you add up all of those totals of what you would have to pay if they were fully funded students. As I said before, the parents do pay the full taxes as if their students were fully funded, but the net effect is you take the cost of what it would cost, and if these students had not opted to attend a private school, the cost would be \$60,038,960, adding up all the school divisions that way. So after you have got that total, then you will divide by the total enrollment number that I gave her before of 10,506, and you divide that by the 60 and that—you divide that by the number of students and that gives you the weighted average. Then you take the weighted average and again you multiply by 46.5 percent to give you the support which would be \$2,600.

So we go from having to spend—in Winnipeg No. 1, for example, instead of having to spend as a government \$6,532 for each of those students, we only have to pay \$2,643 per student with the parents picking up the balance on top of the education taxes they pay, as everybody else does. That is how the province saves money, and that is how the formula works.

Ms. Friesen: I just want to make sure I understand what the minister is saying. She started out by giving me a Winnipeg No. 1 example of 2,474 students at a cost of \$6,500. Now that \$6,500 is the cost two years ago and that is part of the formula that it will always be two years ago. The number of students, is that also two years ago or that is the current number of students, that is, as of the '96 and '97 enrollment year?

Mrs. McIntosh: We keep the current number of students at a two-year-old cost.

Ms. Friesen: So the example that we will be looking at is the '96-97 enrollment numbers, and we will be using the cost per student of two years ago in this case in Winnipeg No. 1. and that will give us the \$16.175 million. Okay

The second step the minister said was to develop a weighted average. Now she said add up all the total which would give you approximately \$60 million across all the school divisions, all those 58 school divisions. Is that what is happening there? Have I got that step right?

Mrs. McIntosh: Yes, that is correct.

Ms. Friesen: And then, Mr. Chairman, we divide that by the total enrollment in private schools across Manitoba which gives us the weighted average. Okay?

Mrs. McIntosh: Yes.

* (1520)

Ms. Friesen: That is then multiplied by 46.5 percent in the case of '96-97 in order to provide us with a figure of \$2,600 for Winnipeg School Division No. 1.

Mrs. McIntosh: Yes, it would be for Winnipeg School Division No. 1. It would also be for all other school divisions. Every independent school. That is the one

rate. That formula is how we arrive at the weighted rate which goes to each independent school. They have the same.

Ms. Friesen: Does that mean that a child who lives in Winnipeg No. 1 and a child who lives in Transcona will both be taking the same amount of money with them, say, to Balmoral Hall or to St. John's Ravenscourt or to St. Edward's, whichever school they are going to? Is the per pupil payment from the provincial government going to be exactly the same for every child in every private school?

Mrs. McIntosh: Yes.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Chairman, does the minister have an estimate of what the percentage increase will be to the private schools in this coming year? It was \$27 million last year. She has given us an approximate \$30 million for the coming year.

Mrs. McIntosh: Mr. Chairman, approximately 11 percent, taking into account the rate increase as a result of moving from the 42 percent to 46 percent and a projected enrollment increase of some 4 percent.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Chairman, could the minister just perhaps spell out the mathematics on that for me? What does the minister mean by taking into account the transition from 42 percent to 46 percent, and what is the basis for projected enrollment increase of 4 percent this year?

Mrs. McIntosh: Mr. Chairman, projecting enrollments is not an exact science, but the 4 percent is a figure that has been used historically. Sometimes it is above; sometimes it is below. For example, in 1992 the actual increase in enrollment was 5.6 percent, whereas last year the actual increase in enrollment was only 2.6 percent. Of course, if they do not have a 4-percent increase in enrollment, they do not get 4 percent, they only would get—like last year, for example, when the increase in enrollment was lower than was expected, they only got funded to the actual enrollment, not the projected, but 4 percent has historically been used. As I say, sometimes it is above, sometimes it is below. In 1992, it was above; last year, it was below, but they do not get the 4 percent if they do not have 4 percent.

The other rate, of course, is the letter of agreement where we have moved from 42.5 percent to 46.5 percent as per the terms of the agreement.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Chairman, I asked the minister if she could spell out the mathematics by which she arrives at 11 percent increase this year. There is a transition in the formula. Perhaps using real numbers, or perhaps using an example, the minister could indicate how the increase is 11 percent.

Mrs. McIntosh: The 11 percent, of course, is four plus seven, but the four is the expected enrollment increase, and the 7.2 percent, as I indicated, is the difference between 42.5 percent and 46.5 percent, the exact same dollar amount as it would have been under the old formula, moving from 68 percent to 74 percent under the old formula. So the dollar amount in the old formula and the dollar amount in the new formula in terms of the percentage rate increase are the same, no difference, expressed differently, but the same amount of money.

* (1530)

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Chairman, I wonder if the minister could provide me with an example of how she has gone to an 11 percent increase. I am not understanding it from what she is saying. When she says, for example, that the amount under the old formula would have gone to 74 percent and the dollar amount remains the same, I am afraid that is not clear to an outsider to the department's finances. I wonder if the minister could make that clear by giving me an example of how that works.

Mrs. McIntosh: Mr. Chairman, perhaps I can maybe say it a different way. It may help her. Going from 42.5 percent to 46.25 percent of costs is the same as going from 68 percent to 74 percent of provincial funding. Method A uses the amount that we the province fund public schools per pupil times 74. Method B uses the amount spent by divisions times 46.5. Does that help?

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Chairman, I think I got that part. What I am trying to get at is why the minister believes that the total amount is no different. I also want to understand how the minister gets from 42 to 46 percent. Could she give me the accounting on that?

Mr. Chairman, maybe I could clarify what it is I am looking for. The minister has said—not just here, but on other occasions as well—that the 74 percent of funding under the old formula—that is, the grant from the government—is equal to, but the dollar amount remains

the same as the new formula, 46 percent of the cost. Now what I would like is an accounting of that. How do we get those two together?

Mrs. McIntosh: Mr. Chairman, we will plug in the real dollars, and that may help the member put some clarity around this. We provided, under the old formula, \$3,500 per provincial pupil to public schools. Under the old formula, we were going to be moving to 74 percent at this time, so we would multiply that \$3,500 by 74 percent and that comes out to \$2,600. The number actually is \$3,600, sorry. We are just working it out quickly here, but it is \$3,600, not \$3,500. Just a correction there.

Now, under the new formula, we will say that we take the \$5,700 amount, which is the weighted cost per pupil, and we multiply that by 46.5 percent. It comes out to \$2,600 as well. You are taking 46 percent of \$5,700, and you are taking 74 percent of \$3,500. So the larger numbers with which you are working are not identical, so your answers will be—they will end up the same answer.

If you look at it as being on a graph, you look at yesterday's way, you would go from 50 percent to 80 percent on a graph, which was the commitment of the funding and, on that graph, just before you got to 80 percent you would see two figures, one 68 percent and one 74 percent, and you would move from the smaller of those to the larger.

Currently you would have another graph that would move from 42.5 percent to 46.5 percent on a graph that would go from zero to 50 percent, and the points on the graph would line up. It is like when you get a measuring cup where you have got one side in metric and the other side in imperial, but you still end up with the same amount of water. You just call it something different.

* (1540)

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Chairman, the minister has used the number in her new formula of the weighted per pupil cost as \$5,700. Could the minister give me the numbers upon which that is based? How is that arrived at?

Mrs. McIntosh: All right. I think I have given the member an indication that in Winnipeg the eligible

enrollment in the Winnipeg School Division was 2,476, and that the cost per pupil if that pupil attended a Winnipeg public school would have been \$6,532. With St. James, I believe I read the enrollment, so I will maybe just go to the cost per pupil. In St. James-Assiniboia, the cost per pupil would be \$5,416; in Assiniboine South, \$5,711; in St. Boniface, \$5,805; in Fort Garry, \$5,850; in St. Vital, \$5,318; in Norwood, \$6,101; in River East, \$5,250; in Seven Oaks, \$5,645; in Lord Selkirk, \$4,935; in Transcona, \$5,150; in Agassiz, \$5,272; in Seine River, \$5,022; in Hanover, \$4,252, a very efficient division, that one, and known for its cost efficiency; Boundary, \$6,497; Red River, \$6,339; Rhineland, \$4,901; Morris-MacDonald, \$5,306, not bad; White Horse Plain, \$6,283; Interlake, \$4,534; Evergreen, \$5,568; Lakeshore, \$5,304; Portage la Prairie, \$5,307; Midland, \$5,454; Garden Valley, \$4,587; Pembina Valley, \$6,168; Tiger Hills, \$5,918; Pine Creek, \$5,443; Beautiful Plains, \$5,173; Turtle River, \$6,020; Dauphin, \$5,157; Duck Mountain, \$6,266; Swan Valley, \$6,131; Internountain, \$5,521; Birdtail River, \$5,554; Rolling River, \$5,662; Brandon, \$4,678; Souris Valley, \$5,543; Antler River, \$6,693; Turtle Mountain, \$6,062; Kelsey, \$5,526; Flin Flon, \$5,916; Western, \$5,188; Frontier, \$9,619; Lynn Lake, \$7,320; Mystery Lake, \$6,208; Sprague, \$6,628; and Leaf Rapids, \$7,450.

Ms. Friesen: I am still trying to make sure that I have the method down. The minister took \$2,476 as the cost in Winnipeg No. 1—sorry, that is the current attendance. She took the cost of \$6,500, came up with a total and then took the total of all the ones that she has just read out, and, approximately, she said that was about \$60 million. Then she divided that by the total enrollment of \$10,000-and-something, arrived at the weighted average cost of \$2,600.

Mrs. McIntosh: The total weighted cost of \$5,715.

Ms. Friesen: That was the missing piece I did not have—and then took that \$5,715, multiplied that by 46.5 percent and came to \$2,600. Is that it?

Mrs. McIntosh: Yes.

Ms. Friesen: Some of those figures are approximations that might be—

Mrs. McIntosh: Some of those figures are rounded off so they might be out \$5 or \$10 or something, but basically, yes, those are the figures.

Ms. Friesen: When the minister was developing this new formula, did she discuss this with the school trustees of Manitoba, because I think what the recognition is is that the government has tied grants to private schools to the costs in public divisions and also tied it to the increasing costs in public divisions, costs which are frequently out of control of the divisions? I am thinking of gas costs. I am thinking of repair costs, building repairs, as well as other kinds of inevitable costs, putting aside the whole issue of wages. There are inevitable increases in those costs that trustees are having to provide for in a variety of ways.

The public perception on these changes, I think, is very clear, that the private schools, under the old agreement, had tied themselves to a situation whereby they were being affected, having their costs reduced as the government reduced the cost to public schools. It was a bit like a U-tube in a way. As the government cut the costs in one area, it was also able to reduce its commitments to the private schools under the old agreement. They have gone to a new agreement, which is tied essentially to the prospect of increasing amounts, so that every time school trustees raise taxes, they are inevitably increasing the amount coming from the Province of Manitoba to private schools.

Is that the minister's understanding of what is happening? Did the minister discuss this at all with the school trustees of Manitoba in making this new agreement?

Mrs. McIntosh: We did not talk to the public school trustees because this does not affect their tax bill in any way. The Manitoba Federation of Independent Schools pupils are resident in public divisions, and their parents are full taxpayers there. They will pay the local special levy and provincial school taxes, so their school taxes will go up when the public school board of trustees sets the tax rates. If they set a tax increase, of course, the independent schools pupils' parents' taxes will go up because they pay the same taxes that the parents of students in public schools do. So, when their public school trustees raise taxes, they pay those raised taxes. But the setting of the taxes that the public schools choose

to do does not impact in any way, shape or form—pardon me, it would not be impacted by this decision of the government of Manitoba.

In some provinces—in fact, in Alberta, provinces to the west of us—taxpayers have the choice of directing their taxes. They can direct their taxes to the private school system or the public school system. In Manitoba they do not have that luxury. They have to pay the public school taxes, and then on top of that they also have to pay for the private schools. In Alberta, for example, the private system is fully funded by the people. They do not pay public taxes at all, and the students going to the private schools, the separate school system there, the Catholic schools, do not pay user fees the way they have to here in Manitoba.

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

So people who wish to exercise their religious rights in that sense can take advantage of religious education, provided they are willing to accept less and pay more for that privilege. That is some 83 percent of the independent schools.

There are also other schools that are not necessarily religious based, but they may be all-girls schools like Balmoral Hall or all-boys schools like St. Paul's. They pay again extra to be able to participate in a single-gender school, which, again the public schools cannot provide them, just as they cannot by law provide religious exercises.

Division costs, the member indicates, have been rising. She said they are experiencing rising costs that they cannot control and to leave aside the question of teachers' wages as a cost impact. But the fact is that many divisions are being able to lower a lot of their other costs. The only one they have not been successful in lowering is the teacher wage cost. If the divisions continue being successful as they have—and I can name a number of areas in where school divisions have substantially reduced costs in heating and many school divisions have now put in efficiency factors in their schools that have reduced heating costs substantially. They have brought in simple measures, such as tying the light switch to the heating register so that every time the light goes off the heat goes down. They have closed off wings of schools where they have empty classrooms, mothballed the classrooms, put

the heat down to just maintenance temperature and saved heating costs that way.

* (1550)

Many divisions are now renting out empty rooms to daycares or to other suitable community enterprises and generating revenue for their schools, thereby offsetting their costs. Many divisions are using more low-maintenance buses. Many have switched to computerized systems for their busing routes so that they can reduce the costs of transportation organization where they have to decide, you know, having to have people make decisions on busing routes. There are so many efficiencies that have been brought in by school divisions that have been able to bring costs down that I am very admiring of school divisions that have done these things.

As I say, the one cost the member says that we should set aside and not look at is the one cost that to date they have not been able to get a control on. If they are able successfully to prevent the ever-rising escalation of salary costs, then it is conceivable that continuing their efforts to become more cost-efficient in purchasing of supplies, moving to joint purchasing with other divisions on materials as many divisions have and moving to multimedia materials as opposed to print materials and a wide variety of other things they are doing, it is quite conceivable that their costs could come down in which case, of course, the funding for independent schools would also go down, because the funding for the independent schools will go up or down depending upon how successful the public schools are in containing their costs. Since the independent school parents pay those costs to public schools plus their own on top of it, I think they have a strong interest in seeing public schools get their costs down.

Our formula is not unique; it is not a unique formula. It is based upon the same kind of method used in British Columbia. British Columbia—the member may be familiar with the government there as it is of her same party, an NDP government—uses a somewhat similar formula that we have modelled ours upon. They seem to think it works well there and we are not partisan about these things. If the NDP have a good idea in one province that we think will work well here, we are quite happy to emulate their example of the role model that they have set for other Canadian provinces. The member

may feel differently, but then we are not being partisan here.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Chairman, I think the minister was in one part of her statement assuming that private schools and separate schools in Alberta were the same and towards the end she did pick up on that. So it is important, I think, in this discussion to keep those issues clear.

The minister made many comments about the ability of school divisions to cut their costs, and I wondered if the minister had a collected list of those initiatives, some of the ones she mentioned. She indicated that there were many, many more that school divisions had used across the province. Here is an example of the role of the government in providing information and assistance to school divisions in best practices, the kind of thing that we talked about earlier in Estimates. Does the minister have available a list like that, that could be tabled, or that perhaps she has already made available to school divisions?

Mrs. McIntosh: Mr. Chairman, certainly, I can recall that, when I was chairman of the St. James-Assiniboia School Board, we had identified some \$11 million worth of cost saving that our division had invoked by doing such things as closing off wings of schools, bringing in heat conservation measures into the schools, purchasing of different brands of floor wax; I mean, getting right down to the nitty-gritty. Certainly, divisions share those with each other, and we encourage them to do that. In fact, the member is probably aware that we have just come through some very intense consultations with divisions in Manitoba concerning the Boundaries Review, and one of the things that has come out of that has been the identification of cost savings and cost efficiencies.

I believe it was Garden Valley or Hanover or one of those divisions that just recently submitted to me a list of the cost savings and efficiencies that they had just, in the last month or so, identified for me in terms of reducing expenditures by shared-services agreements with other school divisions. One way in which St. James-Assiniboia was able to bring its transportation costs down was, for example, to share busing costs with St. Charles Academy, the Roman Catholic private school in our area, where they shared the bus going the same route.

Each paid a per capita; each got it for less—those kinds of things.

We have comparative statistics from the 1996-97 FRAME budgets showing areas where school divisions have been able to reduce costs. We look, for example, at a drop of 2.7 percent in administrative costs. We look at a drop of 2.3 percent in transportation of pupils. We look at a drop of 0.5 percent in the operations and the maintenance, a way of delivering operations and maintenance. We look at the community education services in terms of ways of delivering those things. We look at a percentage drop there of 8 percent. We look at a number of efficiencies that are sort of generic.

I do not have that kind of data on a division-by-division basis, but the numbers I have just indicated were gleaned by summarizing the data available in FRAME, and I will table this as a public document, and if the member wishes to do her own extrapolation on any kind of figuring in here, she is most welcome to do that. So I will table the FRAME Report, 1995-96 budget, and indicate to her, as I table it, that this goes out to every school division in Manitoba so they can do just those very same kinds of deductive extrapolation that the member may wish to do with the document.

As well, I indicate that secretary-treasurers and superintendents and trustees, particularly the MASBO officials, are constantly sharing ideas for cost efficiency. I mentioned the cost savings that could have been made on the purchasing of materials or different ways of planning out the bus routes, and divisions looking for best practices can examine FRAME and see how the information in there fits their own needs, and we encourage them to do that. We encourage them to continue their co-operative efforts. We are delighted to see boards all across this province working to identify to me how they are planning to reduce costs by sharing of all kinds of things.

* (1600)

(Mr. Deputy Chairperson in the Chair)

We also know that once the initial technology education is finally in place, you can expect to see a lot of course deliveries and itinerant teachers and so on—you can expect to see a lot of those costs come down. Initially,

they are not going to in those areas because the costs are still high, and we still have CRTC rulings, et cetera, but over time the use of technology will eventually result in abilities to deliver sophisticated course offerings at a much lesser rate than can currently be done, or sometimes not be done at all right now.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Chairman, I think the FRAME document that the minister refers to is a summary of numbers, pie charts, diagrams which would indicate changed costs. It may or it may not show efficiencies. It may indeed show cuts. What I was looking for from the minister was some sense that the department took a role in summarizing, in publicizing and encouraging best practices. The minister gave a number of examples, but as I understood the minister's response, it was that this was something which she left up to others, that this was to be done on an informal basis through secretary-treasurers, superintendents and trustees. I am asking again, does the minister take any responsibility? Does she see any role for the department in taking the best practices, seeing where there are real efficiencies and encouraging and finding ways for divisions to come together, to use them in some cases, or to plan for these kinds of efficiencies?

Mrs. McIntosh: Mr. Chairman, the department does do workshops and seminars. We have seminars, seven planned, coming up for about 150 school division financial people. We talk about best practices, accounting, those kinds of things, and we also are available and are often called upon, upon request, for advice and guidance. We have had workshops in the last year. Again, the school division financial people with the Department of Education, Finance Branch, they do look at best practices. They worked on an intensive analyses with three school divisions in this last year, actually working with them on parts of their budget when requested. So there is very intensive assistance available.

The only thing that we have to be careful of, because of the local autonomy of school boards, is that we do not put boards in a position where they end up saying here is government interfering with us in the matter of our spending of money. The school boards, as you know, are very sensitive right now about the spending of their money. We have just come through two consecutive MASS conventions where they have passed resolutions on the floor of the house asking that their local autonomy

be seen as a high priority, demanding that their ability to pay be allowed to be considered at the bargaining table, that they did not want control of how they spent their money being turned over to a third party for decision making. They have passed two resolutions two years in a row stating that to government.

So, when we are available, providing workshops, seminars, advice, guidance, we are very careful not to be seen to be telling them how they have to spend their money, because that, as I indicate, is of high priority to them, that they retain that local autonomy.

Even when we went and did that intensive analyzing with those three divisions, it was the desire of the divisions that we be there providing them that help. It was not our imposing ourselves into their area of jurisdiction and authority.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Chairman, I think what the minister misses is the sensitivity of school trustees to the constant cuts that it has received in public education from this government, the sensitivity of trustees who now see that as they are forced to increase taxes that in fact at the same time as they are doing that, they are also taking money out of the public purse to go to private schools as well.

I think what I was looking for from the minister was some sense that a government which continues to cut the money to public schools also take some responsibility for ensuring that schools and school divisions across Manitoba were aware of what their neighbours were doing, were aware that there were efficiencies that perhaps they had not tried, that the government could encourage divisions in that way. I do not see any responsibility for that, but I would like to ask the minister if she would table the workshop outline which she said dealt with best practices, the workshops that the Department of Education's Finance Branch did with three school divisions at their request.

Would it be possible for the minister to table the workshop outline and some of the materials that were used in that?

Mrs. McIntosh: I do not have that here and as far as indicating the exact nature of the work done in an intensive analysis of three particular specific school divisions at their request, I think that would be up to the

school divisions to determine whether they wanted that brought forward.

I would say in response to the member's questions or, I suppose, comments, really, that we are very sensitive not to be micromanaging in the school divisions. One of the things that we discovered with the new blueprint and the Foundation for Excellence was that boards indicated that they did not want the department in there micromanaging and felt that the blueprint was, in the first instance, providing them with micromanagement from the department, and that was a large part of the initial resistance to the blueprint. It was not so much that they did not approve of having new curricula or doing assessment as rather that they did not want to have the department telling them what to do.

* (1610)

I think, by and large, from the work that has been going on in the last few months, we are through a lot of that in that divisions, many divisions are now up and running and enjoying some of the new plans and finding that they are enjoying them and are pleased they are there and that the hurdles, many of the initial hurdles have now been crossed and so there is a much easier implementation period than we had thought we might be having at this time based upon the initial feeling that, oh, the department is micromanaging and to imply, as the member has—I think, maybe not intentionally, but there seemed to be a bit of an implication in her commentary that because we were not out there imposing that, therefore, we were not available.

As I indicated, the department is ready upon request, and I gave her the one example of the working with three divisions on an intensive analyses of their financing and expenditures and even helping them with certain sections of the budget preparation. That was pretty in-depth assistance which the division desired. We are at the divisions' wishes too. We are most willing and eager to do that. I do not know, if maybe the member could indicate if the member would be prepared to endorse my implementing a program of a network of sharing best practice in addition to the workshops, you know, I would be interested in a response to that.

We also have assisted boards with flexible management by allowing them a little bit more in the

formula, that 20 percent flexibility within some four or five budget categories, and boards have expressed a tremendous appreciation for that because it has allowed them to mix and match their needs more. Naturally, I think everybody would prefer a larger block grant and so would we, but, when money is tight, the flexibility within the frame lines does assist greatly, and that has been expressed back to us many, many times, thank you for the flexibility. The member should also recognize that we have two main reasons that cuts have been necessary this year in the public school system. One, of course, is the tremor or ripple effect that we are feeling from the federal transfer cuts, massive cuts, huge in their impact, enormous in their impact, on the education system, and the ripple effect of those through the system is that it was impossible to maintain funding for this year or until such time as the federal transfer cuts are no longer cuts.

Last night, in fact, I was out in Altona speaking at a parent council there, which I do. As the member knows, I do regular school visits. Because there were some people there who had taken the trouble to take a look at the impact of external circumstances on the provincial budget and understood the negative impacts of the transfer cuts plus the \$2 million in interest on the debt that we have to pay every day, the debt left us by the NDP, we were actually thanked by a small group of people for being able—actually, what they asked me to do, I did not do it, and I must do it, is to pass on—they said, pass on to Treasury Board our thanks. I thought this was a very unusual thing for me to hear. But what they wanted me to do—and this is true, and I will make sure that Mr. Stefanson knows. They said, pass on to Treasury Board our thanks for being able to minimize the impact of the external circumstances your government faces to 2 percent and for not passing through what the real cut would have been to education if Treasury Board had not found ways to save money elsewhere.

I thought it was an indication of the public finally beginning to understand that \$116 million taken out of a system plus \$2 million a day that has to go in interest means that you just simply cannot fund to the level that you would like to. But I can guarantee you that, if you look at the way the funding has been developed, we have actually been able to increase the intensity of our provision provincially to the schools over and above what it used to be in the government that held power before the

Filmon government took over the reins and started making some efforts to get finances under control.

I think I have indicated before, but it bears repeating, that next year we will have a \$220- million cut from Ottawa, roughly the equivalent of the operating budget of the University of Manitoba. [interjection] The member for The Pas (Mr. Lathlin) would like to say something, Mr. Chairman. Could he please be given the microphone so that he can say his comments into the record? I have no objection. He is speaking. He might as well have the mike.

Ms. Friesen: I hope that when the minister speaks to Treasury Board that she will pass on the comments of my constituents, many of whom are facing a 20 percent cut in their welfare rates. These are young people who have to find transport out of that to look for work. The situation that many of those young people in my riding have been put in through this Treasury Board, this government, is unbelievable.

I want the minister to remember that. I want the minister, as she leaves this House, to look those young people in west Broadway in the eye, to tell them how they are going to feed themselves on the money that they are being allowed by this government, to tell them where the jobs are that this government says are there.

The minister must want to pass on a balanced report to the Treasury Board. I hope she includes that. I hope she includes, as well, the impact of the cuts in her funding to school divisions across Manitoba. In particular, she might think of the loss of nursery schools in the city of Winnipeg, nursery schools and the Headstart Programs, which are one of the things that the young children of the inner city very much depended upon, one of the things which every educational report indicates gave them a head start, gave them a chance. The cuts that this government has imposed upon the school system of the public—[interjection] Oh, I am sorry, is the minister speaking to someone?

I am so sorry, Mr. Deputy Chairperson. I guess the minister is not paying attention.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Order, please. Order, please, to everybody. I would ask that we try to follow the line that we are on more carefully, to all members. I

would like to keep these Estimates, if possible, rolling smoothly.

Ms. Friesen: I would like to continue with what I was saying, reminding the minister of the balanced picture which I am sure she will want to present to Treasury Board and suggesting, since the minister was at that moment speaking, that it was essentially the same kind of position which she indicated to the member for The Pas (Mr. Lathlin), and I think we should treat each other equally in this case, and I notice the minister is doing it again.

I am quite prepared to continue to speak while the minister continues to discuss things, as she should, with her staff, but I do think that should be put on the record because it is the kind of behaviour the minister has employed throughout these Estimates. I have ignored it until now, but I do think it is important to recognize it.

Mr. Chairman, I understand your concern and desire to continue on the particular line that we are facing here, and again I will return to that line and suggest when the minister presents her report to Treasury Board that she also talk about the increases in salaries which have been offered to members of Crown corporations, 42 percent increases, I gather, in some cases in this government, and the increased grants to elite schools across Manitoba at the same time as grants to public schools have been cut. It is the inequity, it is the unfairness that so many Manitobans are coming to recognize from this government.

I want to ask the minister what reports she receives regularly from private schools. What are the reporting lines? We know, for example, that the private schools must have trained teachers, trained in the public universities. I assume that they present a report to the minister of the qualifications of the teachers in their schools each year. They must follow the curriculum of Manitoba.

Is there a report that the private schools provide regularly to the minister on their attention to the curriculum of Manitoba? As they receive both Level I and in some cases Level II and III special needs, is there something similar to the ADAP or to reports from other schools that are provided by the private schools on a regular basis? Could the minister tell me what regular reports—by regular, I think I mean annual in this case—she

receives from each of the private schools of Manitoba, the funded private schools?

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Order, please. A formal vote has been requested in the Chamber. We will now proceed to the Assembly. Thank you.

The committee recessed at 4:20 p.m.

After Recess

The committee resumed at 5:12 p.m.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Order, please. We will resume Estimates in Education and Training. I believe the honourable minister was about to answer a question that had been asked.

Mrs. McIntosh: The member was indeed correct that during her question I did turn to receive some information from my deputy on a question that she had asked earlier. In that sense, I was following her example of talking while other people were speaking, but I am pleased to say, I am not following the other examples of the way in which we treat provincial money.

I should indicate that one of the reasons we have \$650 million interest that we have to pay on the debt every year is directly because of the care that the previous NDP government forgot to take with our finances. So the fact that we have that amount of interest to pay on the debt every year—\$650 million or just a little under \$2 million a day—really does hamstring us in being able to do a lot of things.

I also should indicate, since the matter was raised by the member, that we have also done some other things where we have not followed her example. The CPI, for example, is up 32.5 percent since we took office and the provincial support to schools is up 36.5 percent. When we took office in '88, the support to schools as a percentage of the provincial budget was 11 percent; now it is 12 percent. So those are just a few of the things that I think are important to put on the record in light of the comments that the member made in her commentary before she asked her question.

She had asked a question about the accountability for independent schools, and I think we have been through

this before several times, but I am happy to let her know again that the independent schools must provide audited financial statements which are filed annually with the schools Finance Branch. Their accounting must conform to a standard. They must employ certified teachers, verified by the schools Finance Branch annually by the professional certification office upon mandatory provision of a list of teachers employed by each independent school.

With the special needs students, they negotiate with our staff on each Level II and Level III pupil based on the same criteria as in public schools. They will have to prepare annual school plans which will include the plans for special needs programming and, when those are in place, which we expect will be happening shortly, there will be no need for ADAPs because we will be having the annual school plans.

They must also teach the Manitoba curriculum. We do not monitor this directly, nor do we in the public schools but, since all the students will be having to write the Manitoba tests in both independent and public schools and the tests are curriculum congruent, the knowledge of the curriculum will soon become evident.

I am not quite sure what else the member asked because we did have a 45-minute break and I am not quite certain if I have forgotten some of the other aspects of her question, but, if I have, she may wish to restate some of those points now and I will seek to try and provide the answer.

Ms. Friesen: Could the minister tell us what the enrollment was at the beginning of the year in private schools last year and what the enrollment is at the current time? Does the minister have a means for knowing that or does she have, for example, a previous year where we would be able to have an accounting of initial enrollments and final enrollments?

Mrs. McIntosh: Excuse me, is there another committee going in the Chamber as well, Mr. Chairman?

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Yes, there is.

Mrs. McIntosh: Okay. The member had asked the question about, she wanted to know about the enrollment,

and we know, for example, that 10,305 students were enrolled in '94-95 and 10,569 were enrolled in '95-96, and so it is possible then to see the difference between those two in terms of numbers and you can extrapolate a percentage from that.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Chairman, I am interested in knowing both the reporting mechanism and the actual numbers of enrollments in private schools at the beginning of the year and enrollment in private schools at the end of the year. What the minister provided me with was two separate enrollment years, and I am looking first of all for the method, the reporting mechanism of how the department receives that and, secondly, if she could give me an actual example.

Mrs. McIntosh: We use exactly the same method that we do in public schools. The September 30 enrollment is the enrollment figure that is used for public schools and for independent schools as well, as the member can see, the consistent thread of similar treatment for the partly funded schools. The nonfunded schools, of course, do not require the same adherence to public school rules. The deputy has just indicated that we do not know at the end of June the enrollment figures for the public schools either. We go by the September 30 date.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Chairman, does the minister not request final enrollments from public schools? I mean, the minister has got a \$3 million school information service. Is this not providing those kinds of numbers?

* (1720)

Mrs. McIntosh: Mr. Chairman, we still follow the NDP way of doing it in that regard. We have not yet had a chance to reform that aspect of education because we have been too busy reforming all the others. But right now we are still following the exact same method used by the member's government when it was in power, although we certainly are interested in moving to more frequent enrollment projections and accounting so that we can improve from their methodology.

I am pleased to hear the member's question because I think it indicates that she too feels the method the NDP employed could be improved, and certainly we are interested in that. Right now we are still using the old NDP way.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Chairman, I am interested to note that the government over eight years and \$3 million is not able to ask these kinds of questions of its Schools Information System.

I wanted to ask the minister too why there is no separate line for the amount of money given to private education neither here nor on the Schools Grants section. We have spent a lot of time in this Estimates partly because the minister has changed the funding formula. I wanted to have it on the public record precisely, for trustees and parents and students, how that actually works. So we spent a lot of time putting that on the public record.

There is also no line, as far as I can find in the public Estimates of the department, where the public in general can follow those amounts. So I am suggesting to the minister there may be an opportunity to do that within the Estimates of the department. Is that a possibility? Should the minister be directing us to other areas of the budget where this is accounted for?

Mrs. McIntosh: The member indicated that she is surprised that in eight years we have not been able to change everything over from the way they had it when they were in power, but I indicate to the member on the year-end enrollment figures, the fact that we do not yet have a change does not mean we have not been working on it.

We at least have taken the time to begin work on it, and we will be moving electronically, which is the way to go. We have an EIS committee with representatives from MASBO and school divisions working on the compilation of data so that we can find electronic means to do this. Right now, of course, as the member may or may not know from her party's days in government how school divisions feel about being forced to produce paper blizzards on shifting enrollments, we are working to have that out, and it will probably be within the next year or two that you can see that electronic system up.

I think that will be very significant for a whole host of reasons, not just for year-end enrollments but for other reasons as well in terms of the compilation of data and the ability to utilize it for decision-making purposes. The member had asked another question regarding the independent schools, and she was asking will there be a

separate line. I am indicating that we are looking into a separate line, but right now the line says Schools Grants, and that is, they are children in our schools both public and private. When I think about the students in schools and when I think about school grants, I tend to think of students. I often will say to people—because I know the member has made quite a point at some moment in the past of saying that the minister is the minister and responsible for public schools in Manitoba, which indeed I am.

I am also the Minister of Education, and I am responsible for the education of all students, not just those in public schools. I am responsible for the students who are educated in public schools, which are the ones the member is interested in, but I am also responsible for educating the students in independent schools, in partly funded schools, in nonfunded schools and in home schools. They are all equally important to me, because each deserves and requires an education, each has the money being paid by their guardians or parents to the exact same tune, the same amount, except the independent schools of course pay a user fee on top of their basic amount. The member made reference to Alberta where I lived for three years and had my own children start school there, so I am well aware of the differences she pointed out to me after I had explained the system in Alberta to her that we do not have that ability here in Manitoba of having a separate school system.

I do take my responsibilities to all children seriously. I do feel I have as big a responsibility to those who exercise their choice in a free country to choose a religious school or an alternative school just as Ed Schreyer said when he signed that agreement with the federal government saying that he believed that all children had the right to attend schools of their choice other than state-run schools and that all education should be free till the end of Grade 8 and that he would bring in legislation if he had to to ensure that they had that right.

Just as Ed Schreyer said that, so I believe.

Ms. Friesen: I am glad to see that the minister will be looking into the prospect of having a separate line dealing with the amount of funding going to private schools because the issue here is not one child versus another child, it is that the funding is based upon different assumptions. There are different methods of

funding the two kinds of schools; and, when we look at Estimates and when we pass or reject Estimates, we are looking at the financial responsibility. So I am glad to see that the minister will be looking at that next time.

Mrs. McIntosh: Yes, and I think that will show up, of course, as—right now, as I say, it is all school grants. I think a separate line might more clearly delineate how much money the public school system is saving by having the independent schools pick up \$8 million of the public schools costs. That perhaps would be a good thing for people to see.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Order, please.

The hour is now 5:30 p.m., and I am interrupting the proceedings of the committee. As previously agreed in the House, the committee will be recessed until 9 a.m. tomorrow (Thursday).

HEALTH

Mr. Chairperson (Marcel Laurendeau): Order, please. 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 on Resolution 21.1 Administration and Finance (a) Minister's Salary.

* (1500)

Mr. Stan Struthers (Dauphin): I would like to point out for the record that we will be starting with Estimates today, and I will be speaking for my party for the first short little bit.

What I want to make my comments on is the sorry state of health care in Manitoba these days. In particular, I want to be specifically talking on the way the Home Care program has been handled by the current government and its minister who is supposed to be in charge of providing home care and the benefits of home care for all Manitobans.

I recently came into contact with a person, an elderly lady, who expressed her concern about what is going on in home care. She said that her husband was a receiver

of home care services and that now he had been forced to move into a hospital where he was being taken care of. She was very unhappy about this situation, and she pointed out to me that in all her 63 years of marriage to her husband they never before had been apart and that now they were.

Mr. Chair, I want to make it absolutely clear how upset this woman was that this situation had been foisted upon her. I want to also be sure that everybody knows that she points the finger directly at this Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) for this situation. I want to make sure that everybody understands that she lays the problems of her and her husband directly at the feet of this government, not the union bosses, not the NDP, not any other fantasized excuse that this government has come up with. She puts the blame exactly where it should be, with this Minister of Health and the government that has decided to destroy Manitoba home care.

Mr. Chair, I find it very hard to disagree with this woman after what I have seen happen in this House over the last several weeks in terms of the statements that have been coming forth from this minister and this government having to do with something as important as taking care of the elderly and the disabled and the sick. I have heard some things in this House that quite honestly tell me that this government and this minister are out of touch. I have heard things in this Legislature, in Estimates and in Question Period, and in statements to the media that indicate that we are dealing with a government that is absolutely uncaring. We are dealing with a government that does not deserve to be government and a minister that does not deserve to be minister.

I think no better example is the fact that the minister would not have the courage to go and listen to public hearings when they took place in this Legislature, when one person after another told Manitobans of their particular situations and their lack of service from home care providers. Not a single one agrees with the minister as to where this blame should go. This minister has to take responsibility for what is going on in home care, and this minister in the final end-all and say-all will have that responsibility on his shoulders.

All those people who are right now suffering without the benefits of home care are the responsibility of this minister. Why is he doing it? It is ideology, pure and

simple. It is ideology. The minister and this government believes it is perfectly fine to take a program that is benefiting many Manitobans and reduce it to a program that becomes a scheme to put a lot of money into the hands of very few. Now that is ideology. That is traditional Conservative ideology. That is Edmund Burke ideology upon which the Tory party is based.

The minister has no reports. He has no answers to questions. The minister has no reasons for this decision that he has made on home care. The minister has failed even once to provide one good reason why we should tear apart our home care system as he is doing. There is no reason for what he is doing other than ideology. Mr. Chair, what we have heard from the minister are clichés. We have heard name-calling. We have heard personal attacks. We have heard a lot of rhetoric. We have not heard of any kind of evidence to support what this government is doing, not a single shred.

What the minister faces is a situation where he has no support from clients. He faces a situation where the workers do not support what he is doing. Maybe the one reason why a settlement was brought forth, was agreed to late last night, was that public opinion is not on the side of this minister either, not at all.

My question for the minister is very simple. Given the fact that he does not have anything to substantiate what he is moving toward, given the fact that home care workers and clients disagree with what he is doing and have courageously demonstrated that for the last number of weeks in this dispute, given the fact that public opinion is definitely against him on this one, will this minister finally put an end to this ridiculous plan to privatize home care?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): Mr. Chairman, none of what the honourable member said by way of preamble to the question, which came at the end, is true, and so, therefore, I cannot oblige the honourable member by answering the question in the way that he would like me to.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to bring to your attention something that disturbs me somewhat. I had a personal undertaking from the honourable member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) that these Estimates would have been completed the other day, and I was told that anything that

was going to happen today would be a matter of moments. The honourable member may not be aware of that, but I have that personal undertaking from his critic, the Health critic for the New Democratic Party, and in the absence of any explanation, I cannot quite understand why that commitment is not being honoured today.

Mr. Gord Mackintosh (St. Johns): Mr. Chair, I think it is important to talk for a brief period of time about the perspective that I have had of the home care issue. My background in the community, and the minister is well aware of this, is as a former convenor for many years of the Patients Rights Committee which later became the Health Care Consumer Rights Committee.

This committee had as its message, health care is our say too. It was saying that the consumers of health care, the reason why the health care system exists and the people most affected by the health care system were being left out of decision making, not only insofar as their own personal health was concerned, but because of policy making in the area of health care.

It was our position that we tried to raise the awareness of the government in particular on this issue that this had to change. It had to change not only for the sake of the dignity of health care consumers in Manitoba, but it had to change because health care consumers know best about how health services should be delivered in Manitoba. If the health care providers, and I include the minister in that, do not know from users how the services are being received, how can we truly have an effective health care system?

Mr. Chair, the government was not receptive to that message, and I recall committee meetings in this building. The current Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) listened, but the then Minister of Health refused, refused to meet with us, refused to be in the committee meetings when the presentations were being made. I will say one thing, I commend this Minister of Health, the current Minister of Health, not only for listening but for responding and acknowledging the views of health care consumers as expressed through our committee.

* (1510)

Now, I do not know what happened because now that he is in a position to do more than acknowledge the

legitimate views of health care consumers, he has closed his mind to those views. I do not think anything was clearer than when the hearings were held in this building right down the hall, the minister could not so much as bring himself to go down there and listen to the health care consumers, the people most affected by home care. Why? How is it that the health minister could be so threatened, so threatened by those most affected? What an unfortunate mindset, Mr. Chair.

It is one thing to make the case that health care consumers should be more involved, given more decision-making ability in the health care system, but no stronger is the case than involved in decisions regarding home care. Why? Well, philosophically, it was stated in the federal-provincial territorial working group on home care that home care inverts the traditional power structure in the health system.

In the hospital there is a hierarchical structure headed by a doctor with a patient at the bottom. The patient is sick in an unfamiliar setting and generally in no position to take control of his or her fate, but home care takes place on the client's turf, an enormous shift in the balance of power, says the report. Physicians are rarely deliverers of service; clients and families, at least in theory, are encouraged to participate in decision making.

Then on the practical level, with home care you are receiving services about toileting, dressing, feeding, bathing—there is nothing more intimate than that—and receiving those services in one's own home, not a hospital room, in one's own castle. That is why it is so important that there be a standard ensured, a continuity of care, one which a profit care system cannot ensure.

I am sorry, Mr. Chair, that the Minister of Health is continuing the pattern of his predecessor in continuing to close his ears to the views of the consumers of health care, as he does so as I speak. When I look at the health care attendant job description issued by this government, the first standard that is listed there says this. The HCA must demonstrate a knowledge of client's routine and lifestyle. There has to be a knowledge of pattern. There has to be continuity. It is required in the job description.

We can go on and look at other standards: Demonstrates an ability to accept client's beliefs, values and lifestyle; observes changes in client's physical

condition and functioning; demonstrates knowledge of client's past eating habits.

Continuity is a prerequisite. It is in the job description, Mr. Chair.

Now, we have heard from workers, hundreds and hundreds of home care workers. They do not say, what about me, Mr. Chair. What they are saying loud and clear is, what about my client?

I want to quote from a letter from a health care attendant of 11 years who, after trying to get a hold of the Minister of Health time and time again and was turned down by the receptionist in that office, wrote, and I quote: Have you ever visited the homes of people on home care and those on private care and compared the two, Mr. McCrae?

She goes on to say: Since last fall my client has endured pain and suffering at the hands of private attendants. It was a horrifying experience for her whenever they would fill in on Monday afternoons and Tuesday mornings. The private company did not phone to say who was coming. The attendants were untrained. One of the attendants came one day at the end of my shift and did not introduce herself and said, when do I feed her? When do I change her diaper? I called her into the kitchen and said, she is not mentally disabled, ask her. She knows what she wants and when. I then asked several of the attendants, do they not give you information about the client, and they all stated that the private company just gives them a name, address and phone number and told them they do not need to know anything else.

How can you take care of a client if you do not know their needs, Mr. McCrae, she writes.

And, indeed, how can you fulfill the requirements, the job description for the HCA, if there is not that continuity, if you do not know your client?

The letter goes on, Mr. Chair, but I will leave it at that. The minister has a copy of that letter dated April 12. I urge him to read it personally. The government has been engaged in negotiations with the workers. I now ask that the minister engage in a survey of the users of home care, those most affected, especially those who have used profit care, and will he listen to the stories?

I will tell the minister, I know he is afraid of that because one of the stories was Nancy Whiteway, who a number of years ago, as someone with chronic constipation, an MS patient, was denied the continuity of a home care worker, an HCA, to help her with toileting, and all she could do was go on a hunger strike. That is the only tool she had. She went on a hunger strike. She was willing to put her life on the line. Thankfully, the public system did respond; albeit too slowly, it did respond.

I am afraid, Mr. Chair, that a private system with the first obligation to a shareholder, the first legal obligation not to the client, would not respond.

I ask the minister, talk to the users, listen to the users, listen to the patients, the health care consumers. Thank you.

Mr. McCrae: Mr. Chairman, one of the first things that I did upon assuming the office of Minister of Health for Manitoba was to set up a Home Care Appeal Panel. That appeal panel has been there for that very purpose, the purpose of listening to the clients of our home care system and correcting the problems that confront them.

We have worked with that Home Care Appeal Panel, and we have resolved the problems between the program and our clients, and we will continue to do so.

Ms. Diane McGifford (Osborne): Mr. Chair, I had originally thought I would speak to the minister about home care, but being as one of my colleagues has just done that, I think I will confine my remarks more to women's health issues and possibly talk a little bit about Pharmacare, as well.

Last week, I spoke with the minister during Estimates, and he talked to me about a Women's Health Strategy. He said, by his own reckoning, the development of a Women's Health Strategy has been going on for several years. He spoke of this strategy as having four particular concerns. These were female cancers, midwifery, new contraceptive and reproductive technologies, and eating disorders.

Now, Mr. Chair, these are all very important concerns. Last night, I met with a group of community women, women who are all very concerned about health care issues. I talked to them about the minister's health

strategy, and they were very pleased to see that these issues are being investigated.

* (1520)

They were less pleased to learn that the strategy had been in the developmental stages for several years. The minister tells me that he hopes there will be a draft paper ready this summer. I do not know that we have much confidence that it will really be ready since, as I say, it has been in the draft stages for several years.

One of the reasons why it is hard to have confidence in this paper is that midwifery, one of the four focuses of the strategy, is still, strictly speaking, illegal. While I know that there have not been any charges laid recently, I also note that there are no plans to introduce legislation to legalize midwifery during this session of the Legislature, so it is very hard to imagine that the strategy will indeed be ready when said.

The group of community women that I spoke with last night agreed, as I said, that all the issues were very important, but we are aware that there are some very large, and I suppose you might even describe them as glaring, holes or gaps. For example, one of the major concerns affecting women's health these days is smoking, and I believe that lung cancer has now surpassed breast cancer as the leading cause of premature death among women. I understand that young women, teenage women, women in schools are beginning to smoke more and more. I think I am right in saying that there is a greater percentage of young women beginning to smoke than there are young men.

I think that there is also evidence that smoking women may be more susceptible to lung cancers than men are. I refer the minister to the Tobacco Free Times which is a publication that I believe comes out of Ontario, for details on this matter. My concern is that in the Women's Health Strategy, according to the minister's own reckoning, there is nothing about smoking cessation. There is no strategy on women and smoking, and it is a very, very serious concern.

Secondly, the group of community women were very concerned that there was nothing in the minister's strategy about pre and postnatal care and pre and postnatal well-being. This, again, is particularly important for teenage women who are pregnant, and I believe that Winnipeg is

the teenage pregnancy capital of Canada. I think that is correct. So we are very concerned about this gap in the Women's Health Strategy.

We are also disturbed that there is no recognition that economic circumstances and social conditions are major determinants in the health of women. There does not appear to be a holistic view of women's health concerns. There appears to be no focus in the minister's Women's Health Strategy of the special needs of mature women. Osteoporosis, for example, is a very serious condition affecting postmenopausal women, and I bring that issue to the minister's attention, especially since increasingly we have an aging population and osteoporosis will be increasingly an issue for women.

I might also add that the minister's strategy for women does not mention AIDS and women, and AIDS is increasingly a problem for women, and I think as we have said many times in this Chamber, when AIDS affects women, it will affect their children. So I bring those five points to the minister's attention.

Something else I would like to bring to the minister's attention is to remind him that the majority of health providers and health consumers are women. I would like to remind him that women experience health reform often as layoffs, as having to assume additional care-giving roles for family members.

This is, of course, one of my fears. It has always been one of my fears with the move toward privatization that when the user fees that are sure to accompany this sooner or later come in, we know who is going to be expected to care for the family members who cannot afford services, and that, of course, will be women. The kind of squeeze that women who provide health care endure is really classic. Caught between their children and their parents, the situation is stressful. It is isolating. It is fatiguing. Moreover, it is a situation that often affects women who are over 50. Often these women bear the brunt of the increased home health care just at a time when they are looking for some respite and just at a time when many of them are developing their own health problems. So I would like to bring that to the minister's attention, too.

I want to remind the minister that 98 percent of home care workers are women and that a very large number of these women are also immigrant people. I bring this to

the minister's attention to point out that this is a very, very vulnerable group and that these people have certainly suffered enough. I think it is time to treat these workers with a little bit of respect and dignity. It is time to work on the perception that many Manitoba women have, that the health care policies of this Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) are sexist.

I also want to bring to the minister's attention the fact that 80 percent of health care workers in Manitoba are women—I am not confining myself here to home care workers—of all health care workers are women and that these women are living with layoffs. They are living with shifts from full-time to part-time work. They are living in many cases without job security and, in many cases, they are living with very few benefits. It seems to me that these health care workers live and work under inordinate stress and the government has really done nothing to relieve this stress.

In closing, I want to say that there was a time in Manitoba when women could count on a responsive health care system, when the principles of the Canada Health Act indeed inhered, and I am very disappointed that that is no longer the case, that we are moving nearer and nearer to a two-tiered, American system and that the minister has lost the confidence of Manitoba women when it comes to their health care. Thank you.

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): I want to ask the minister if he realizes the impact these changes that he is proposing to privatize home care are going to have on women.

I had the opportunity to meet with many of the people who were in the home care field and very concerned about this government's plan to privatize, and those people said to me, both men and women, do you not think this is a women's issue and that this government is being very heartless in not recognizing the impacts that this decision to move toward privatization is going to have on women, many of whom are single mothers, many who are sole breadwinners of the family?

I would ask the minister if he would recognize the impact of his decision to move in this direction to privatize and reduce the salaries of the deliverers of home care, and will he recognize that is a wrong decision because it hurts the women of Manitoba?

Mr. McCrae: Mr. Chairman, it is with due regard for the women of Manitoba that we have approached the bargaining table in respect to the recent labour disruption in home care. A majority of the clients of our home care system are women, and we want to improve our home care services for them in the future. That is what we expect to do.

In carrying out the terms of any collective agreement arrived at, that will also be carried out according to the terms of that collective agreement. In other words, we expect to keep our commitments. The honourable member might speak to the honourable member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) to understand what I mean when I say we intend to keep our commitments.

Ms. Wowchuk: The minister indicated that many of the clients are women, and I am indicating that many of the workers are women, and this government's plan to privatize home care will result in a reduction of close to 40 percent in their pay when the private companies take over and have to make their share of profit of this issue.

Now, the minister says he will keep his commitment. I want to ask the minister if he is also going to be keeping the commitment that his department made in writing to all the workers in rural Manitoba indicating that there would not be any privatization of home care in rural Manitoba.

Is he making that commitment that there will not be privatization? Will he send that clear message to the workers and the clients in rural Manitoba, because that was the letter that he sent out prior to the workers having to take action against this government's plan to privatize the home care system.

Mr. McCrae: Mr. Chairman, the honourable member's comments are duly noted.

* (1530)

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Chairman, I just want to ask the minister the question again. He says comments are duly noted.

The question is, does the government intend to privatize home care in rural Manitoba, as a Treasury Board document says, that home care will be going under

the regional health boards, and once it is under the regional health boards, the minister had indicated there is no guarantee that it will stay with the government.

Can the minister make a commitment that there will not be privatization of home care services in rural Manitoba as was indicated in the letter that went to the deliverers of home care a few weeks ago?

Mr. McCrae: We intend to carry out the terms of whatever collective agreement is arrived at between the parties.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Chairperson, I have a couple of questions that I want to ask the minister.

My colleague from The Maples had a discussion with a constituent who had asked if I might be able to raise this with the minister, and this might be an appropriate time to do that. It is regarding the Pharmacare deductible and the levels of income that have to be incorporated in determining the deductible. This particular individual has workers' compensation, a pension. Would that be included in the calculation of his Pharmacare deductible. would the minister know offhand?

Mr. McCrae: Whatever is determined to be income under the rules that determine what income is, that income is used to decide the person's deductible. I do not know what different classes of dollars are considered income, but I can find that out.

Certainly, the whole idea behind the new Pharmacare is the ability to pay, that principle whereby those who can afford to pay for their own medicine will pay for their own medicine, and those who cannot afford to pay for their medicine will get assistance from the program.

Those who need a lot of medicine will get a lot of assistance from the program, such that nobody will pay more than 3 percent of their income for a pharmaceutical product. It is 3.4 percent in Saskatchewan, I believe, but it is 3 percent in Manitoba, and if you are really poor, it is 2 percent.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Chairperson, I am wondering if the minister could maybe take the specifics of the question, and as opposed to getting back to me, if he could get back to the member for The Maples (Mr.

Kowalski). I do not have the constituent's address, or I would give you the constituent's address, so that you could write directly sometime in the next week to 10 days.

Mr. McCrae: Yes, if the honourable member would have the honourable member for The Maples call my office or call my office himself, we will take the specifics from him and go from there. I do not have any staff here now.

So if he calls my office, we will take the specifics from him and look into the matter for the honourable member.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Chairperson, I did have a few questions also with respect to the home care situation. It seems that we have a tentative agreement in place.

I asked the question earlier today about the whole question of wage. It was fairly clear from a B.C. report that indicated that privatization for profit actually had seen a 50 percent turnover in the workforce compared to 37 percent in other sectors, particularly the nonprofit.

I wonder if the minister has given any consideration to the impact of the private for-profit and what impact that is going to have on the turnover of employees.

Mr. McCrae: Yes, I have given that consideration, Mr. Chairman, and I know that some people who argue about this whole concept of turnover ignore altogether some of the findings of our Home Care Appeal Panel. The appeal panel has dealt with many, many complaints dealing with people going on holidays or people calling in sick and not being available for work. It creates a lack of continuity. The honourable member cannot pretend that in any work—this is not a fault. This happens in workplaces and amongst people who work. They get sick and they call in sick. Their client may have a disruption.

We would like to do something about that. We are doing something about that. But do not ignore the fact that the turnover is only one part of the equation here. For those who are not turning over, if that is the right word, they have holidays, they have illnesses, they have emergencies in their families. They are human beings. They have issues that arise from time to time which result in a break in the continuity of service for the client. This is unavoidable. Do not ignore that. Do not pretend that is not already there, because it is.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Chairperson, I would not necessarily argue that there is not 100 percent continuity of care that is being provided today, but I would argue that this particular table that I tabled earlier today, from the B.C. studies, is fairly clear in terms of, when it comes to privatization for profit, there is a higher percentage of worker turnover. When you have a higher percentage of worker turnover, that will lead to less continuity compared to other areas, whether it is unionized, nonprofit, and that is what it was being compared to.

What I am looking for specifically from the minister is to acknowledge the fact that what is currently happening in B.C. could, and many would argue, including myself, will likely happen here, where we will see a higher percentage of worker turnover in private, for-profit companies that deliver home care services.

Would he not at the very least acknowledge that this in all likelihood would occur, and if he is not prepared to acknowledge that, then indicate what evidence the minister has to demonstrate that this will not happen in the province of Manitoba.

Mr. McCrae: I acknowledge the document tabled in the House today by the honourable member for Inkster. It is called: Table 56, Average Turnover Rate by Total Homemaker Expenditures, Ownership, and Union Status for British Columbia Homemaker Agencies, 1992/93 Fiscal Year. I acknowledge having received that.

The honourable member arrives at an interpretation that he wants to arrive at, but he ignores some of the facts. They are not just insignificant, little facts. He does not mention, for example, that user fees are a part of virtually every home care system in Canada but not in Manitoba. I guess Quebec shares that distinction. He does not mention, Mr. Chairman, that many provinces have means tests for people, and he does not mention that most provinces have contracting out with private and nonprofit and profit of one kind or another in their systems.

So I guess it is easy to pick and choose when you want to make a philosophical argument. I am at a disadvantage. I am not making a philosophical argument; I am making a pragmatic argument that says competition does bring about excellence. That is not something that is new, and it should surprise no one that

I would argue that. There are those who have an ideological aversion to profit, so, therefore, anything associated with profit is evil and bad.

Last week, the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) raised with us, one of the companies is putting out a promotion for its employees. They have, what do you call those, points that you get for every hour's work you do. You get a point, and your name goes in the hat. You draw, and you get a television set or a trip or something like that. This is somehow evil. An incentive to promote excellence is somehow evil and wrong, and they try to confuse the public by throwing in the whole concept of profit. This was not a television set for the owner of the company. It is a television set for the workers who are out there providing services to clients, and, in order to get them to provide the best service they can, companies offer these kinds of promotions.

* (1540)

Governments do it in various ways, too, through the pay stub, I suppose, but certainly in the private sector those are the kinds of promotions that go on. The member sent it across to me, and I thought, oh, oh, I guess this is something really horrible that he is talking about. Really, when you think it through, any kind of promotion that brings about excellence is not something we should be making fun of in the Legislature. People who work for other people and provide care, whether they work for the government or for a nonprofit agency or some other kind of agency—I had a reporter who seriously suggested that if you work for the government, you are going to do a better job. Well, I do not hear that argument very often, but I did. The question was asked by a reporter who works for a proprietary television company. I said, well, are you trying to tell me that you do not do as good a job as the reporter over at CBC? Funny, they did not play that part of the interview, Mr. Chairman. How come?

Human beings are human beings. Most human beings are perfectly honest people and hard working and have integrity. They accept a job; they give it their level best. When they cannot give it their level best anymore, they quit because there is no satisfaction in not doing your level best. The honourable member, is he really trying to say that Canadians who work for companies or for nongovernment agencies are somehow inferior to

everybody else? I would say that is a pretty big insult to most Canadians because most Canadians do not work for government. Think it over. You are talking about your fellow citizens here, and you are insulting the majority of them.

Mr. Lamoureux: Well, Mr. Chairperson, for hours and hours, we try to get a better understanding as to why the Minister of Health has made the decision that he has made. In essence, what he has decided is that—let us say we use the budget of \$70 million for home care services. By privatizing for profit and using that \$70 million—and he can argue it is 25 percent today, but ultimately the government's intentions are to fully privatize—what you are doing is, a business for profit is going in there with expectations of getting a return for their money.

That rate of return, Mr. Chairperson, is no doubt debatable or arguable. I would speculate that a private company is going to want to get somewhere between the neighbourhood of a 10 percent to 14 percent rate of return.

Well, what you are talking about is \$8 million to \$10 million, if you like, of a return for profit that is going to be required in order for private companies to be interested.

That takes a great deal of money out of home care services, and where are they going to get that dollar from? The services, in essence, will still be there. The quality will be called into question, but, in essence, that \$8 million to \$10 million is going to be taken out of the salaries of individual home care workers who are there today, and it is going to be given to those companies that have acquired the contracts.

So the argument of a few people are going to become rich as a result of this and the home care worker is going to be deeply penalized, some would argue up to 40 percent, including me, Mr. Chairperson, 40 percent in some cases, is it a sense of fairness not only to the home care worker but ultimately in the long run to the client?

That is why, if we were to speculate as to why it is that you have a higher turnover rate in B.C. in the private, for-profit home care services compared to nonprofit or unionized home care services, I would argue that the primary reason is likely, and I am speculating, and

obviously the Minister of Health would have to speculate because I do not believe that he has done his homework on this particular issue, is that there is a lower rate of pay.

When you marginalize labour costs, you are going to have more people entering into home care services and exiting because of the rate of pay. You cannot say, well, if you are committed to delivering this quality service, then the rate of pay should not have an impact.

Well, I will not buy into that argument and, if the minister wanted to, I could probably speak for a while as to why that argument would not win the day but, ultimately, and specifically for the Minister of Health, would he not agree that the private for-profit, what gives them the strategic advantage, if you like, is that they are prepared to pay considerably less, but as a consequence of paying that wage at considerably less, you are not going to have as much continuity of care.

Ultimately, following that argument through, I would argue then that in the long term, not only the long term but in the short term, the quality of care that is being delivered is going to deteriorate.

That is the reason why the privatization for profit just cannot work as the government is trying to portray it. We believe in the Liberal Party that it is absolutely essential, even with the tentative agreement now reached, that the Minister of Health agree to this 12-month moratorium. By agreeing to the 12-month moratorium, then and only then will the minister have the time to do what he should have done in the first place, and that is to consult with the clients, to consult with the home care workers, to consult with the individual Manitobans who have the experience, who want to give the government direction on home care services.

We ultimately believe that if you take a look at home care services and the amount of money that home care services has saved the government over the years through the deinstitutionalizing—they bridge the personal care home, the hospitals, along with the community as a whole, and the direction that the government is taking is, even from a philosophical point of view, if you believe in medicare, the five fundamental principles of medicare, ultimately, we would argue that home care services is a natural extension of that.

You can still have private companies participating in and around, complementing these core services that are being provided; there is no doubt. We are not saying that should not exist. It exists today even within our health care system. So the specific question—and I see the Minister of Health wants to converse with the New Democratic critic, but I was going to sit down and then let the Minister of Health respond, so I will extend the question. [interjection]

The member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Tweed) likes one of the suggestions that we have talked about. I say that with tongue in cheek. He does not really support it. But maybe what I will do is I will appeal to the member for Turtle Mountain while I wait for the Minister of Health to finish his conversation with the New Democratic critic. That is, if you believe ultimately that you have to privatize and if you want to privatize in a way in which you are going to maximize those dollars that are being allocated, I would recommend that special treatment has to be given to nonprofit organizations.

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

That can be given in different ways. It could be given directly, or it could be given indirectly, and let me cite an example of both. Indirectly it can be given through having or instituting a wage structure or a wage scale that says that when you set out the criteria for everyone to bid in, in order to be able to bid for this contract, you have to meet this specific wage scale structure.

* (1550)

By doing that, you are ensuring the quality, if you like. You are ensuring, to a certain degree, quality. How are you ensuring quality? You are ensuring quality because you are allowing those individuals, the many people who deliver—and this is what the government has lost out on. Home care services today are single parents, are individuals who—whether you are a single parent or not, these individuals—Mr. Chairperson, I am told I only have two minutes. I am not going to have enough time to expand on that particular point.

The other form of direct assistance or special treatment, Mr. Chairperson, is of allowing a certain percentage for nonprofit, or ultimately you could argue that it is just for

nonprofit agencies. Imagine if you allowed community clinics the opportunity to be able to deliver this service. Currently today our community health clinics provide all sorts of programs. Look at what is happening in the province of Quebec. But whether it is something that is happening in the province of Quebec, or it is some statistics in the province of B.C. that clearly demonstrate that the government is moving in the wrong direction in the province of Manitoba, all we have asked the minister to do is to do his homework, to know what it is that he is actually doing. That is ultimately the reason why we have called for the 12-month moratorium. The 12-month moratorium would allow him to do his homework.

So, Mr. Chairperson, I have put forward a number of questions. The Minister of Health appears to be ready to answer the question. Unfortunately, my time has run out. So I look forward to the response from the minister.

Mr. McCrae: Mr. Chairman, that question has been asked and answered a number of times.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Chairperson, because the minister was taken to the side, the New Democratic critic had some comments, I guess, that he wanted to express to him, so maybe he did not quite catch the question. I cannot recall it being asked on numerous times in the past.

The question specific to the minister is, here you have a significant percentage in the province of B.C. where there is a comparison between private for-profit and nonprofit and unionized. The private for-profit clearly indicates that there is a higher turnover rate of workers. That does have an impact on the quality of service being delivered.

The question specifically to the Minister of Health was, would he not agree with me and speculate, as I have done, that the primary reason for that in all likelihood is because of the wage structure that is in the province of B.C.? I cannot say, being conclusive for 100 percent, for the simple reason, is that I do not have the same resources that the minister has at his finger tips, but if I did, and if I had to make a decision of this nature, I would have done my homework, and I would have looked at what the privatization for profit is going to do for the workforce and the impact it was going to have. I would

have done my homework, as I talked about earlier, and that is maybe where it could get somewhat repetitive with the province of Quebec on the nonprofit side.

That is the question, and put in that frame, I do not believe that the minister has attempted to answer.

Mr. McCrae: Mr. Chairman, the honourable member simply wants to engage me in debate. We have debated for many, many hours, and we have answered these and many other questions many times. Repetition sometimes has some effect, but in this case, I think, maybe not.

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): I will defer for one more question.

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Radcliffe): The honourable Leader of the Opposition is deferring to the honourable member for Inkster for one more question.

Mr. Lamoureux: I appreciate the gesture.

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Radcliffe): The honourable Leader of the Opposition has indicated that the honourable member for Inkster is to finish his train of questioning.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Chairperson, I appreciate the Leader acknowledging what the process has been in the past, and that is to be able to continue on asking some questions.

Mr. Chairperson, this specific question which the minister has not answered is, does the minister believe that the wage structure of the private for-profit, as compared to nonprofit or unionized, has an impact on the worker turnover? Does he believe that that, in fact, will have an impact?

Mr. McCrae: Mr. Chairman, the honourable member has asked a lot of questions, and I have answered a lot of questions, each and every one. Many of them have been repeated many, many times. That seems to be the pattern today.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Chairperson, maybe the Minister of Health will humour me and answer this question, and then I will see if, in fact, he has answered it in the past. To the best of my knowledge, the Minister of Health has

not answered the question. So I would ask that the Minister of Health listen very carefully to the question.

The question, once again, is, there is evidence in B.C., and the minister has made reference to the table that I tabled earlier today that clearly shows, that clearly demonstrates that worker turnover in the province of B.C. is higher in the private for-profit, approximately 50 percent, compared to unionized and nonprofit, which is substantially less than 40 percent. Would he not agree that the primary reason for that, in all likelihood, is because of the wage structure that they have incorporated? How would he justify that worker turnover in the province of B.C.?

If he feels that we do not need to be concerned about that because that is in B.C., tell us why we should not be concerned that that will not be the same case in the province of Manitoba.

Mr. McCrae: The problem here, Mr. Chairman, is that the honourable member concludes that people who work for private companies will not provide good service to our clients. I do not agree.

He suggests that this continuity issue is the real issue that ought to govern the day when he refused to comment on what I said about continuity issues in the present system. So continuity and turnover are two different things. The honourable member chooses only to talk about turnover. He does not want to talk about the Home Care Appeal Panel and all of its findings and complaints relating to continuity with employees who have not left the system. They become ill, they go on vacation and all of those sorts of things.

So the trouble with taking a philosophical approach is, you also take a very selective approach to its statistics. When you take a pragmatic approach, you look at them all, this statistic, that statistic and the other and then, on balance, you make a decision. That is what is happening here.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Chairperson, this will be my final question I am going to be asking with respect to home care service. [interjection] Well, on the prodding of the government, maybe I will not quit.

I am inclined to disagree with what the Minister of Health is saying in the sense that I believe that there is a valid argument to be made that what has happened in B.C. and is demonstrated in the table that was presented is that there is and there should be concern from the Minister of Health's perspective on the turnover of home care service workers.

As a result of privatization for profit, we are going to see a higher percentage of turnover. We believe that to be the case. The Minister of Health appears not to believe that that is the case. Unfortunately, the Minister of Health cannot provide us with any information whatsoever to justify that that is not going to be the case.

So I would jump to the conclusion that I have jumped to in many other questions that I have posed to the Minister of Health. I once again would leave it with the Minister of Health, and that is, if the Minister of Health wants to do what is in the best interests of quality home care services today and tomorrow, what the Minister of Health needs to do is, he has to agree to a 12-month moratorium, allow for the proper consultation so that a better decision can be made, because there is absolutely no information that the Minister of Health has provided us to indicate whatsoever that the direction that his government is choosing to take home care services is in the betterment of the clients, not only for today, but well into the future. We find that that is, in fact, most unfortunate.

If the Minister of Health would do the right thing and agree to some sort of moratorium, that would allow him to do what he should have done in the past, and that is to consult the people who know what needs to occur in order to enhance the quality of service, not to take it down. Ultimately, what the minister is proposing will do that.

Mr. McCrae: I thank the honourable member for his comments.

* (1600)

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): I want to speak on the Minister's Salary to, first of all, indicate my own disappointment of some of the things we have seen in recent months and particularly coming from this Minister of Health. What has been happening is unfortunately not

an isolated incident, and there was a bit of a precursor to this. I want to put this on the record because I had attempted to work co-operatively with the Minister of Health on a number of issues in my constituency, and he even attended a meeting in my constituency just shortly after he was appointed minister. In keeping with that same spirit, during the lockout, the hospital support staff in Thompson, I contacted the Minister of Health, along with the mayor of the city of Thompson and the city manager. The minister will remember that discussion.

What was interesting is that much of what the minister said at the time was the same kind of rhetoric he later used in regard to the home care situation and home care workers. What he said was, how can anyone call themselves a caregiver if they withdraw their services? This was very interesting because, in that situation, what had happened was that the employees, the 85 support staff at the Thompson General Hospital, had been locked out by their employer, but that did not stop the Minister of Health from spending most of the time that we had hoped to discuss ways of solving the problem, for the minister continuing with this kind of rhetoric.

Mr. Chairperson, I think it is unfortunate again that when we got into the home care situation, we saw much of the same kind of rhetoric. The minister made comments in the press of a very similar nature. The minister then, in an attempt to relive a situation in 1987, when he was ejected from the House for comments, made comments about bombs and slashing tires and saying that this is what the NDP stood for. Those kind of comments have no place in this House, but, you know, beyond that, I think a very serious question has to be raised of how a Minister of Health, who has to deal with the public, users of health care and health care employees, can deal in a good faith manner while at the same time making those kind of attacks.

I find it very ironic that today, this is the first time in about a month that we have not heard the Minister of Health, in response to a question, get up and talk about union bosses or get up and attack home care workers, as he has done on a continuous basis for the last month. Is it not amazing? There is a tentative agreement now; well, all that rhetoric has been pulled back.

Mr. Chairperson, I ask the question because I really think this is important for the people of Manitoba to look

at, whether we had to have the kind of situation we have had the last month. Did we really have to have the situation where home care workers felt they had no other choice, remembering that through their own Treasury Board document, the government had signalled very clearly its intent to privatize? They felt they had no other choice than to fight back.

Mr. Chairperson, there has been a lot of impact on people throughout this province, and I really wonder if a lot of this has not been driven by some very personal agendas of members opposite. I mention the Minister of Health because his comments on the record were absolutely unacceptable. We have another dispute with the Minister of Education (Mrs. McIntosh), which seems to have upped the ante in quotes, who yesterday made reference again, and, by the way, I have had similar comments made to me privately by the Minister of Education.

By the way, to the member, it is very relevant because it shows what happens when you get your own political blinkers in the way of dealing with the good of the province. We have a Minister of Education, who is making dramatic changes to collective bargaining for teachers, we have a Minister of Health who has to sit down and try and work with the health care workers, who are making personal and direct attacks, not only against those workers but us, as New Democrats, for doing what?

We were accused of all these various things, including by the minister yesterday, for doing what? We were accused of all these various things, including by the minister yesterday, for doing what? For saying that we supported the fight and we are part and parcel of the fight against privatization.

I said to the minister yesterday and I said this to the members of the caucus opposite, we had a lot of very courageous people. You can take whatever side you want and you can throw whatever rhetoric out that you want, but when you walked by a lot of the people who were out in front of this building on a regular basis fighting for what they thought was right, something you disagreed with, I am talking about the home care workers, I really wonder how you could have looked them in the face. How could you look them in the face and then go to the press scrum outside of this Chamber or in this Chamber and then make the comments about the union bosses and

the comments about not being caregivers because they were walking the picket line?

Mr. Chairperson, this minister has to understand that there were one million Manitobans who have diverse views, come from diverse backgrounds. No one in this province can exclude the democratic right of workers to unionize if they so wish and to take a stand, as the home care workers did. That is democracy. This is what makes Manitoba a great province. We have that ability to do that.

(Mr. Chairperson in the Chair)

What I found interesting was the experience of some of the home care workers I talked to, because many of the home care workers I talked to come from countries where democracy is not something you take for granted. I know. We have seen the waves of people throughout the world who set up people's movements, who fought against dictatorships, who fought for democracy, and I really wonder what kind of message we sent to many people. I had this reflected to me from people asking, is this the way our democratic system works? When the people, and it was the people, not just the home care workers, not just the clients, the people of Manitoba who were so clear on an issue, when you have such disrespect shown for the political process by a government that breaks its campaign promises and then launches into personal attacks against union leaders, not bosses, union leaders democratically elected and on the workers themselves, I say, Mr. Chairperson, let us learn from this experience.

Democracy is not about having an election once every four years. Democracy is about the living, breathing exchange of ideas. It is about differences of ideas and, in some cases, very strong disagreements.

What I say to the Minister of Health is that he should reflect upon this because, even though he may not have had any sympathy with the home care clients and the home care workers who took a stand, he should at least, I believe, have shown more respect to the home care workers and the clients than he did on numerous occasions.

I understand that the minister has had a very long record in this House, a vendetta against many organized

workers in this province. It goes back to the mid-1980s. I am not going to relive those debates, but we have to put that aside at times. We have to put aside some of our differences, even some of our own personal agenda and work for the betterment of the province.

That is why I want to say we moved a motion to reduce the minister's salary, and in a few moments when we are dealing with the Minister's Salary, we will regrettably have to vote against the minister's salary. I regret this because I remember the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) a few years ago being a far more co-operative individual. It just seems sad that we have gone through this whole wrenching experience that we have gone through this past month which hopefully soon will at least partially be resolved with a tentative settlement.

I believe that if this Minister of Health and this government had shown more respect for the courage and dignity of the clients, yes, and the home care workers for what was a very difficult decision that they took, first of all, we would not have had the strike situation develop in the first place. Second of all, it probably could have been resolved a lot sooner. I believe, thirdly, Mr. Chairperson, perhaps most importantly, we could have had a real discussion on the real issue that they took a stand on, which was the privatization of home care.

We believe that discussion will continue. Quite frankly, it will continue into the next election if the government does not change its course. One of the first things, I am sure, that the next NDP government will be doing will be getting rid of the privatized vision of health care that is being put forward by this minister.

* (1610)

We are one million people. We are a small province. We have a tradition of tolerance, and we have a tradition of agreeing to disagree and respecting our democratic right to do so. I say to the Minister of Health, one of the reasons we will be voting against the minister's salary is because he has in the last period of time not shown that kind of respect to many Manitobans who disagreed with him. We are going to say, and the only way we can today, Mr. Chairperson, by voting against his salary that that simply is not good enough.

Mr. McCrae: Mr. Chairman, in his usual eloquent fashion, the honourable member for Thompson has today placed a big fat juicy worm on the hook for me, and today in light of all of the very positive developments, I am simply not of a disposition to bite.

Mr. Doer: Mr. Chairman, I just want to make a few comments, potentially closing off, of course, the line dealing with the Minister's Salary. We have already placed a motion before the House, to dramatize our concern for home care workers, for the minister to take a 40 percent wage cut. It is the kind of symbol that we think is important, and the kind of message we think is important to the minister, not for personal reasons, but for professional ones. The minister's original Treasury Board plan to contract out all across the city of Winnipeg, a plan now that seems to have no author, no owner, no parent, is drifting out there with the Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson), the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae), the Premier (Mr. Filmon), Jules Benson.

Of course, it was a broken promise. It was not what the government campaigned on. It is not the philosophy that you articulated in the campaign. It was not the ideology that you proposed to the people of Manitoba. You did not propose profit and competition in home care in the election campaign. Therefore, you had no mandate to proceed with this plan as articulated in the Treasury Board document.

This plan is both a disaster for our health care system and an economic message of the priorities of members opposite, a message that says to Manitobans that it is the philosophy of the Conservative Party, the Progressive Conservative Party, dare I use that term, and I should not. It is the philosophy of the so-called Filmon team, and I do not know whether everybody is on the team or not. It is the philosophy of the so-called team that the economic vision of the members opposite is sort of the ultimate extreme example of trickle-down economics where four individuals, some of whom are close to the Minister of Health, would get potentially millions of dollars through the profit in home care while 3,000 people, at least, in Winnipeg would receive a 30 percent to 40 percent wage cut.

What does that mean for consumer confidence? What does that mean for an economic vision? What is the kind of philosophy behind this in an economic sense as well as

a health care sense? It is wrong. It is an agenda of greed, an agenda of greed that we totally reject. It is an agenda of profit in health care which we totally reject, and we have been proud to work with the workers and the clients in home care and the public in home care because the public has totally rejected your vision of a profit home care system. They have totally rejected, across all political lines, your vision.

Of course, the government can pretend one thing and pretend another, but if you drive through River Heights, as I am sure the member for River Heights (Mr. Radcliffe) does every night, if you drive through Tuxedo—I have even seen home care signs on Park Boulevard, and I know there are no voters for the NDP on Park Boulevard that I know of. Thousands of signs in Brandon West—[interjection] Well, you cannot be too sure now because some people are saying to us now that we were Tories and we voted Tory in the last election, but these people and this Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) and this Premier (Mr. Filmon) remind us of Grant Devine, a scorched-earth philosophy and scorched-earth policy to burn down all the things that mean something to our communities, a scorched-earth Brian Mulroney policy that has no place in that kind of community.

I drove down Kingston Crescent on Monday night, and you know what? I drove from the Osborne Bridge, where it curls around the Canoe Club, to St. Mary's. There were all kinds of home care signs. I was on Kildonan Drive last evening, and, you know, it was a relatively good poll for the present member for Rossmere (Mr. Toews), the soon-to-be former member for Rossmere. Home care signs all down the streets, and they were Conservative homes, Liberal homes, undecided homes, nonpolitical homes, a New Democratic home or two, all with home care signs on those areas. You could go on and on and on.

The public of this province has totally rejected the vision of the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) and the Premier (Mr. Filmon). Now, this is not the first time this minister has blown a huge major public issue. Remember the promises on the emergency wards. Remember in the election campaign, we are not going to close the emergency wards of our hospitals. I use those hospital wards, he says. He lowers his voice and says, I use those wards myself. We are not going to close them after the election.

Of course, in September of 1995, another broken promise from the Minister of Health. But did they have any plan in place? Did they have any strategy in place? Did they have any people in place? Did they have any studies in place? Just like in home care, they did not have the public with them; they did not have the studies with them; they did not have any people that were working with them.

The emergency wards is the same situation. No plan. No strategy. No idea of breaking your promise. Then the minister limply or regrettably comes back to this Chamber with really weak comments in November and says, oh, we are going to reopen those emergency wards in our community hospitals because holidays are coming. Do you not know that holidays are coming? We have a Minister of Health that is responsible for the stewardship of a \$1.8 billion department, and he does not know that Christmas is coming in November. This does not give us any cause for any confidence, regrettably, for the health care department.

Pharmacare, home care, emergency care, rural health care—the member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk) two or three days in a row had to point out that you do not build incentives into a community-based health care system in rural and northern Manitoba by reaching in and grabbing the surpluses that they had produced over long years of volunteer work.

That just deals with a few of the items. We started this week off again with the Health Sciences Centre, another broken promise from the Minister of Health. What are they saying in Winkler and Morden about the hospital that was scheduled to go into Winkler and Morden? The two communities came together to build a hospital in a growing area of south central Manitoba, another broken promise from the Minister of Health.

* (1620)

The Health Sciences situation is now, according to the devastating report, critical. Emergency wards, operating rooms for both children and adults are in critical working condition. We believe that this Minister of Health is no longer able to fulfill the duties on behalf of the people of Manitoba. We believe this Minister of Health is not fit for the task.

The people of Manitoba deserve better, and, regrettably, we will have to vote against the minister's salary because we must oppose the broken promises and lack of vision in a profit government for our health care and for our future. Our children, our grandchildren, our grandparents, our communities, deserve better, and we will vote for a better future, for a better health care system and against this scorched-earth policy of the present Minister of Health. Thank you very much.

Mr. Chairperson: Is the committee ready for the question?

The question before the committee is Resolution 21.1 Administration and Finance (a) Minister's Salary. Shall the item pass?

Some Honourable Members: No.

Voice Vote

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

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

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

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Mr. Chairperson: It is accordingly passed.

Formal Vote

Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader): I request a recorded vote.

Mr. Chairperson: A formal vote has been requested by two members. Call in the members.

Both sections in Chamber for formal vote.

Mr. Chairperson: In the section of the Committee of Supply meeting in the Chamber considering the Estimates of the Department of Health, a formal vote was requested on the item 1.(a) Minister's Salary.

A COUNT-OUT VOTE was taken, the result being as follows: Yeas 27, Nays 24.

Mr. Chairperson: The motion is accordingly carried.

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Mr. Chairperson, I was paired with the honourable Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Driedger). Had I not been paired, I would have voted against the motion.

Mr. George Hickes (Point Douglas): I was paired with the Premier. Had I not been paired, I would have voted against the motion.

Mr. Chairperson: This section of the Committee of Supply will now consider the consideration of the departmental Estimates. We are on the resolution.

Resolution 21.1: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$6,009,300 for Health, Administration and Finance, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1997.

This completes the Estimates of the Department of Health. The next set of Estimates that will be considered by this section of the Committee of Supply are the Estimates of the Department of Labour.

The hour is now 5:10. What is the will of the committee?

* (1710)

Hon. Jim Ernst (Government House Leader): Mr. Chairperson, if we could adjourn the Committee of Supply and seek leave to call back the Speaker, I could then change the Estimates schedule for tomorrow, which is in the best interest of everyone, I believe.

Mr. Chairperson: Is there leave to recess the committee for five minutes to call back the Speaker to deal with the order of the Estimates for tomorrow? Leave? Leave has been granted. Call in the Speaker.

* (1720)

IN SESSION

House Business

Hon. Jim Ernst (Government House Leader): Mr. Deputy Speaker, earlier today, I announced a schedule for

the third committee for Estimates that will sit starting at 9 a.m. tomorrow.

At that time, I had announced Urban Affairs, Culture, Government Services and Status of Women, in that order, for tomorrow. I would like to change that order now and delete Urban Affairs and replace it with Energy and Mines. Culture would remain. Government Services would start in the afternoon, and Status of Women is removed.

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Marcel Laurendeau): Is that agreed to? [agreed]

Mr. Ernst: I move, seconded by the Minister of Education (Mrs. McIntosh), that Mr. Deputy Speaker do now leave the Chair and the House resolve itself into a Committee of Supply.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. There cannot be a motion moved twice in the same day. All we need is leave to go back into committee.

Is there leave for the House to go back into committee? [agreed]

Mr. Ernst: I believe that there may be a will of the House to call it 5:30.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is it the will of the House to call it 5:30?

Some Honourable Members: No.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: No, there is no leave. We will be starting with the consideration of the Department of Labour.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

LABOUR

Mr. Chairperson (Marcel Laurendeau): Is it the will of the House to call it 5:30, by the committee, I mean?

The hour being 5:30 p.m., this committee is now recessed until 9 a.m. tomorrow (Thursday).

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, May 15, 1996

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