



Third Session - Thirty-Sixth Legislature

of the

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

**Official Report
(Hansard)**

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The Honourable Louise M. Dacquay
Speaker*



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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Sixth Legislature

Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
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	Steinbach	P.C.
DYCK, Peter	Pembina	P.C.
ENNS, Harry, Hon.	Lakeside	P.C.
ERNST, Jim	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.
JENNISSON, Gerard	Flin Flon	N.D.P.
KOWALSKI, Gary	The Maples	Ind.
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, Hon.	Riel	P.C.
PENNER, Jack	Emerson	P.C.
PITURA, Frank, Hon.	Morris	P.C.
PRAZNIK, Darren, Hon.	Lac du Bonnet	P.C.
RADCLIFFE, Mike, Hon.	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.
Vacant	Portage la Prairie	

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, June 9, 1997

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

* (1335)

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Obstetrics Closure—Grace General Hospital

Ms. MaryAnn Mihychuk (St. James): Madam Speaker, I beg to present the petition of T. B. Bailey, E. L. Barton, Barbara Martin and others requesting the Minister of Health (Mr. Praznik) to consider stopping the closure of the obstetrics program at Winnipeg's Grace Hospital.

Mobile Screening Unit for Mammograms

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): I beg to present the petition of Roxann Doan, Elsie Schwanke and Velinka Chamberlain and others praying that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba request the Minister of Health (Mr. Praznik) to consider immediately establishing a mobile screening unit for mammograms to help women across the province detect breast cancer at the earliest possible opportunity.

Ms. Diane McGifford (Osborne): Madam Speaker, I beg to present the petition of William Wittmeier, Edith Doan, Arthur Doan and others praying that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba request the Minister of Health to consider immediately establishing a mobile screening unit for mammograms to help women across the province detect breast cancer at the earliest possible opportunity.

Obstetrics Closure—Grace General Hospital

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): I beg to present the petition of D. Lamont-Dreger, Cathleen Shawa, Jacqueline Zalnasky and others requesting that the Minister of Health (Mr. Praznik) consider stopping the closure of the obstetrics program at Winnipeg's Grace Hospital.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Obstetrics Closure—Grace General Hospital

Madam Speaker: I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member for St. James (Ms. Mihychuk), and 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: 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 the obstetrics program has always been an important part of the Grace Hospital's mandate; and

THAT both people in the community and a number of government studies have recommended against the further closure of community hospitals' obstetrics programs; and

THAT as a result of federal and provincial cuts in the health budget, hospitals are being forced to eliminate programs in order to balance their own budgets; and

THAT the closure of the Grace Hospital obstetrics ward will mean laying off 54 health care professionals, many of whom have years of experience and dedicated service in obstetrics; and

THAT moving to a model where more and more births are centred in the tertiary care hospitals will be more costly and decreases the choices for women about where they can give birth.

WHEREFORE YOUR PETITIONERS HUMBLY PRAY THAT the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba request that the Minister of Health (Mr. Praznik) consider stopping the closure of the obstetrics program at Winnipeg's Grace Hospital.

Mobile Screening Unit for Mammograms

Madam Speaker: I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak), and 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: Yes. The Clerk will read.

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

WHEREAS medical authorities have stated that breast cancer in Manitoba has reached almost epidemic proportions; and

WHEREAS yearly mammograms are recommended for women over 50, and perhaps younger if a woman feels she is at risk; and

WHEREAS while improved surgical procedures and better post-operative care do improve a woman's chances if she is diagnosed, early detection plays a vital role; and

WHEREAS Manitoba currently has only three centres where mammograms can be performed, those being Winnipeg, Brandon and Thompson; and

WHEREAS a trip to and from these centres for a mammogram can cost a woman upwards of \$500 which is a prohibitive cost for some women; and

WHEREAS a number of other provinces have dealt with this problem by establishing mobile screening units; and

WHEREAS the provincial government has promised to take action on this serious issue.

WHEREFORE YOUR PETITIONERS HUMBLY PRAY that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba may be pleased to request the Minister of Health (Mr. Praznik) to consider immediately establishing a mobile screening unit for mammograms to help women across

the province detect breast cancer at the earliest possible opportunity.

* (1340)

Madam Speaker: I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member for Osborne (Ms. McGifford), and 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: Yes. The Clerk will read.

Mr. Clerk: The petition of the undersigned citizens of the Province of Manitoba, humbly sheweth that:

WHEREAS medical authorities have stated that breast cancer in Manitoba has reached almost epidemic proportions; and

WHEREAS yearly mammograms are recommended for women over 50, and perhaps younger if a woman feels she is at risk; and

WHEREAS while improved surgical procedures and better post-operative care do improve a woman's chances if she is diagnosed, early detection plays a vital role; and

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WHEREFORE YOUR PETITIONERS HUMBLY PRAY that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba may be pleased to request the Minister of Health (Mr. Praznik) to consider immediately establishing a mobile

screening unit for mammograms to help women across the province detect breast cancer at the earliest possible opportunity.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Committee of Supply

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

I move, seconded by the honourable member for St. Vital (Mrs. Render), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS AND TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Environment): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to table the State of the Environment Report for Manitoba for 1997.

Meeting of Canada-Taiwan Business Association

Hon. James Downey (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism): Madam Speaker, I have a statement for the House of which I have copies for members opposite.

Madam Speaker, I am pleased to inform the House of a significant meeting held in Winnipeg last week of the Canada-Taiwan Business Association. The association alternates its annual joint meetings between Canada and Taiwan, and my wife and I had the pleasure of attending the last meeting in Canada two years ago which was held in New Brunswick. At that time, I made a proposal that the association hold its next Canadian meeting in Winnipeg.

My colleague the Honourable Harry Enns, Minister of Agriculture, led a trade mission to Taiwan in September 1996, and his efforts in promoting Manitoba assisted in making this meeting a reality. The result

was this year's meeting here in Winnipeg which attracted the largest delegation ever from Taiwan with 130 official delegates. This conference is presented every year to promote trade and other economic relations between the two countries.

* (1345)

The keynote speaker of this year's event was a leading Taiwanese economic adviser, Dr. P. K. Chiang, chairman of the Council for Economic Planning and Development. This year's event focused on sectors of special interest to Manitoba, including natural resources, agri-food, transportation and building products and services. During the meeting, 25 members of the Taiwan Venture Capital Association met with five Manitoba companies and were apparently very enthusiastic about the prospects for developing some partnerships. The conference also offered a rare opportunity for some 20 Manitoba companies to showcase their goods, services and capabilities to representatives of one of the world's most important emerging markets. As well, senior delegates from Taiwan toured several prominent local companies such as New Flyer Industries, Standard Aero, Bristol Aerospace and Loewen Windows.

So with all of these activities and positive expectations, I am confident this conference laid solid foundations for significant trade and commercial relationships. Indeed, in response to an invitation from the Taiwanese government and industrial officials, my department has begun planning a government-led private-sector trade mission to Taiwan within a year. Overall, Madam Speaker, this conference has been a notable achievement for Winnipeg and Manitoba and certainly holds great promise for enhancing our economic and other ties with Taiwan and other major markets in Asia.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the chairman of Taiwan's Council for Economic Planning and Development, Dr. P. K. Chiang, for the generous donation of \$20,000 to the flood relief fund in Manitoba. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Tim Sale (Crescentwood): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the minister for the statement in regard to the meeting of the Canada-Taiwan Business

Association here last week and to commend members of that organization for their efforts to promote fair and free trade between our two countries. Particularly, I think it is appropriate that all members of the House join together in thanking the Council for Economic Planning and Development for its generous donation, one of thousands and thousands of donations from around the world to the flood relief efforts here in Manitoba.

So I am pleased to join with the minister in thanking that association and to wish the association well in its future endeavours to promote more interaction and exchange between our two economies and peoples.

Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Agriculture): Madam Speaker, I would like to table with the Legislature several copies of the final task force report entitled Working for Value.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 57—The Highway Traffic Amendment, Summary Convictions Amendment and Consequential Amendments Act

Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister of Highways and Transportation): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Urban Affairs (Mr. Reimer), that leave be given to introduce Bill 57, The Highway Traffic Amendment, Summary Convictions Amendment and Consequential Amendments Act (Loi modifiant le Code de la route et la Loi sur les poursuites sommaires et modifications corrélatives), and that the same be now received and read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 58—The Law Reform Commission Amendment Act

Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson), that leave be given to introduce Bill 58, The Law Reform Commission Amendment Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur la Commission de réforme du droit), 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. I would table the message of the Lieutenant Governor.

Motion agreed to.

* (1350)

Bill 59—The Conservation Agreements Act

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Natural Resources): I move, seconded by the Minister of Environment (Mr. McCrae), that leave be given to introduce Bill 59, The Conservation Agreements Act (Loi sur les accords de conservation).

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

Madam Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable Minister of Natural Resources, seconded by the honourable Minister of Environment, that leave be given to introduce Bill 59, The Conservation Agreements Act; Loi sur les accords de conservation, 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. Agreed? Agreed and so ordered.

Bill 60—The Elderly and Infirm Persons' Housing Amendment Act

Hon. Jack Reimer (Minister of Housing): I move, seconded by the Minister of Government Services (Mr. Pitura), that leave be given to introduce Bill 60, The Elderly and Infirm Persons' Housing Amendment Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur le logement des infirmes et des personnes âgées), 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. I would also like to table a message.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 203—The Privacy Protection Act

Ms. Diane McGifford (Osborne): I move, seconded by the member for St. James (Ms. Mihychuk), that leave be given to introduce Bill 203, The Privacy Protection Act; Loi sur la protection des renseignements personnels, and that the same be now received and read a first time.

Motion presented.

Ms. McGifford: I am pleased today to introduce The Privacy Protection Act, which is designed to protect the records of Manitobans so essential, especially in light of the information age, the complexities of rapidly changing technology, and in the introduction of SmartHealth into the province of Manitoba without adequate legislation and adequate administrative procedures in place for the protection of individual privacy.

The bill reflects the belief that the key to contemporary privacy legislation is a privacy commissioner and recognizes that neither civil actions nor criminal penalties provide adequate or practical privacy protection.

Finally, the bill makes provisions for a privacy commissioner, who is an independent officer of the Legislature, appointed by an all-party committee of the Legislature for a fixed term and gives the privacy commissioner the power to issue binding orders. Most Canadian jurisdictions agree that a privacy commissioner is essential, and this concept is at the centre of the proposed legislation and so addresses the inadequacies of the government's proposed legislation.

Introduction of Guests

Madam Speaker: Prior to Oral Questions, I would like to draw the attention of all honourable members to the Speaker's Gallery where we have with us today senior elected and government officials from Ukraine participating in the Canada-Ukraine Legislative Cooperation Project: Mr. Chechetov, Mr. Nehoda, Mr. Reznik and Mr. Sholomytski.

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

Also, seated in the public gallery this afternoon, we have 23 students from Sun Valley School under the direction of Mademoiselle Yvette Couture. This school is located in the constituency of the Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Mitchelson).

Additionally, we have twenty-seven Grades 5 and 6 students from the Centennial School under the direction of Ms. Dianne Moroz. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak).

Also, fourteen Grade 6 students from the Duke of Marlborough School under the direction of Mrs. Pam Doyle. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Rupertsland (Mr. Robinson).

Also, 20 students from Red River Community College Training Centre in English as a Second Language under the direction of Ms. Lorna Hiebert. This group is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Broadway (Mr. Santos).

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

* (1355)

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Portage and Main Barrier Removal

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Madam Speaker, my question is to the First Minister. Regrettably, between 1991 and 1995, it is reported that property values for downtown office space have declined by some 20 percent. Over the weekend, a consultant's report was endorsed by business and community representatives to breathe new life into downtown Winnipeg and calls on a number of measures to do that, one of which is to tear down the barriers that were erected at Portage and Main. I would like to ask the First Minister whether he endorses this plan, and what support will he give to the City of Winnipeg to tear down those barriers and make our community more user friendly.

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Madam Speaker, last time I checked, the responsibility for that kind of action was solely and squarely within the jurisdiction and authority of the City of Winnipeg. The City of Winnipeg, I know, is vitally interested in ensuring that its downtown area is revitalized, strengthened, and I would say that I have great confidence in their ability to do that job. Unlike the Leader of the Opposition, I do not try and always interfere in the workings of other levels of government for my own political gain. I believe, if the member opposite has nothing of criticism or of compliment to be saying with respect to the actions of provincial government, then maybe he should run for the mayoralty next time around.

Mr. Doer: Thank goodness we took an opposite view, and we were involved with the city and the federal government to develop The Forks and The Forks site for all Manitobans. Perhaps the Premier should examine the fact that he does have a Minister of Urban Affairs, and presumably he has sworn that individual in to do something on behalf of the city of Winnipeg.

I would like to ask the Premier whether his thin-skinned answer here this afternoon is due more in fact to his voting record at the City of Winnipeg, where he voted to erect the barricades in 1976 on two occasions, and then, when he was called to withdraw those barricades and let the people participate in this famous, historic corner, he voted with his friends, the back-room coalition, the gang at City Hall, the ICEC, and he voted against the people. Would it be that his thin-skinned response today in terms of lack of leadership is more to do with his past biases rather than the future of what is best for Winnipeggers and downtown Winnipeg?

Mr. Filmon: No, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Doer: That is the first straight answer I have gotten from the Premier for a long time. I thank him for that response.

Downtown Winnipeg Revitalization

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Madam Speaker, the report in the business community joined with Tourism Winnipeg, Winnipeg 2000, the Chamber

of Commerce and a number of other groups a couple of weeks ago which recommended that we take a downtown view for future development. This group again says that we should have a downtown-first location policy for facilities in the city of Winnipeg.

I would like to ask the Premier whether he will overrule his Minister responsible for Lotteries and have the investment, the \$50-million capital investment that is being planned by this government to go out of downtown and into the suburbs. Will he practise the policy of downtown first and start doing something about our downtown situation here in Winnipeg?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Madam Speaker, you know, the difficulty that we have with the suggestions that continuously are brought forward by the Leader of the Opposition is that he lives life in eight-second clips. He never looks at anything on a long-term basis; he never looks at anything in terms of the whole broad basis. To suggest—[interjection]

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

The honourable First Minister, to complete his response.

Mr. Filmon: To suggest that the solutions to revitalizing downtown Winnipeg are a quick hit like having a casino there belies totally the complexity of the problem and the challenges that are faced. That is why, when you look at life in eight-second clips as the Leader of the Opposition does, you ignore the fact that there needs to be a great deal more work and effort being put in co-operatively by partnerships of all sorts. The fact of the matter is that the consultant that was brought in by The Forks and North Portage to look at and evaluate the circumstances of downtown Winnipeg said that a casino is not going to solve any problems in downtown Winnipeg, that locating the casino in downtown Winnipeg will not mean one dollar more business for the enterprises that are involved in downtown Winnipeg and will not do anything to revitalize it.

But, you see, Madam Speaker, this is what the Leader of the Opposition looks for, is all those kinds of simplistic answers that are readily attainable and immediately applicable and wrong nine times out of 10.

We have to look at a whole variety of issues, and this government will continue to support downtown Winnipeg, will continue to look at long-term issues that can be implemented and that can in fact enhance the downtown area of Winnipeg. That is what we will keep working on, not the quick fixes that the Leader of the Opposition always seems to find.

* (1400)

Queen versus Bauder Court of Appeal Decision

Mr. Gord Mackintosh (St. Johns): To the Minister of Justice. The minister has denied that his department is a culprit in the Bauder sex assault case, but in the transcript at the Provincial Court hearing which we have now obtained, when defence counsel told the judge, and I quote: There became consensual relations, sexual relations, and there is no suggestion at any point in time that these relations were anything but consensual, or this was an entirely consensual matter, or Mr. Bauder did not use his position in any way to force the complainant.

I asked: Did the Crown say anything? No, no objection whatsoever. No argument on relevance, no alternative version even, just as in the Court of Appeal, we understand.

My question for the minister: Is it now the government's policy that the perceived conduct of child victims should now be relevant in sexual crimes against them? Because that is what it appears the government's position is in the courts.

Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Madam Speaker, the member for St. Johns is incorrect. He is putting incorrect information and certainly misleading information on the record. If one reviews the entire transcript at the provincial judges level, it is clear what the Crown's position is. It was then the defence to indicate what their position was, and there was a very clear position taken by the provincial judge in respect of the issue of consent. There was no opportunity, nor was there any requirement for the Crown to correct anything. The Crown's position in respect of this individual, this victim, was made perfectly clear on the record, and when you go to the Court of Appeal, the factum—again,

the member for St. Johns is misleading this House—specifically indicates that the Crown, in response to the position of the defence—and it was the defence in each of these cases. The defence indicated that it was consensual; the Crown's specific written position was that this individual was the victim of a person who was taking advantage of a position of trust.

Mr. Mackintosh: Would the minister, with that nonsense that he has just put on the record—because the transcript speaks for itself. There was absolute acquiescence by the Crown in this miscarriage of justice.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member for St. Johns, to pose his supplementary question now.

Mr. Mackintosh: Will this minister not face up to the fact that there are serious, serious shortcomings in his department, especially when he gets a letter from the mother of the victim here who says, and I quote: We have some serious and grave concerns about the way in which the prosecution was handled. And this was the primary factor in the eventual outcome of the case.

Will he not face up to reality?

Mr. Toews: Madam Speaker, I have had occasion to speak to many prosecutors over the last number of days, and one of the concerns that they raise is why is this member continually slamming them for their professional work. I stand beside what my prosecutors did in that case. I want to indicate that our criminal justice system indicates that these people have independence in terms of the decisions that they make, and it would be highly improper for me as the minister to interfere in the decisions that they make. Nothing this member has indicated demonstrated that these people have done anything less than their professional duties, and this member, who probably does not even know how to prosecute a parking ticket, should take a lesson from those prosecutors who for years have been out there defending the public of Manitoba.

Point of Order

Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader): Point of order, Madam Speaker. Beauchesne is very clear that answers to questions should relate to the matter

raised. The member for St. Johns raised a question based on a letter received from the mother of the victim. I would appreciate if you would have the minister respond to these concerns without the kind of low-level personal insults that we saw in that answer. The mother, at least, deserves a straightforward answer.

Madam Speaker: The honourable Minister of Justice, on the same point of order.

Mr. Toews: On the same point of order, Madam Speaker, I fully appreciate that members have the right to raise legitimate questions. However, in the past there have been some very specious questions which have had the effect of impeaching the integrity of people in my department, professional people who work hard for the province of Manitoba, and it is that member who should apologize to the prosecutors in the Attorney General's department.

Madam Speaker: On the point of order raised by the honourable member for Thompson, there is no point of order. It is clearly a dispute over the facts.

Prosecutions Division Resources

Mr. Gord Mackintosh (St. Johns): Would the minister not do as we are seeking, and that is to provide support for those hard-working and excellent Crown attorneys? Give them the resources they need to do the job, particularly given the words of the mother of the victim who writes to me last week and says this: I am certain that if they—and that is the Prosecutions branch—would have done their job that the Court of Appeal would not have reached the verdict that they did, and there may be no reason to appeal it to the Supreme Court.

Would he not support his own Crown attorneys?

Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Madam Speaker, day in and day out I support the prosecutors against the frivolous kinds of attacks by the member for St. Johns.

Pharmacare Crohn's Disease Treatment

Ms. Marianne Cerilli (Radisson): Madam Speaker, on May 14 I wrote to the Minister of Health on behalf

of my constituent Paul Reimer to inquire when Entocort, a new medication to put Crohn's disease into remission, would be covered under Pharmacare. This new medication will cost \$96 per month after the first month, which is a lot of money when you are on a disability pension of \$834 a month.

I want to ask the Minister of Health, given that this medication was approved and available to the public on April 2, 1997, if this minister will confirm that this new drug will be on the drug formulary for new medications covered under Pharmacare which is to be released shortly, within a month, if this medication for Crohn's disease will be on that formulary.

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, I hope that I will be able to do that. The exact specifics I will get for the member. As she has correctly identified, it is that time of the year when we do prepare the new formulary. That has been done already, and I will check the specifics on that particular item. There are many, many items that change and are added to that particular formulary at this time of the year. I may just add for the member's information that we are in fact exploring now, for just the reason she has identified—the length of time that it does take to have product added to that formulary—a much faster process that will involve many reviews throughout the year so that people will not have to wait significant lengths of time for new drugs to be added. So I thank her for her comment.

Drug Formulary Tabling Request

Ms. Marianne Cerilli (Radisson): I want to ask the minister to confirm: When will he be releasing this new drug formulary for Manitobans to ensure that the most up-to-date medications will be on it? Will he tell the House today when will he release the formulary, which he has in his possession right now?

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, I believe the approvals of the changes took place by cabinet last week, so it is in the administrative process to be released. We have in fact changed the method by which we communicate. Because so many pharmacies are now online, we will be proceeding with a faster electronic notification method as opposed to the

publishing of the large areas in the Gazette. It speeds the process.

We are also going to be moving to a number of times during the year when we will be making those revisions and changes to deal with just the issue that she has flagged. I would suggest, if she wants the specifics on this drug, I should be able to provide her that information later in the day, just to give her the confirmation she is looking for.

Ms. Cerilli: What I asked the Minister of Health for is a date when he is going to release the formulary, which I understand he has in his office right now, and I want to know if this medication for Crohn's disease will be on it. I understand he is going to get me the specifics on that drug, but I want to know now when he is going to release the drug formulary, which will include a number of different drugs.

Mr. Praznik: Madam Speaker, two specific points. Just to confirm, I do not have it in front of me, so I would not want to put false information on the floor of the House, but I will get her the confirmation that she is looking for in a timely fashion. With respect to the formulary, as I have indicated, it was approved—those changes to the formulary were approved by cabinet last week, and they are in process now administratively through the system. They will be done, I imagine, very, very shortly. It is my first experience going through this, so I cannot offhand tell her on what specific date, but they have received approval. They received approval last Wednesday at cabinet, and now it is an administrative matter working itself through to publication. So I imagine whatever number of days it takes for that to happen, it will happen very closely. I cannot give her an exact date, but it is in process. It has been approved.

* (1410)

Ombudsman Resources

Ms. Diane McGifford (Osborne): Madam Speaker, last week the provincial Ombudsman told the media that the backlog in his office was close to a year. Yet this office will soon assume responsibility for two complex new pieces of legislation, The Freedom of

Information and Protection of Privacy Act and The Personal Health Information Act. Clearly, the latter act is vital legislation which should protect us from SmartHealth.

I want to ask the Minister of Health, who knows that his complex and controversial legislation will tax the Ombudsman's office still further, what steps he is taking to assure Manitobans that their complaints will be handled before the next century.

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, if the member would like to assist the Ombudsman in solving that individual's backlog now, she could play a very big role in it by going to her caucus meeting tonight and suggesting that her colleagues attend LAMC meetings so that the LAMC could provide those resources. Right now the holdup is with her and her colleagues.

Ms. McGifford: I think the Minister of Health well knows there is no agenda.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member for Osborne was recognized for a supplementary question that requires no preamble.

Ms. McGifford: Madam Speaker, I want to ask the Minister of Health, who knows that Manitoba is the only province in Canada which will have all personal health information online, to explain how the overworked and understaffed Ombudsman's office will provide the expertise in health care records management and computer security, and if he is so worried about the LAMC, perhaps we could have an agenda and meetings scheduled.

Mr. Praznik: Madam Speaker, with respect to new responsibilities for that office, both the Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship (Mrs. Vodrey) and myself clearly recognize that more resources will have to go in to properly staff that office, and we are committed to see that happen.

With respect to the current backlog of work in that office, I think we have heard the case very clearly today in the words of the member for Transcona (Mr. Reid), who is holding that office—the members in the New Democratic Party—holding the good work of the Office

of the Ombudsman to ransom to advance one of their own agendas. So the members opposite must clearly accept—given the fact that their agenda was said here in the House today by the member for Transcona—responsibility for that and not try to evade responsibility for their actions.

Ms. McGifford: Madam Speaker, I wish the Minister of Health would answer my questions instead of dealing cheap political tricks.

Health Records Privacy Information and Privacy Commissioner

Madam Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member for Osborne, with a final supplementary question.

Ms. Diane McGifford (Osborne): Madam Speaker, is it not time to admit, in view of the overworked Ombudsman, the need for expertise, the limitations on the Ombudsman's office and the laborious and expensive court appeal process, that what this legislation cries out for is an information and privacy commissioner?

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, this is not a joke. This is a serious business. The only joke in here is how the New Democratic Party, holding up resources for the Office of the Ombudsman, then can use that as an argument to say we should not give them some additional work with resources.

Madam Speaker, if the Office of the Ombudsman is unable to do its work today, it is because of members of the New Democratic Party holding up the . . . The Minister of Culture (Mrs. Vodrey), this Minister of Health, with our Treasury Board will make sure that the resources to do the work that is required under the privacy legislation to properly protect the privacy of people's health information will happen, but New Democrats have to maybe once, maybe for once accept some responsibility for their actions.

Legislative Building Fountain

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Government Services. Next to the Louis Riel statue, one would argue the centrepiece at the back is the first-class multihundred-thousand-dollar water fountain that this government built a couple of years back. The problem is that it has not been working very well. We have seen tax dollars going down the drain as they have been unable to turn on the tap.

My question to the Minister of Government Services: When does this minister predict that they are actually going to be able to turn on the water fountain? Will we be able to see it before the summer gets underway?

Hon. Frank Pitura (Minister of Government Services): I am informed by my staff that the fountain and all the problems that existed with it at the beginning have now been worked out. The fountain will indeed be operating in due course and give Manitobans and the tourists of Manitoba something to enjoy.

Mr. Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I take it “due course” means prior to the snowfall, I trust, I hope.

Smoking Policy

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): My question to the Minister of Government Services is: Back in April I asked him the question about the smoking lounge. He said that he was going to establish this wonderful committee that would come back and quickly respond to what was going to be happening. Is he going to continue to allow a double standard inside this building and outside? Will he stand up today and say no more smoking in the members' lounge?

Hon. Frank Pitura (Minister of Government Services): In response to the member's question, the Department of Government Services was approached by LAMC to investigate the smoking issue with respect to the members' lounge, at which point my department has looked into some alternatives for smoking, and that report is ready to go forward to LAMC for their discussions the very next time they meet.

Mr. Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I am wondering if the minister then will share with us—as he will argue the NDP are being irresponsible on this issue, I would ask the minister to take responsibility and indicate to this House, does he believe it is time that the Manitoba Chamber joined chambers across this country and say that it is not appropriate to allow smoking beside the Chamber while at the same time disallow smoking in other public buildings outside of this Legislative Building.

Mr. Pitura: Without belabouring the issue, I think that overall the government of Manitoba would like to continue to move towards the smoke-free environment within all the government buildings. However, I would point out that the smoking members' lounge, the members' lounge across the way, is under the purview of the Legislative Assembly Management Commission, so it would be up to that committee to decide as to whether or not they would accept the proposal from Government Services. As I mentioned earlier, as soon as the LAMC is prepared to meet and have a legitimate meeting, we will be prepared to put that forward to LAMC.

Canadian Corrosion Control Stop-Work Warning Compliance

Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona): The Workplace Safety and Health Act states under the stop-work warning, Section 26(2), that the officer of Workplace Safety and Health Branch can issue that warning when it “involves or is likely to involve a serious risk” to the workers working in a particular workplace. In 1991, August, Canadian Corrosion Control was issued a stop-work warning, and then at the end of September of that same year, 1991, the company was still not in compliance with the stop-work warning and workers' health and safety were at risk.

I want to ask the minister responsible for Workplace Safety and Health why his branch did not issue a stop-work order for that particular company considering that they had not complied and that workers' health and safety were at risk.

* (1420)

Hon. Harold Gilleshammer (Minister of Labour): I point out to my honourable friend that he should be

familiar with this legislation. It was brought forward by his party when they were in government, and the primary focus of the legislation is to provide education and persuade employers to provide a safe workplace.

Secondarily, there is a role for prosecution and enforcement. In this particular case there was a stop-work warning that was complied with, and that brought an end to the matter.

Workplace Safety—Prosecution

Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona): I want to ask the Minister of Justice, who, when he was Minister of Labour, stated that the appropriate individuals and corporations are named when a recommendation goes from the Workplace Safety and Health Branch to the Department of Justice. I want to ask the Minister of Justice why his department put a stay on prosecutions against Canadian Corrosion Control in June of 1995 when that particular company went bankrupt, and why did the Justice Department not take steps against the owners of that company.

Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I would refer my colleague from Transcona to the report that was issued out of Saskatchewan by two very prominent ex-prosecutors, Mr. Earl Wilson, Q.C., and Mr. Peter Martin, Q.C., who went to law school here, graduates 1976, two of the finest prosecutors that Alberta ever produced and who were hired by the Saskatchewan NDP government.

He talks very clearly about the issue of the independence of prosecutors and basically indicates that the independence of prosecutors must mean that prosecutors must remain free to reduce charges, stay prosecutions or negotiate plea bargains in which the offender may be prosecuted for a less serious crime or receive a lesser sentence. The independence of prosecutors to make decisions is something that political people, including the Attorney General, should not interfere with.

Mr. Reid: I want to table a list that the minister has supplied me, prosecutions and cases before the court when he was Minister of Labour, showing that not one company owner or manager was ever listed in the prosecutions of that particular year. I want to ask this

Minister of Justice why his department does not have a zero tolerance policy when serious injury or death occurs as a result of a workplace accident and why owners themselves are not listed along with the company names in these particular prosecutions now through his department, allowing people to escape prosecution because of his actions. [interjection]

Mr. Toews: Madam Speaker, the member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett) asks who I am trying to protect. I am trying to protect the people of Manitoba.

The issue that he should be looking at is indeed the act that the NDP passed—and if you look at this designer of that act, the policy person behind that act, one Victor Rabinovitch, who indicated that the purpose of The Workplace Safety and Health Act that the NDP were bringing in was not to prosecute, it was to educate.

So this government has brought in legislation to toughen up some of the fines, but if they want to ask why more prosecutions have not been done under that act, maybe they should look at the policy that they themselves implemented and that we have carried out, I would say, in a much better way than they could have ever carried it out.

Employment Statistics High-Wage Positions

Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East): Madam Speaker, over the weekend the Minister of Finance was glowing over the results of the labour force survey for May which was recently published showing 12,200 more jobs than in May of 1996. However, the gains were essentially made in the low-wage service sectors, while Manitoba actually lost 5,400 jobs in the higher-wage sectors of manufacturing, construction and utilities. Can this minister explain why we are losing thousands of jobs in the high-wage industry sectors of this province?

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Finance): Well, first of all, the member for Brandon East makes a terrible assumption that jobs in the service sector are low-paying, low-skilled kinds of jobs. I assure him they are not, and all he needs to do is go to many Manitoba businesses in information technology and other areas, and he will find that they are good jobs, well-paying jobs and so on.

I am glad that he finally recognizes the strong performance of Manitoba's economy in terms of jobs. In fact, even more important than the statistics that he put on the record today is, for the first five months of 1997, there are 16,400 more jobs in Manitoba today, the best record in all of Canada. What is even more important is in the private sector there are actually over 19,900 more jobs created during that same period, and probably the best news of all is that 80 percent of those jobs are full-time jobs. Nearly 13,000 of those jobs are full-time jobs, again the best performance in all of Canada right here in Manitoba.

Manufacturing Industry

Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East): A supplementary: I note the province of Saskatchewan has the lowest unemployment rate in Canada, 5.6 percent, lower than Manitoba. Can the minister—

Madam Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member for Brandon East, to pose a supplementary question now.

Mr. Leonard Evans: Can the minister explain why we lost 2,900 manufacturing jobs since May of 1996, while manufacturing jobs continued to increase in Canada as a whole?

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, during that period of time there were some adjustments, some closures taking place, some related to the flood here in Manitoba during that period, but I think what is most important of all—and I know the member for Brandon East always says: Well, do not only look at things in the short term, look at them in the long term. If you look at the period from 1992 to 1996, the last four years, there are 8,600 more manufacturing jobs in Manitoba, one of the best performances in all of Canada. So, again, over the long term here in Manitoba, manufacturing jobs are performing amongst the best in all of Canada.

Mr. Leonard Evans: Can the minister explain why there are fewer jobs in manufacturing in Manitoba today than there were in 1988 when this government was first elected? Why has the manufacturing sector declined over the term, the whole term of this

government, fewer people in manufacturing today than in 1988?

Mr. Stefanson: Madam Speaker, again, I think what has been happening, certainly across Canada, is there have been some adjustments in the manufacturing sector. There have been adjustments in terms of technology. I know the members of the NDP are still in the dark ages. They do not realize that technology is taking place and is taking place in Manitoba businesses and Canadian businesses, so there are some adjustments. But I encourage the member for Brandon East. He always says: Do not look at one month's statistics, let us look over the longer term. Well, let us look at the period 1992 to 1996, and the job growth in Manitoba in the manufacturing sector is amongst the best in all of Canada.

But, on an overall basis, the single most important thing to Manitobans is jobs, and Manitoba for the first five months of 1997 has the best job growth in all of Canada. We have the best job growth in private sector jobs in all of Canada. We have the third-lowest unemployment rate in all of Canada. We have the second-lowest youth unemployment in all of Canada. That is excellent news for all Manitobans in terms of job opportunities and the performance of Manitoba's economy.

* (1430)

Child Labour Minister's Comments

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): Madam Speaker, my question is to the Premier (Mr. Filmon).

This morning the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs justified child labour by quoting Margaret Thatcher and by saying, quote: In Pakistan the only way a family might eat is if that child or a number of children of a family were out doing some work.

Does the Premier agree with this statement by the Minister of Consumer Affairs?

Hon. Mike Radcliffe (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Madam Speaker, I would like to put on the record in this Assembly, as I did on the public airwaves this morning, that the Government of

Canada and in turn our government ought not to seek simplistic solutions with regard to international trade and that if in fact we are dealing with foreign nations where there are less than satisfactory child labour laws, then the role and philosophy that our Canadian government has used—for example, with the nation of Cuba, whereby if we trade with them, if we talk to them, if we do not exclude them, we can have far more impact than if we just cut them off and put them in a little ghetto and forget about them. So, therefore, ongoing communication and education has got to be the key to help solve these world problems, which in no way do I attempt to diminish.

Government Position

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): Madam Speaker, my supplementary to the Premier is this: Given that requiring the country of origin labelling on products would allow consumers to know where the products were made by child labour, would this Premier, unlike his Consumer Affairs minister, stand up and condemn that child labour is unacceptable?

Hon. Mike Radcliffe (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Madam Speaker, I repeat for the benefit of the member opposite that I do condemn and I believe that every right-thinking person in this country would condemn inappropriate use of child labour in any nation, be it in Canada, be it abroad. I can assure the member opposite that this is an issue that was raised today to me, and I am prepared to research it and see if this is something that would be appropriate to institute in Manitoba. This is not a knee-jerk reaction such as perhaps my honourable colleague across the way would want to indulge, but it is something that should be considered. However, I must reiterate for the record that I do not accept any of the preamble or the implications that this government or this nation in any way condones the abuse of children.

Madam Speaker: Time for Oral Questions has expired.

NONPOLITICAL STATEMENTS

Women's Health Research Foundation

Mrs. Shirley Render (St. Vital): Madam Speaker, do I have leave to make a nonpolitical statement?

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

Mrs. Render: On Thursday, June 5, the Women's Health Research Foundation held their third annual fundraising luncheon.

Madam Speaker, the event was sold out. I think this is proof positive that people wanted to support this very worthy event, and they also wanted to hear the very uplifting remarks of the keynote speaker, Ann Medina.

Each year the Women's Health Research Foundation grants scholarships to women in the scientific and medical community to finance research projects that focus on important aspects of women's health. Another speaker at the luncheon was last year's scholarship winner, Lanette Friesen, who is a Ph.D. student carrying out research targeted to earlier diagnosis of ovarian cancer with a view to significantly reducing the mortality rate of this very deadly disease.

The Women's Health Research Foundation is to be congratulated for the vision and the energy it brings to addressing many critical health issues affecting women, and I would like to wish them continued success in their very worthy efforts. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Stanley Knowles

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): I would like leave for a nonpolitical statement.

Madam Speaker: Does the honourable Leader of the official opposition have leave? [agreed]

Mr. Doer: We were saddened today to hear of the passing of Stanley Knowles. I want to pay tribute to Stanley Knowles here this afternoon. Stanley Knowles, of course, is a great Canadian, a great Manitoban and a great parliamentarian. His contributions are well known by Manitobans and by Canadians in terms of the contributions he made to our community and to our families.

He was a person of warmth, integrity, honesty, strength and vision. He always maintained the human touch with the people he represented and the people he

came into contact with. He, of course, will be remembered in history books as a parliamentarian who used his skills on behalf of his constituents. Over the 40-some years that he represented his constituency, over some 12 elections where he was elected to Parliament, he used those tremendous and vast skills as a parliamentarian and as an orator to fight on behalf of his constituents for medicare and for the Canadian pension plan that we have in our country.

He had a number of victories even as he continued to improve the Canadian pension act in Canada. He was able to ensure that people that were in a strike or lock-out situation were not denied or cut off from their pension benefits as they struggled for working conditions and for health and safety conditions at their workplace.

He fought for a pension plan that would be universal and available to all Canadians as one of his great legacies on behalf of all of our citizens. Of course, he was instrumental for years in fighting for and articulating a need for medicare and universal health care. Of course, he came about these great, great strengths and fights for injustice and to deal with a more equitable society based on his family history.

His mother had a number of encounters with our health care system. He knew first-hand the tremendous challenges that families had without the means to access a health care system, a health care system that we had in this country at one time that was only available to those who had wealth and means as opposed to everyone that had health care needs.

His father was fired from a workplace. He knew first-hand what it meant to go without a pay cheque at home, to go first-hand without a livelihood, to have the indignity of being unemployed. He also knew first-hand what it meant to have a union and a representative organization on behalf of the workers at a workplace. He never ever forgot those strong messages from his childhood.

We know today that all of us that were, in fact, canvassing over the last couple of weeks in the federal election and were in contact with people in the various areas of the city that he represented in the Winnipeg centre constituency, Elmwood, the inner city, the north

end—we know in going in contact door to door in this last federal election that people still remembered Stanley Knowles. They still cherished his great contributions. They still cherished the way he represented their values and their community. I think that is a lasting testament to his great personal strengths.

I know, on a personal level, I met Stanley Knowles on a number of occasions, and of course in our party and on occasions where he went outside of our political party he was treated by fellow Canadians as virtually a saint, and I guess he was as close a person to a saint that I will ever meet, certainly in terms of his contributions to our community. I also note that he was of sharp mind even after his heart attack in 1981, I believe.

I received letters from Stanley Knowles, advice from Stanley Knowles, suggestions from Stanley Knowles. He was very, very consistent in his writing and in his personal views that we can never ever forget who we represent, and for us and for people in our party, it was particularly important to him that we remembered we represented the working people, the people that did not have voice, the people that did not have power, that it was so important for us to balance that power through Parliament, through democracy and through our elected representatives.

* (1440)

Stanley believed greatly in the kind of mixture and common philosophy of his religious beliefs in the social gospel and his teachings and his great beliefs in the labour movement, and he was instrumental in restructuring the CCF to the NDP with the labour movement as a partner. He rejected the American view of political movements and endorsed the European view—and of course his great belief of mixing all of this together in terms of the Parliament and democracy. You know, there was a person that valued and cherished and fought for the rights of all elected parliamentarians in Ottawa and believed strongly in each one of these Legislatures, that we each have a very important role to play in representing our constituents.

All of us have a lot of stories to tell about Stanley Knowles. I still remember the wonderful picture in

Brandon University, I think it is in the student union building, of Stanley Knowles and Tommy Douglas on the shovels for the ground-breaking ceremony at Brandon University for the student council building. It is a wonderful, wonderful picture of these two people that preached and practised their political beliefs every day of their lives.

Madam Speaker, we will miss Stanley Knowles, we will not forget Stanley Knowles and we have been inspired by Stanley Knowles. Thank you.

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Environment): Madam Speaker, might I have leave to make a nonpolitical statement?

Madam Speaker: Does the honourable Minister of Environment have leave to make a nonpolitical statement? [agreed]

Mr. McCrae: Madam Speaker, I too, as were all Canadians, was saddened to learn of the passing of the Honourable Stanley Knowles. I am pleased today to be able to offer my sympathy and condolences to the family of Mr. Knowles.

I, like the honourable Leader of the Opposition, knew Stanley Knowles, and during my time as an employee at the House of Commons came to know him as well as probably anyone here. This gentleman shared his friendship with people of all walks of life and shared his friendship with people of all political persuasions.

I heard what the honourable Leader of the Opposition said, and if you could personify the ideal of a parliamentarian, I have no doubt but that it would be the Honourable Stanley Knowles. I was privileged for a number of years to record in the House of Commons, and I do not think a day went by—I cannot remember any—when Mr. Knowles did not spend most of the day in the House where he felt he belonged and where he could provide the leadership to his party and to the people of Canada that he was so capable of providing.

I am honoured as a House leader to be able to speak today about Mr. Knowles, because during the time I was in the House of Commons as an employee, Mr. Knowles was House leader for his party and served that function with great distinction. I am sure House leaders

who came and went from the other political parties would not hesitate, nor would they be turned away, to turn to Mr. Knowles for the kind of advice that only he could give.

I was always moved by the dogged consistency that I could see coming from Mr. Knowles. There was a real sense of a clarity of purpose in this Canadian. His purpose—and he made no mistake about that—he knew exactly who he represented and why he represented them, and he never wavered from the things that he believed in. How we achieved the things that we wanted to achieve were sometimes a matter of debate, but the Honourable Stanley Knowles—it would not matter if it was about western grain stabilization or about some of the great social issues or other of the day, the issue of pensions seemed to creep into every speech Mr. Knowles made in the House of Commons. I think he spoke in every single debate that there ever was during his time there, and that was certainly a very long time.

I think, whether he was or was not at any given day the longest presently serving member, he was always known as the dean of parliamentarians and, after over 40 years as a member of the House—with a brief interruption in that service—few Canadians in history can claim, not only the longevity of his service but also the quality of his service. So, if he was not speaking about pensions, he was speaking about veterans' pensions, and if he was not speaking about pensions, he was speaking about pensions for the disabled, and if he was not speaking about pensions, he was speaking about making sure pensions for seniors were keeping up with the requirements of the day.

So I join with the honourable Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer) and all others in paying tribute to a Canadian we can all be proud to have had some association with. Finally, as a Brandonite, Madam Speaker, I would like to pay tribute also to the fact that, as a person who studied at Brandon University and who went on to become the chancellor of our university in Brandon, the people of Brandon will always have a special place in their hearts for Stanley Knowles.

Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East): I wonder if I could have permission for a nonpolitical statement.

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

Mr. Leonard Evans: Madam Speaker, I would like to join with the Leader of the official opposition and with the government House leader to pay tribute to a fine Canadian, a fine parliamentarian and a true social democrat.

I knew Stanley Knowles as a young man, a very young man. In fact, my mother, I believe, took me to a meeting when I was knee-high to a grasshopper, and there was Stanley Knowles when he was first elected as a member of Parliament for Winnipeg North Centre. Indeed, as others have described, he was a great parliamentarian, a fighter for social justice without question. Pensions, I think, were his specialty—old age pensions, veterans pensions—and he was really practising in a very sincere way his Christianity, his social gospel, if you will.

I believe it was John Diefenbaker who was going to make him the first independent Speaker of the House—

An Honourable Member: '57.

Mr. Leonard Evans: '57. Stanley Knowles was such a parliamentarian, such a—he had greater knowledge of the rules of the House of Commons than everybody else put together it seemed, and Mr. Diefenbaker, the then Prime Minister, had actually offered Stanley Knowles the job of being the first independent Speaker of the House of Commons. For various reasons, Stanley turned it down. I think he wanted to carry on his fight for pensions and so on.

Then, of course, Prime Minister Trudeau recognized his contribution in the House by offering him a permanent seat or table alongside the clerical staff in the House of Commons, and Stanley took him up on it. If you watched the House of Commons on the television from time to time, you would see Stanley Knowles sitting there. Particularly when something very important was happening, some big event, Stanley was certainly there. In fact, Stanley told me one time he did not think he could survive if he could not go to the House of Commons. He was so dedicated to Parliament, and he had been so absorbed in the House

all those years that he said, Len, I do not think I could survive if I could not be at the House of Commons and participate in one way or the other.

As the government House leader has said, I wanted to mention, as well, Stanley's connection with Brandon University. Stanley was a graduate of Brandon University, and later in the '70s and the '80s he was a chancellor for many, many years. I wanted to comment that in those days when you graduated, you would kneel on a stool before the chancellor and Stanley would put his hand on your shoulder and give you a little talk. You know, there were hundreds of people waiting to graduate, but Stanley talked to each and every one of them. Needless to say, we had very long graduating ceremonies, but he had words of wisdom to everybody.

Unfortunately, later he did have this massive stroke, and he did lose his memory, but it came back. He had to work on it. The government House leader may remember—Stanley would be telling us at Brandon University graduations and telling people how he had to work on remembering things, and indeed it came back. In fact, afterwards I heard Stanley Knowles give many a speech after this massive stroke, after a few months, without a single note, to the Brandon University graduating ceremony—without a note and a speech with some content and a message. So this was Stanley Knowles, a great mind.

Of course the students recognized his contribution as well as Tommy Douglas by naming the student centre the Knowles/Douglas Student Union Centre. I was at that—this really dates me—sod turning with the Leader of the Opposition, Stanley Knowles and Tommy Douglas, and it was truly a great day.

He was a fine man, a great Canadian. He indeed has made his contribution to making our society a better place to live in, certainly one who lived and breathed the social gospel. Thank you.

* (1450)

Committee Changes

Mr. Gerry McAlpine (Sturgeon Creek): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable member

for St. Vital (Mrs. Render), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Public Utilities and Natural Resources be amended as follows: the member for Arthur-Virden (Mr. Downey) for the member for Brandon West (Mr. McCrae); the honourable member for Minnedosa (Mr. Gilleshammer) for the honourable member for Morris (Mr. Pitura).

For the Standing Committee on Law Amendments, I move, seconded by the honourable member for St. Vital (Mrs. Render), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Law Amendments be amended as follows: the honourable member for Brandon West (Mr. McCrae) for the honourable member for Kirkfield Park (Mr. Stefanson); the honourable member for River Heights (Mr. Radcliffe) for the honourable member for Fort Garry (Mrs. Vodrey); the honourable member for Gimli (Mr. Helwer) for the honourable member for Charleswood (Mr. Ernst).

Motions agreed to.

Mr. George Hickes (Point Douglas): I move, seconded by the member for Broadway (Mr. Santos), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Law Amendments be amended as follows: Elmwood (Mr. Maloway) for Wellington (Ms. Barrett); Thompson (Mr. Ashton) for St. Johns (Mr. Mackintosh); Flin Flon (Mr. Jennissen) for Burrows (Mr. Martindale) for June 10, 1997, 10 a.m.

I move, seconded by the member for Broadway (Mr. Santos), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Public Utilities and Natural Resources be amended as follows: Transcona (Mr. Reid) for Thompson (Mr. Ashton); Selkirk (Mr. Dewar) for The Pas (Mr. Lathlin); Crescentwood (Mr. Sale) for St. Johns (Mr. Mackintosh) for Tuesday, June 10, 1997, for 10 a.m.

Motions agreed to.

NONPOLITICAL STATEMENTS

Stanley Knowles

Mr. Conrad Santos (Broadway): Madam Speaker, I seek leave to make a two-pronged political statement.

Madam Speaker: Does the honourable member for Broadway have leave to revert back to Nonpolitical Statements to make a nonpolitical statement? [agreed]

Mr. Santos: First of all, I would like to join my colleague in paying personal tribute to Stanley Knowles. I remember an incident in a dinner. I came to him and I asked him this question. I said, Stanley, I now get involved in political life. I do not want to be corrupted. How did you do it? He said to me, Conrad, the matter is entirely in your hands, and I remember that in my life.

Philippine Heritage Week

Mr. Santos: The second prong of my statement relates to the Philippine Heritage Week, Madam Speaker. Last Sunday, we started celebrating the Philippine Heritage Week with the reading of the proclamation from the Premier (Mr. Filmon) and the proclamation from the mayor in the Winnipeg quadrangle, where we had a flag-raising ceremony. Then we went to the Philippine Centre and had a free lunch provided by the seniors, which is their seniors day.

This Wednesday, there will be the Manitoba Association of Filipino Teachers who will make a cultural presentation at the Wellington School at 690 Beverley Street within the Broadway constituency. On Thursday, June 12, starting at 12 p.m., there will be some cultural shows and pictorial exhibits at the Garden City Shopping Centre hosted by the Association of Filipino Students of the University of Manitoba, the International Development Committee of the YM-YWCA and the Canadian Hunger Association.

On Friday, June 13, starting at 7 p.m., at the Prairie Theatre Exchange, 3rd Floor, 340 Portage Avenue, Portage Place, there will be an oratorical contest on the national hero Dr. Rizal's My Last Farewell hosted by the Ladies of the Knights of Rizal, followed by a concert of Filipino musicians at 767 Tache Avenue, Le Rendez-vous.

On Saturday, June 14, the Manitoba Association of the Order of the Knights of Rizal, the Manitoba Association of Filipino Teachers and the Coalition of Filipino-Canadians on Violence Prevention will co-host a conference on Journeying Together Towards Racial Harmony, followed by the Philippines Independence Commemoration Ball at the second floor of the Winnipeg Convention Centre at 6 p.m.

The Philippine Heritage Week will conclude with an all-community picnic on Sunday, June 15, in Assiniboine Park, Roblin Boulevard, co-hosted by Timpuyog, Radyo 27 and the Pangasinan Group, starting at 9 a.m., followed by Procession Santacrusan and game Pabitin, hosted by the Quezon Province Association of Manitoba and the Health Awareness Day.

On behalf of the Manitoba New Democratic Party caucus in the Manitoba Legislative Assembly, we wish the entire Filipino-Canadian community all the best in their week-long celebration of the Philippine Heritage Week. Thank you.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

House Business

Hon. James McCrae (Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, I understand there to be a disposition to waive private members' hour today.

Madam Speaker: Is there leave to waive private members' hour today? [agreed]

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

Motion agreed to.

* (1500)

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY (Concurrent Sections)

HEALTH

Mr. 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 Health. When the committee last sat it had been considering item 3. Community and Mental Health Services (c) Home

Care (4) External Agencies - Home Care on page 70 of the Estimates book. Shall the item pass?

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Mr. Chairperson, just to commence, from my knowledge it appears that we will be going until six o'clock today, which will then leave us, all things being equal, an hour and a half tomorrow, which will then conclude the time devoted to Estimates.

What I am hoping to cover today, the bulk of the material today, as I had indicated to the minister, some questioning on the personal continuing care line, then probably move down through the other lines fairly quickly, probably try to get to capital today, the bulk of that issue, probably cover most of the issues today and then tomorrow be basically devoted to some follow-up on probably some other issues. That is what I am contemplating, although it is sometimes difficult to gauge these things accordingly, but for the purposes of planning, that is what I intend to do from my perspective.

Just one other sidelight, the minister just received a communication from the Westway family, who also provided a letter to me as well, and it would be inappropriate for me to ask a question about it today, but I thought perhaps tomorrow when we get back into this forum we could deal with the Westway issue. It is an issue—the minister has just received correspondence from a family concerning care of an individual by the name of Kim Westway. We could—I am advising the minister that perhaps tomorrow we can just do some quick follow-up to see what the status is of that communication.

Returning to the issue of the structure that has now been put into place at personal care homes, the minister provided me on Thursday with a description of a program that has been put in place and correspondence that has gone to personal care homes dealing with complaints at the personal care homes, and I want to go through obviously for reasons signified earlier in the Estimates procedure.

As I understand it from this process, individuals are first encouraged to formally approach the management of the respective personal care home. If at that time their complaints are not dealt with adequately, then they

are encouraged to fill out a complaint form that is available at the personal care homes. In addition to that, if it is still not satisfied or if at any point they request anonymity, there is an 800-line number that has been put in place, and that directs it to the Seniors Directorate. I understand from the information provided to me that there is a specific follow-up on urgent complaints that is in place that requires some kind of immediate follow-up, 24 hours, as I understand it. Can the minister indicate what happens in the department when a complaint is forwarded? What is the process that takes place now within the department if a concern is raised about care of an individual at a particular nursing home that is not satisfied by their management? What assurances can be given that that will be completely followed up on?

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Health): Just to put it in perspective, there will be two parts to the answer. Prior to the changes that I have instituted here with Mr. McFarlane's good work, if we had a complaint to the department, it obviously was forwarded to the staff at the Long Term Care unit or division of the department. They would investigate it. If it required follow-up with the facility, either they or one of our consultants who work with the facilities was sent to work with them.

Now there is some change in that today. With the committee's consent, I would like to have Mr. McFarlane get into the detail of this new system, because we are just starting to get it going, and he will be able to provide the details.

Mr. Chairperson: In this area only, the committee is allowing a staff member to make presentation of sorts? [agreed]

Mr. Jim McFarlane (Executive Director, Employment Standards Division): Again, the change in the process is how the ministry is captured with the information. In the past, the person would usually or most often informally approach the home and indicate they have a concern. It might be with their mother or their grandmother, somebody in the home. If they were not satisfied with that response, or if the nature of the response was such that the home felt that it might not be an issue that they could deal with but rather an issue of funding from the ministry or something and beyond

their control, then it was often left to the individual to then promote it. That would be dependent sometimes on whether they knew where to go in the next step, whether they were familiar with the existence of the Long Term Care unit or whether they would contact their MLA or somebody else in the process.

The system that has been implemented now clearly identifies who would be the next level in the process that would assist the resident or the family of the resident in trying to deal with those types of issues if the home was not able to, or the facility was not able to, satisfy their complaint. When it is put in writing, it automatically—now, again, a copy is provided to the person filing the complaint, but it automatically also promotes the complaint issue to either the regional health authority's liaison individual or to the Long Term Care unit of the Ministry of Health.

In either case, those individuals would look at what the nature of the issue was, whether it was an urgent issue, whether it was a systemic issue, and have to make some judgment in terms of how they would work with the home to try to resolve the issue.

Oftentimes people do not want their—they are concerned about retribution in the process or they have a fear of retribution in the process. They would be very concerned about putting things in writing. There was also the mechanism to allow them to phone the 1-800 number and have anonymity in the process, where the issues would be looked at, if they are systemic or if they are serious in nature. Again, the ministry or the liaison officer and, through the liaison officer, the regional health authority would be captured with working with the home in trying to resolve the issue.

Mr. Chomiak: Aside from the process that is now in place, has there been put in place any change of resources or change in systematic approach to ensure that the actual follow-up that takes place, follow-up that is recommended or follow-up that is suggested, is actually followed through with?

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Chair, with this new system, we have obviously added some additional time and effort on behalf of staff at the Seniors Directorate where calls are being received. We also have given this responsibility to working at significant problems with

the 10 liaison officers we have with regional health authorities. That is now part of their responsibility. So, if a matter comes up, it is one of their roles to be taking that complaint and working with that regional health authority to have it resolved and reporting back.

With respect to the directorate, specifically, we have not added any resources in our own Long Term Care unit. That is under consideration. That is part of the work that Mr. McFarlane is doing for me now to give me an assessment of whether or not we need to increase our staff loads there and what functions.

I just share this with the member, one of my concerns is how we, in fact, write standards. Standards in my mind should be very much operating manuals describing how things should be done correctly. They should be very user friendly to the people who are using them, and we have identified some work that perhaps needs to be done in this area. Mr. McFarlane, right now, part of his mandate here is to give me some advice. He is still working on that particular piece of it.

Mr. Chomiak: In the case of Holiday Haven complaints, the solution appears to have been to have had Holiday Haven engage an outside consultant. I am wondering if, in fact, that process would still be in place with respect to similar problems that occurred today.

* (1510)

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Chair, Holiday Haven, the issue there was an independent study of their system that was conducted. I think it was the Manitoba Association of Personal Care Homes or, as such, a nursing home association who did a review for Holiday Haven of their operation some time ago and the member—he and I are both well aware of how that ended. What we asked on the Friday, or the day on which I made the decision that we had to do something here, was I asked my senior staff to call and ask if the home would voluntarily give up its management of the facility, which they agreed to do. As a consequence, we put in another manager who was unrelated to the people who were managing it, and now we have hired a company who runs personal care homes to put in a management team to run the facility.

They, today, do not have a consultant in place. There is another management running that facility; so they are under new management. I do not know exactly where they are in their agreement. That has been worked out. I think the goal was to stay for two years to get them to the position where they could be certified or accredited, pardon me, by the national body and—I gather the detail of which has been worked out between the personal care home and that management company—and I think Manitoba Health had monitored that.

If we had a similar situation today, and, I guess, this is the concern he and I both share. We all know from time to time we are going to have problems or complaints or service issues on an individual basis. It is the nature of the system. There are a lot of very, very high-need people in those facilities. They are high-stress positions for many who work in them, and from time to time things will happen. That is human nature. We have to make sure when they do that they are corrected and they do not become a systemic or ongoing problem. The larger issue and it is one that Mr. McFarlane is identifying, if we continue to have either a continual number of complaints from a facility which flags then a problem in the facility, an ongoing problem in the facility or we have a lot of complaints from every facility of the same nature, which flags a systemic problem, we have to be able to assess that and move that quickly.

If it is a facility problem and we are unable to resolve it with changes that are needed quickly, the powers I am asking the Legislature for, as minister for the office of minister under The Regional Health Authorities Amendment Act, would then allow this ministry to be able to move in because patient care would be at risk and, on an interim temporary basis, replace the management to stabilize the situation and then proceed from there to work out arrangements for a long-term solution. Today that power does not exist. The only power that does exist is the removal of the licence.

Without the consent of the owners, that power to remove a licence in many ways is a very impractical result, because if you have 150 people as there were in Holiday Haven, if there had not been agreement to turn over management, my only option would have been to remove the licence, and then in January we would have been moving 150 bedridden elderly people out of that

facility into other locations in the dead of winter, and that is to assume we could even find enough bed space for them. So the conditions into which they may have been going are likely to have been crowded for many, as we had to accommodate them in an emergency situation as we probably would do if we had a fire or flood.

But the fact of the matter is that weighs very heavy for any Minister of Health if those are your only options—pull a licence and move people out or try to negotiate a suitable arrangement. In January, your practical ability to pull people out of a facility has to be pretty bad because you may be putting them at greater risk with your decision than their current situation. That is why we are seeking that amendment in the Legislature, which would then give the minister of the day the power to step in, take over management, stabilize the situation.

I would expect, within the system that we are building here with Mr. McFarlane, that a minister will be notified in good time in order to take that step should everyone else fail to resolve a problem. I am hoping that today, once this bill is passed, a Holiday Haven-type situation that might go on as long as it did may not, in fact, happen.

Mr. Chomiak: Is the ministry convinced that all of the present facilities have in place sufficient complaint mechanisms, information and co-operation to ensure that the process will work at the individual facilities on an individual level?

Mr. Praznik: One thing a minister learns is never to indicate clearly they are convinced everything will work well. Rarely does it always work well. I hope that we have improved the system significantly and that we will have far better results and a much better warning system of when we have problems in a system that will result in their resolution in a timely and effective fashion.

We have notified all of those facilities, provided them with the poster and complaint forms with the requirement they be posted. We have written to them to put into place the complaint process. We have set up the 1-800 line with the Seniors Directorate. You see, that is a bit of insurance in all of this, because if a

particular facility is not dealing with a complaint, the 1-800 line ultimately is there to pick that fact up quickly as long as people choose to use it. We have the support of the regional health authorities. They are very well aware of this, and when they are running facilities, of course, are part of that complaint process. So what more we can do, I am not quite sure. We have already had phone calls on the 1-800 line, so people are using it. They are aware of it. I guess, over the next number of months, we will continue to assess this. If there is a way to improve it or if it is not meeting the need, then we will have to look at it again.

I would ask the honourable member because if the system is not working, he is likely one of the first to find out about it as people call critics of opposition parties, I would ask that he—and as I know he will do—let us know, because we need that kind of feedback. I am not for one moment saying we have a perfect system, but we have moved quickly here to put something in place that is better than what we had, and we hope it will do the job. If there are ways to improve it, I am certainly the first one who will want to know that. If there are things that do not work, we want to know that as well.

Mr. Chomiak: I would suggest addendums to the annual report or something along those lines that might indicate the extent and the gravity of complaints and information, not just for statistical purposes but to get some assessment as well as to let individuals know that this exists. So I think some kind of ongoing dialogue in this regard would probably assist.

Mr. Praznik: That is an excellent suggestion. Something we thought about yet have not got to that point of how we report this, but obviously we are going to want to keep track of the data and be able to provide it and how things are resolved but in a fair manner, obviously. Some of the complaints one gets sometimes are not founded, most tend to have an issue. His suggestion that we perhaps make an addendum to an annual report is very worthy of consideration, and I will certainly note it. It is something we are looking at already, but I appreciate his suggestion.

Mr. Chomiak: I think the issue that perhaps is missed in all of this is the fact that there is often no advocate, no individual, no advocate, no ombudsperson to

represent many of these people. Often there are no families and no relatives. Certainly, in the case of Holiday Haven, that was one of the issues. I am wondering if the minister might comment on guarantees and assurances in this regard.

* (1520)

Mr. Praznik: In a very practical way, for many, many people in our personal care homes, their own family is often their best advocate, who are not happy when they get letters that the member has brought to my attention coming from family members. MLAs are often an excellent Ombudsman role to bring a matter to attention and to be resolved. The concern that the member has, and I identify with those individuals who have no family, no ability to speak to an MLA, are really very much alone.

They may be very, very aged with no family remaining and their contemporaries are just as aged and unlikely to be in a position to help them. Those people are the ones, I think, that are truly helpless. That is why one of the things that we are trying to work into our system, as Mr. McFarlane may have mentioned, is to be doing more regular, unannounced visits and audits of facilities so that we can catch any difficulty that may not get attention or be reported. To have a specific individual in that kind of ombudsperson role does present some administrative difficulties, because often you do not even know who those are.

How do you even make contact with that? We have thought about some of this. I guess the most practical way is to ensure we are doing a fair amount of unannounced inspections on a fairly regular basis to keep the whole system cognizant that there are people watching to make sure that things are done right and meeting standards. That is one of the staffing issues about whether we add resources or reassign existing resources. We need to have people within that branch, who are very capable of doing those kind of things. We are trying to get a grip right now on some of our options for meeting that need.

Mr. Chomiak: The other issue of concern, with respect to alerting authorities as to difficulties, is the issue of staff and their ability to do so. From the process that has been put in place, it appears the only

realistic way a staffperson who disagrees or who has information can bring the information forward is through the 1-800 number, and I am wondering if the minister might comment on the extent to which that may or may not be an adequate resource.

Mr. Praznik: The member flags what is always a difficult matter for staff in any facility, to bring forward the concerns that they have, and we all know from time to time there are staff who bring forward concerns that are really unwarranted, and that is part of maybe their own employment situation. You have to be wary of those things, but there is from time to time very legitimately situations that are severe enough that warrant a staff member wanting to do something about it. The 1-800 line that he has mentioned is absolutely an excellent way of doing that and assures confidentiality and leads to a matter at least being checked out.

We also know from the experience of my deputy minister that we have had over the years correspondence or contact with staff in facilities that come to the ministry. That is always kept, to his knowledge and mine, on a confidential basis. It is always that balance between wanting the information and making sure your system is not being used for someone's personal agenda, fairness to the facility, fairness to the patient, how you keep it confidential. It is always a hard balancing act, but I think between the 1-800 number and the ability to contact the ministry or even the regional health authority to provide that information is certainly there.

I do not know how else one would do it. If the member has some suggestions, we would be pleased to look at them.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, it is obviously clear from the record of Holiday Haven that staff at all kinds of levels had raised warning flags, as well as the fact that it appeared that issues of follow-up from previous investigations by the Department of Health had not been followed up.

For example, there had been recommendations from previous incidents that a social worker be hired at Holiday Haven, and, in fact, a social worker was hired

and subsequently let go and that many of the difficulties that occurred, occurred subsequent to the social worker being let go, and there was no tangible way of connecting the original recommendations that there had to be a social worker to the subsequent dismissal of the social worker, and problems ensued.

I am really actually trying to avoid going down and reopening the Holiday Haven fiasco, but I do want to understand some of the dynamics. I guess my question to the minister is, the minister indicated at the time that there was an internal review of what happened in the department with respect to the concerns at Holiday Haven, and I wonder if the minister can share with us the results of that internal review.

Mr. Praznik: I do not think it was a formal internal review that has produced a report. What it is is I have asked my associate deputy minister who is responsible for that area—and we brought in Mr. McFarlane—to give us an assessment of how the department functions.

I am going to just share a couple of observations because that is ultimately what I have out of the work that has gone on. It is one of these issues where I do not think you can necessarily point to one person's misfeasance or malfeasance that resulted in this. I think the difficulty is more the way the system in fact works, because these facilities, and whether they be for-profit or not for-profit, are private facilities that are licensed, and our ability as a department to be able to do anything when the problem is detected is really one of good will. It is either good will or you pull the licence.

The practical matter of pulling a licence is a couple of things, and this is what we found in talking with our staff, that they are cognizant of it. If you are going to pull someone's licence, you have to have very, very good reasons to do it, or the department will be in court and challenged by those owners. You just cannot do it on a whim, so it has to be a very, very strong case that there is a problem here. Then, when you do pull a licence, if you do pull a licence, you have to have another place to put those people, and the system does not have 150 or 75 or 80 spare beds that are available on very short notice. So now you are talking about a severe disruption to the lives of people who are in a facility.

The problem again in weighing the balance that staff have to face is that often the difficulties that are encountered in these facilities are not necessarily of a life-threatening nature. They are inconvenience. They are not a pleasant place to be. There are issues around response time to being able to clean up body functions where people are unable to control them. They may be an attitude of staff. That is probably in itself the hardest one to deal with, is attitude. How do you prove a bad attitude? How do you prove a nasty attitude on behalf of an individual who just treats people without respect? This is a very hard thing. I know from my labour relations days, and I share that with Mr. McFarlane, it is a very hard area to prove. Yet it is a very real service issue to people who live in those facilities.

So here you have staff trying to balance those issues with ultimately the power to do only a very severe action, which is recommend the minister pull the licence. So I think that setup—I add, Mr. McFarlane finds with me that often the No. 1 issue of complaint that he has discovered is laundry. He tells me that this is ironical, and I do not mean to take away in any way from the complaints that we have had, but the No. 1 issue to date that he has noted in his work is it is issues related to laundry, that clothes are mixed up, they are not getting back to people the way they should, et cetera. That is a very frustrating thing for someone who is aged and in a personal care home.

* (1530)

So, when you have a host of these things, they may be indicative of a management that is not well organized or not very good at what it does, but it does not in itself provide enough weight on that balancing scale to say we are going to take the extraordinary step of pulling the licence. So what that sets off, what I think we have found in the branch and through Mr. McFarlane's work, is you set up a situation where the people who are there dealing with these issues find it very difficult to be able to come down hard to get the results that they want. Yes, they will get an improvement here and yes, they will get homes to make a change, but then, you know, six months later, you are back to maybe where you were. But the offence, mixing up laundry in that case or maybe taking a little too long to clean up a patient or some such thing or

being unfriendly, having an unfriendly atmosphere, is a hard thing on which to remove a licence and move 150 people in the dead of winter, but it is very important to the people living in the facility.

Holiday Haven also had that additional element of a social worker and some other issues that fit into that, so I do not want to take away from what the member says or take away from the issue, the seriousness of it. We are hoping, with this complaint procedure, with the addition of onsite inspections, with a push, I guess, ultimately towards more accreditation in the system and also the power of the minister to not have to pull a licence and move people—but if a situation really gets bad, that the staff then know that we can move in on a temporary basis, take over the administration of a facility and correct a lot of these what appear in isolation to be small problems but in a mass form can result in a pretty unhappy place in which to live, can move in for three months, six months, whatever is necessary to fix that systemic problem and make the changes in that system, and not have to endanger the health of the people because they have to move.

So the combination of this new system, the request to the Legislature for the additional power—and ultimately we have some staffing issues to deal with in terms of standards enforcement. That is one of the issues I am addressing right now with my senior executive. I am a great believer that the standards enforcement has to be housed a little ways away from operations, so even within the same organization it is a little more objective, a healthy tension perhaps where people are looking at standards, doing those kinds of spot checks. We also have some work to do on standards, as Mr. McFarlane has recognized, that some of our standards work to date is not quite where he and I would have it. Maybe we have a higher standard of standards, but we think standards should be a manual of ideal operation, and we need somewhere to go where those documents become much more a manual of ideal operation and very easily read and digested by the people who have to deliver the service.

There is one other point here; I have a note handed to me. The last point Mr. McFarlane flags with me is that audit of standards function has to be somewhat independent from the day-to-day administration and perceived to be as such. That is why when he and I

spoke about appeal boards and Manitoba health boards, ultimately some of these disputes of service may not get resolved, and there may not in themselves be enough to step in and take over a personal care home. There may be two sides to the story, and that is why ultimately having some appeal function or board which can hear both sides and in an independent, objective and consistent way make a recommendation or a determination is important. Temporarily we are using the Home Care Appeal board for any dispute settlement here, but our plan would be to have a much broader based health appeal board to deal with some of these things. That is one of our options today.

I have spoken a long time, but I hope I give the member a sense of where I am coming from, where I am at on this issue.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, so the reference to the appeal board that the minister just made is in reference to his earlier comments during the Estimates process when he said he was planning some kind of administrative appeal body to be put in place to deal with all appeals in the long-term area. The minister was talking about a judicial type of function to be set up for appeals. Is that what the minister is making reference to now?

Mr. Praznik: Well, what I am looking for is we have a Home Care Appeal body right now which, if you are not happy with a determination on whether your facts meet the criteria for service and it cannot be resolved by the supervisor at the supervisory level, you have a right to appeal to that board. A panel of that board will hear your facts, hear the department and make a determination and order care.

We also have a health appeal board that hears appeals on whether or not your monetary conditions are such that you meet whatever requirements in your dispute. I am sure from time to time we are going to have disputes about quality of service, whether a standard is being met, where there will be a dispute between an individual and their family and the people who operate the home, and it is not going to get resolved in reasonable discussions. Before the minister has to make a determination on any of these things, I would like to be able to have a body that builds up a body of experience in dealing with these matters, that can sit

down, hear that case and make a determination as to, yes, this is a reasonable service complaint, or no, really there is not a problem here and give people their day in court in essence to be able to have an independent group adjudicate on their complaint issue.

If you just sort of look—if we have the Home Care Appeal tribunal now or group now, they are going to take on this role. We have the Manitoba Health Board. It just makes good logical sense on a cursory review that combining those functions into one appeal board that would then have however many members you would require—but could sit in panels. Obviously, some would have expertise in different areas. We would be able to have a Francophone contingent to hear complaints in French, as is required by our language policy; all of those issues could be dealt with. It makes good logical sense. So I am looking at that at this current time. I share that with the member. I hope by next year I will have had a decision made if that is what we are going to do and it implemented if that is in fact what we are going to do, but I am sharing with him, I am thinking out loud a little bit and sharing my thoughts. There may be some reason why that does not work and that may be presented to me in the next number of months, and we can discuss that next year, but currently that is the way I am heading.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, I do not think the minister two questions ago was trying to avoid my question about the accountability issue with respect to Holiday Haven. I do not want to dwell so much, because there is so much area to cover, with respect to what happened at Holiday Haven, but some time between February 3 when the minister wrote to me about the complaints I had sent to him on November 22 wherein he said he could not comment on the management, in my opinion that the management should be taken over, and February 15 when Mr. Molnar died, somehow there was a change in the department with respect to whether or not the former management was capable of managing that home. Given that there has been no admission on anyone's part that in fact Mr. Molnar's death was directly attributed to the management at this point, or in fact we do not know, somehow it changed, and there was a recognition between February 3 and February 15 when the death occurred that in fact the management could no longer carry on at Holiday Haven, which to my mind

only made the point that we had recognized far earlier, that is, that the management was not capable of running that home.

* (1540)

There is enough information on file, I believe, and there was enough, and the minister talked about triggering, and I fully appreciate his comments, when is action triggered? When is it sufficient? There is no question that the temporary or the permanent takeover of management is a very, very unique move and is taken only after considerable thought and resources have been utilized, but clearly some time, the department certainly agreed to it after February 15, and therein lies the difficulty.

There is still a story to be told about what happened at Holiday Haven. It still, in my view, ought to come out in some kind of a form, if only in the minister has already recognized that there are serious difficulties and has proceeded to try to fill the gaps, but I think there is enough information that ought to come out yet that would surely show more failings in the system that could only help to improve the system in the future.

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Chair, the member asks a very fair question. What happened in that period? Well, I cannot answer for previous ministers. I cannot answer for previous staff. I can only answer for myself. I think much of it comes back to, and please appreciate, the member appreciate that I have spent a fair bit of time with Mr. McFarlane and my staff trying to get a handle on this myself. If I am going to be held accountable and responsible in the Legislative Assembly, I would like to know what is the root cause of some of this, and so I share my sense of it as someone who has been a cabinet minister for going on seven years and seen a fair bit administratively.

Again, my sense is that the nature of the system, the limited power to effect change, the, to some degree, standards that are not necessarily as readable or clear, that manual sense of standards—the standard is there, but maybe a little too broad-based in definition—all of these factors really contribute to a view that we have got to work with people to solve the problem, which we want to happen. I do not want to take that away.

But, ultimately, the only vehicle, if you cannot work with people, is to pull their licence, which, to recommend that to a minister, is such a harsh reality given whatever problems you are having, because you have 150 people at Holiday Haven in the midst of winter that you have to move out and find space for. I would say that you probably would put more people at risk for their lives moving them out in that weather into maybe crowded facilities than you would trying to continue to deal with the ongoing issues at Holiday Haven. So, given that balance, you result in maybe the lack of action to take over or make that recommendation that the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) and I may want to see.

So what happened, in essence, you have people working, trying to work things out, trying to work things out, trying to work things out, because their options are very, very limited despite the public perception that there are more.

As the minister, I noticed in my first few weeks on the job as I went through the huge amount of correspondence that of all the personal care homes in the province the one that I was signing off letters regarding complaints about the most was Holiday Haven, and we had that particular incident that he has flagged, and, again, we are not sure what caused the gentleman's death. That is why there is a coroner's inquest. We await that result. I hope the chief medical officer takes a fairly wide view in giving us recommendations. I am hoping he is not totally narrow. If there are things he thinks we could learn to improve the system, I would like to—or he learns that we can improve the system, I would like to know about it.

Having said that, once that happens—I mean, here I have all these letters of complaint, and I have this death, not knowing what the cause was, but it happened, and, obviously, this was of concern to us about the facility. I think it was a concern to the public, and I think it was necessary, and my department had been working for some time with the facility to make a very significant change in their management. Again, the powers to do that, to force that, were very limited. They were only to remove licence.

So, at that point, I made a decision as minister with my senior staff that we should approach Holiday

Haven's management and ask them to voluntarily give up management of that facility. By the way, I do not know if that has ever been done before. For the people who are working with me, they did not flag that with me as something that happened every day when we made the decision on Holiday Haven.

It is a very rare occurrence and perhaps just my style, but I thought, let us go, we have to do something here, and let us see if it is done voluntarily. Obviously, if they had refused, then I would have had to deal with that very tough issue of pulling their licence, knowing full well that we would have had to move out 150 people. I was hoping I would not have to have made that decision, because that is a tough decision to make, given the weather, the time of year and what you are going to do to those people. Fortunately, I did not have to make it because the owners of the facility voluntarily gave up their right to manage, and we managed to get someone else in. I am advised today, we are getting a much better response from the families and people in the facility and improvements are underway.

But the member has hit upon a very good issue in the sense that it is one that requires some work to get right in. I am hoping the steps we have taken and a few of the other things we are going to have to do in the next few months will give Manitobans a sense that the system is going to be able to work much faster and much more productively in resolving issues and ultimately protecting the safety of people in personal care homes.

The one caveat I put on this, Mr. Chair, is that, given the nature of our health care system, we are able to keep people home for longer periods than ever before with care. Ever before, within the health care system, people stayed at home before we had personal care homes. But we are able to keep people with home care comfortable in their homes longer than we have had since the advent of personal care homes. The consequence is that people who go into them are much older on average, much more in need of care and much more in need of a higher level of care. So the stresses that come with this are always going to be greater, so the one certainty, the one constant is that we will have problems from time to time. The question is are we able to deal with them speedily and in a positive way. I am hoping the steps we have taken are going to do

that. With that success, if we achieve it, will come a confidence that Manitobans can have in their system, and that is my plan.

Mr. Chomiak: I just want to indicate that I was very pleased at the time that the minister took the steps that he did. This is not generally the kind of question that lends itself to an answer, but I want to put it on the record nonetheless, and that is, the most frightening thing to me about the entire Holiday Haven matter was the fact—I am sure the minister will have a response to this, I am not totally confident in this area—when the death occurred, I fortunately heard about it from an individual. Then, I phoned all of my sources at Holiday Haven. The first individual who confirmed it said to me, yes, we knew about it, but so what? No one ever has done anything in the past at Holiday Haven anyway, so no one bothered to tell you.

I phoned a couple other sources who confirmed, because obviously I was not going to make this a major issue unless I could confirm it from very many sources. The frightening thing for me was people in the system knew about the death. Do not forget, it did not become a public issue until after the death, well after. I believe it was February 24. If the information had not come to me and I had not made it public, I am just not confident there may have not been a response. I do not feel good having to say that. Certainly, I mean the public does not even know a lot of the issues surrounding that. The medical officer, the doctor at Holiday Haven, quit as a result of this death. No one knows about that generally. I am not sure it would have been flagged, and I think that is one of the real tragedies for me personally as an MLA and for the system as well. I do not feel very good knowing that we had to get action the way we did and that is in the form of having to call a press conference in order to do it.

* (1550)

Mr. Praznik: On a personal note, I can tell the member whether he had a press conference or not, I appreciate why he had one. If I was in his shoes, I would have done exactly the same thing, and I would be asking exactly the same question. So my response is in no way meant to diminish his words. I can tell him this on a personal note that my decision to move was not related to his press conference, but the fact that

as a new minister, he has hundreds of things happening around you all the time. If something comes up, you ask for more information. Obviously having a press conference or not sometimes focuses you on an issue today instead of tomorrow morning. But, when the event happened, I asked the week before, I guess, for a full report from my staff, and I wanted what options we had to do something. It was based, by and large, on my going through all of these letters in my signing book realizing there is something wrong here, I do not know what it is, but it has been ongoing for a long time.

The real question is not whether Darren Praznik would have done it or not done it or David Chomiak had a press conference or not. The real issue is the system or process should in itself produce that same result no matter who sits in these chairs, and that is ultimately my goal here as well.

Now, it is a human system and it is a matter of judgment calls, and it is only going to be as good as the people we have in it. My intention here with Mr. McFarlane's good efforts is to move towards a standards manual ultimately that is much clearer and better than we have today. I want to see a system in place where people expect to have their work checked on a regular basis so that people know that is part of the system, that the standards are there, that they are not afraid of that. It is not a fearsome thing that we are here to continue to remind people to make the system better, and we know that the work is hard for the people who work in those facilities, but that because it is hard does not mean that we should not be trying to achieve our best.

Also, from a minister's sense, I want to have a system that is going to be able to pull off facilities from time to time that have significant problems or a systemic problem and flag them with me, if I am the minister, or the minister of the day. That ultimately means that the person we put who will be in charge of our Long Term Care unit, because I understand we have a vacancy in the directorship there and we have an acting director now who is close to retirement or within the next few years, as we look at restaffing that, as you do when you have significant change, whoever we have in that position in the long run is going to have to be someone who is very cognizant and can feel comfortable enough that if they flag a problem that they can take that

problem to the deputy minister and the minister and be supported in their recommendation because they have confidence in them and they are doing their job.

As a human system, I think that is the most we can ever ask for, because ultimately if there is a very serious problem to exercise the power to replace management, it has to get to the ministerial level. Whether that is through the complaint body recommendation that there is a problem here or the staff in the department, I have to make sure that is working, and that is my goal, and I share that with the member for Kildonan. I would like a system that can naturally feel comfortable enough when they have a problem that if they cannot resolve it at that level to move it up as part of the culture to be dealt with by the person who has the authority; the minister has the authority to take the necessary steps if people are at risk.

I do not know what else more one can do. It is very much a cultural thing in terms of how the system works and thinks about. That is one of the reasons I brought Mr. McFarlane in, because he is very, very good at working these kind of changes, and that is the only long-term way. That does not mean someday in the future you might have different players at the table. I hope the system can survive, whoever is at the table, to be able to generate that kind of information to the minister of the day on a timely matter that steps can be taken so that people are not at risk.

Mr. Chomiak: I am pleased with that response and I am glad to hear that the minister would have moved regardless. That was a major area of concern on my part. Did the minister or the department ever see the Nursing Home Association report that was produced?

Mr. Praznik: That report was done by them, I think, under agreement with us. They paid for that agreement. We were not provided with it, although I think our staff had a pretty good idea of a lot of the things that were in it, of which one recommendation was change of management or a significant change in the way they managed that facility. We were working with them; our staff were talking with them. Again, putting it in the context of the culture here, if you did not work cooperatively, your only remedy was to pull the licence, which is such a severe remedy, given the danger in

which you put the people who live there with a move in winter and having beds available that it does force that kind of—okay, let us keep working at it, and that is where we were.

So, although I do not think we have ever received that report, a lot of it was shared with our staff or they were aware of it, as I am sure the member has had information shared with him. Time marched beyond that report, and the circumstances of the early winter and our decision to make that request of their management really implemented the report on a very quick basis if that is in fact what its recommendation was.

Mr. Chomiak: Given that report was—

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Chair, I was just notified by Mr. McFarlane, if I left any impression that the current acting director in that area was being held responsible for this, I certainly do not want to do that. My observation about how a system works—I do not think this was the result of a malfeasance or misfeasance by any staff. As Mr. McFarlane points out to me, part of the difficulty in the Long Term Care branch is that they have to work with personal care homes in a whole host of areas, not just problems with meeting standards. So the working relationship is such that we encourage them to be co-operative and wanting to work with people and resolve issues in that way, because that is the biggest part of their job. That is why, in fact, when we talk about my thinking of reorganizing the department, one of Mr. McFarlane's observations is that the enforcement of standards should very much be removed from the part of the department that deals with people operationally so that there is another piece of the branch that is doing the spot checking, doing the spot auditing, doing the regular inspections and coming back and then saying to the administrative branch: you have a problem in this personal care home. In that way you are not putting people in the position where they are having to have an ongoing daily working relationship with the management of a facility on a host of issues and then also be the enforcers. It does create a natural human conflict there that is not productive.

So the nature of which this thing has been organized for 30 years, I think, has led to some of these difficulties. That is why, if you notice, we are trying to

make that move. So Mr. McFarlane suggested I clarify that, and I totally agree. I think I would not want the current acting director to be—they are so conscientious in their work, and I feel so bad over some of these things, and operate in a place where the tools they have to do this job are also so limited. That is part of the reason why we are adding to the box of tools for them. I want to put it in that sense.

Mr. Chomiak: I certainly do not want to be seen to be unfairly attacking staff. I just wanted to make that clear as well. I guess what I am still not clear on is if we were to run into a Holiday Haven-type scenario again, which, I think, is less likely—you see, part of the frustration that both I and advocates on behalf of Holiday Haven had was that we were assured problems were being looked after. There was a consultant's report that was being prepared. Now, little did we—well, we did know that there were recommendations to change the management which is why I wrote to the ministry saying I know about this recommendation; how are you following up?

* (1600)

Wherein will the department now have the controls and wherein will the department now step in to ensure that—what effectively happened here was management skirted around their responsibilities. Management—and I have no problem saying this, management covered up. Management were wholly inadequate and incapable and kept running away from their responsibilities, and somehow there was no way the department could force them into the situation where they could be accountable.

The presence of an outside consultant's report, which we had accepted as perhaps a possible solution, was, in fact, no solution because there was no way that those recommendations were coming forward to the department.

I mean, wherein are the controls and wherein is the ability now to make sure that that scenario does not repeat itself?

Mr. Praznik: The member asks what concerns me as well in setting this up, and I think the difference is, with respect to staff, twofold, is that our standards

enforcement audit group that we will be assembling and building over the next while within Mr. Potter's part of the department has a mandate that will be very focused. We will be building that out of, I guess, existing resources and putting it together, but much more focused. And they will have available to them, if this Legislative Assembly puts into law our request in The Regional Health Authorities Amendment Act for the powers of the minister to take over management.

That tool in itself, I think, is a very strong tool because it alleviates or reduces the legal liabilities. If there is cause, the minister has the authority from the Legislature to step in and on an interim basis take over management. That is a huge tool, not only in a practical sense, but I think in the cultural sense of enforcement of standards because now you can make a serious move if you are not getting co-operation from a facility, if they are not acting quickly enough, and patient care is at risk, is the way we have worded it, not that lives are at risk, but patient care is at risk. Then the ministry can move in on the authority of the minister and on an interim basis take over that facility. They did not have that power.

So I would think as part of the culture of dealing with standards, the caution, the reluctance that staff may have in working with facilities which are quite reluctant, actually, to work with them, they now have a tremendous tool because they do not have to go the minister and say kill the licence, and the minister says, what are you going to do with 150 people?

Now they can say, Mr. Minister, here is our case. There is a problem here. Here are our complaints. This is documented. These people have had plenty of time to solve the problem; they are not doing it. The minister can say, okay, should we act here? Yes. What can we do? We can step in and appoint an interim manager, and that interim manager might be two weeks, maybe three weeks.

Even the threat of that interim manager, I think, is a huge tool to get the management of personal care homes, both private and nonprofit, to respond to the department to fix a problem whether it be a small one or a large one. That tool does not exist today, will not exist until we have that in our legislation, but it will, I

believe, change the nature of the enforcement of standards in a very positive way.

Mr. Chomiak: When the minister indicated that Mr. McFarlane first indicated that the major concerns he heard from personal care homes was that laundry concerns were a major concern, I was first surprised and then on reflection was not when I consider the kind of problems one hears about. I differ though with respect to what is the major concern in province with respect to personal care homes. [interjection]

I am sorry, the minister is correcting me, that it is in fact the No. 1 complaint.

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Chair, I believe we were saying it is the No. 1—in terms of frequency of complaints, it is the No. 1 complaint; we did not say it was the No. 1 concern. Laundry, and I think there is an important distinction there I wanted to clarify.

Mr. Chomiak: I think that is a correct clarification and it has been more aptly put, but it does lead to my next line of questioning and that is, one of the individuals I respect a lot in the personal care home field advised me this way with respect to personal care homes. He said that 10 or 15 years ago in a personal care home 75 percent of your patients were ambulatory, 25 percent were nonambulatory. Today it is just the opposite, and the minister has alluded to that in several of his answers.

To my mind the key issue, the single most significant issue with respect to personal care homes, is the staff configuration and staff mix. I do not think that we will make any progress in terms of improving situations in personal care homes until the staff mix issue and the staff volumes are dealt with. That was identified in the steering committee report as well. I am wondering if the minister might comment specifically on the staff issue as it relates to personal care homes.

Mr. Praznik: I have said on numerous occasions in the Legislature, and publicly as well, that is one of the issues that concerns me, both in personal care homes and hospitals, is that the degree of severity of people who will be using those institutions are today and will be in the future much greater. The same is true of our hospitals, very much so. Hospital stays or length of

stay are way down. The severity of people who have to stay in overnight is way up. There is much more laser surgery, day surgery, various procedures that are less intrusive and consequently recovery times are faster. Those people are out of the system. Those who are left in our institutions are in much greater need of care.

That is going to continue to put greater pressure on our staff in those facilities. Even if workloads are handled, I think it is much harder to be dealing every day with people who are nonambulatory, maybe much older, maybe suffering from dementia. It is a gruelling way in which to earn one's living to often have to work in those circumstances. For many, there are many who thrive on it, and I have met many of them in personal care homes who enjoy that work greatly and feel very personally rewarded by it, but over time it is very difficult work. I think we all acknowledge it would not be an easy way that I would want to earn my living, and I have a great deal of respect for people working in those facilities.

What is my challenge as the Minister of Health? Well, understand the playing field. We understand that need is increasing. We also understand that the training, consequently salary levels of staff working in health care have increased in many ways. A lot of that pressure can be taken off, in my opinion, and this is again a cursory judgment, by adding more hands in the giving of care. In many of those, particularly personal care homes, the requirement is for more hands, for hands-on care. We have put in additional dollars each year for increases in levels of care, or facilities have had an increase in their level of care requirements, but I would suspect over the next few years we are going to have to look at how do we get actually more hands working in a number of these facilities. There is a certain amount one can do in increasing the efficiency of how we do work. A lot of that has gone on its way, but ultimately it is hands in hospitals and personal care homes. That is why some of the issues we have touched upon with staff aides, nurse's aides, whatever we want to call them, developing that program, adjusting staff mixes to be able to give us more hands-on care are going to be an important part of where we proceed in the future.

* (1610)

This is one area that if I had my druthers, I guess, and could find a few more resources for is an area that increasing the staff side we would obviously have to look at. But I recognize what the member is saying, and that is going to be the big issue for us and facilities over the next number of years is getting, particularly personal care homes, more hands-on kind of care levels and appropriate training to do that job.

Just another point here if the member would just give me a second. By the way, that is not just a challenge for government, but it is a challenge for the people who administer these homes whether they be profit or nonprofit homes. There is going to be some real hard work needed in this area in the next few years, but I think we agree that it is a concern and it is an area that has to be addressed, and I am hoping over the next few years we are going to be able to get a few more hands in these facilities to do that basic care work.

Mr. Chomiak: Without going into too long a question, the minister will know that in '93 there were problems in some nursing homes, that the steering committee was set up and made a report. The minister will know that there were 39 recommendations that came out in June of '95, and that many of these recommendations dealt with issues that we actually have talked about in the last few days. Some of them clearly are being implemented. Can we get an update on the implementation of the 39 recommendations made in the steering committee report?

Mr. Praznik: I would love to be able to table a list of those and their status. The information I have, I had some questions about, and I am having staff revisit some of those issues. So I cannot table that with the member today. I can tell him this: When this issue came to light, and I have had Mr. McFarlane look into it, many of those recommendations were ones related to education, and there were a host of other things that I think have been done. How effective they have been, I mean, time will tell. There are others where there was some work done but not as much as we would have liked ultimately, and I have had staff go back to reassess what has to be done. So today I cannot give him that, but if the member gives me some more time with Mr. McFarlane in this area we perhaps will be able to review that in a better context in the future.

Ms. Bakken is here. Do members plan to go into capital after the break?

Mr. Chomiak: Probably. We are going till six, right?

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Chair, if we could do capital today, I would appreciate it, and leave sort of general stuff, touch-ups, on Monday in that hour and a half. The reason why is, Ms. Bakken is here and, as the member knows, we are preparing—we have so much underway in capital right now that her time is really better spent in her office. So if we can do it this afternoon, I would appreciate it.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, yes, my plan was to get to capital probably later, but why do we not just agree after the break we will slip into capital—I do not think the questioning will be as extensive as it has been in this area—and then we will come back and just continue going.

The committee recessed at 4:15 p.m.

After Recess

The committee resumed at 4:28 p.m.

Mr. Chomiak: Just to sort of wind up this portion, is the minister indicating that he will be providing us with updates at some point as to the 39 recommendations contained in the report?

Mr. Praznik: Yes, I will. I am asking my staff to make sure we do, and we have got all of our work done in implementing, that we can provide a report to him. If I do not, I know the member will remind me, and we will provide it at that time.

Mr. Chomiak: I presume we are now going to move into the area of capital. I wonder if the minister can table for me, he was going to provide me with some specific information with respect to the capital projects to the best that he had. I wonder if we might have access to that.

* (1630)

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Chair, as I indicated, this was sort of an extraordinary year for us, a little different. There are

only—I said five the other day, there are six projects actually, I missed the Sharon Home—that have been approved: Health Sciences Centre, which is an area, a project to address the most critical patient areas in need of redevelopment such as the adult and pediatric operating rooms, intensive care beds, and emergency departments; Brandon General Hospital, again to deal with their most critical infrastructure issues involving operating theatres, emergency department, pharmacy and some building fabric and building systems in their general centre; Boundary Trails, which is a new hospital which will allow for the closure of the current Morden and Winkler facilities; Sharon Home, a new 60-bed personal care home to replace 60 existing beds at the Sharon site on Magnus; a 102-bed facility at the existing Lions Manor on Portage Avenue, which is replacing 62 hostel-style beds. The personal care facility will add another component to a full continuum of care and services provided by their housing corporation; Betel Home, which would be a new 100-bed facility in the west end of Winnipeg linked to the elderly persons' housing unit owned by the Betel Foundation. So those are the six projects that have been approved to date.

We have a \$10-million fund available for conversions for rural health authorities. We expect to start receiving proposals later this summer, early this fall, as those facilities work—is that correct?

We should start to receive some of those proposals, I would hope, early in the fall. It might take a little longer for some who are doing their needs assessment. We have a \$10-million fund for the regular upgrade in safety and security. We also have another tranche of dollars that have been identified for major—I would not say major—other projects that will flow out of the needs assessments of the regional health authorities.

Mr. Chair, if there are specifics that the member has with respect to any one of these announced programs, I would be delighted to have Ms. Bakken address her answers directly to the committee. I think that would save a fair bit of effort and time.

Mr. Chairperson: So it is agreed under this area of capital that Ms. Bakken will answer some of the questions? [agreed]

Mr. Chomiak: Just prior to perhaps—because there are policy and related issues, so I will frame the question and the minister can determine who best will respond. Normally, in terms of the capital program, we see a three-stage program in the announcement of capitalization, the actual capital, then the committed drawings and the various processes. Where are we this year with respect to the overall capital program, and can the minister put a number on it?

Mr. Praznik: I am going to have Ms. Bakken answer that with respect to the estimated value. She and her staff are the ones who are working on the detail of this, so she is far better to answer this than I.

Ms. Linda Bakken (Director, Facilities Development, Department of Health): Two of the projects that have been announced, their drawings are complete, so they would be in the—what you would be familiar with is the approved-for construction category. If we are successful at negotiating a project with those two proponents, we should be able to go to construction in the fall.

An Honourable Member: Which two?

Ms. Bakken: Betel and Lions.

The Health Sciences Centre, we are in the process of actually coming to grips with the size and the siting of those components on the site, and if all things go well, the first construction should begin in the spring of 1999. The Boundary Trails Health facility design will begin, again, in about two months, and, again, if all things go well, we should begin construction in the spring of '99.

The Brandon project will have a number of construction starts. The first project that will go to construction is their new energy plant. There are some clinical components there and some other sort of infrastructure upgrades that will come along in various stages. The Sharon Home is still very much in the idea stage, and the board of the Sharon Home has not determined whether they want to build in the south end of the city or linked to the existing Sharon Home, so we are still very much working with that organization around where the home will be. Therefore, the design has not started.

Mr. Chomiak: Where does the Cancer Treatment Foundation capital fit into this plan?

Ms. Bakken: The Cancer Foundation project was announced by the government in the spring, prior to Mr. Praznik's sitting in the Chair, and that project is anticipated to begin construction around November or December of this year. It is well into what we call design development and will soon be going into working drawings.

Mr. Chomiak: On an individual basis can we place some values—is it possible to place some capital values on each of the projects? For example, we know Betel and Lions have both approved their construction, what the value is, and then is it possible to do that as well with the Health Sciences, Boundary, Brandon, Sharon and the Cancer Treatment?

Ms. Bakken: The actual value, construction value or project value is usually not announced until the construction contract is signed. That is when the public is made aware of what the costs are.

Mr. Praznik: I think the member will appreciate part of the difficulties if we put even an estimate value that will probably be close to where our tenders come in, so we can probably give a total value on the overall package for all of the projects that have been flagged—an estimate. But, again, with the specifics, it has not been policy to reference that in huge detail until tenders have been let and results have been determined, just as the member appreciates. We want to get the best deal on construction we can, but I think we can provide an overall estimate.

Ms. Bakken: The estimated value of the six capital projects that were announced in the spring of this year is \$156 million. That is for the Department of Health's share, and the value of the Cancer Foundation project was announced when the Cancer Foundation approval announcement went out, and that is \$38 million, \$23 million of which is coming from the province, and the remainder is coming from the Cancer Foundation itself.

Mr. Chomiak: So just for clarification, Health Sciences, Brandon, Boundary, Sharon, Lions and Betel comprise a total of \$156 million.

Ms. Bakken: Yes, it is \$156 million of the province's contribution. The cost is estimated to be a little bit more and has taken into consideration the requirement for community contribution.

Mr. Chomiak: When we look into our capital Estimates under appropriation No. 7, of course, we see total capital of \$66.6 million. That, I understand, entails a variety of other projects including the upgrades and the conversions, but, just for my understanding, is it a fair conclusion to state that within the \$66 million allocated this year, that will include the provincial portion of the total cost of the six projects for this year that you have made reference to.

I know it is more complicated than that, so maybe you could explain it to me.

* (1640)

Ms. Bakken: The amount of money that is in this year's Estimates is the cost associated with supporting the capital program in this fiscal year. So there will be a cost associated with those six projects in future fiscal years.

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Chair, the bulk of the cost of those projects, obviously, will be in future years, and that is taking into account, I think, going seven or eight years out on our capital program.

Mr. Chomiak: Can we get an individual breakdown or a breakdown as to what extent each of the individual organizations are required to put up capital for their projects?

Mr. Praznik: Under our new policies, the member appreciates, we are looking for a 20 percent capital contribution on those projects. That is capped at \$6 million in total. So, obviously, the Health Sciences project by its nature is much more significant than 20 percent equating with \$6 million. The exact amount of that contribution is dependent on what the estimates are, and those are part of the confidential negotiations that go on with the sponsors.

I know, Mr. Chair, this must be terribly frustrating for members because the numbers always put things in perspective, but the reason why we do not get into

them, and I put on the record again, is we do not want to be tipping our hand prematurely on the tendering price. We do want to try to achieve the best price, but I appreciate the frustration that this does cause.

Mr. Chomiak: I am wondering if it is possible to get some specifics on precisely what each of the major—and I appreciate the minister has just given me a list—capital projects entails, because, specifically, if one is to look to both Brandon and the Health Sciences Centre, they have been on the books for some time, and knowing the experience of the cancer treatment institute, there are changes, and I understand there are changes, but we are trying to get grips as to what the Health Sciences Centre proposal consists of—what improvements, where and to what extent—as well as the Brandon project.

Mr. Praznik: I am going to table, I guess—I do not know if this was a press release or a draft press release. It was a draft at some time, but I think it contains a fair bit of the information. Everything in it is accurate? I look to my staff. Let me just check it to make sure since it was a draft.

Mr. Chair, I have no problem. I would like to just table this. I think this will provide—it will be fairly insightful to the member for Kildonan. I only have one copy, so if staff could—thank you.

Mr. Chomiak: I thank the minister for providing me with that information. I look forward to a review and some questions in that regard.

The minister talked about a \$10-million conversion program, as well as a \$10-million upgrade for safety. I wonder if we might have some specifics in terms of how the \$10-million conversion program works, as well as some specifics with respect to what is happening in terms of the upgrade, safety and security, and where the upgrade, safety and security, is related to.

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Chair, I think I will answer the queries with respect to the conversion plan, and I am going to leave the safety and upgrade issue to Ms. Bakken to give some detail to. She is well aware of the needs there better than I.

With respect to the conversion, what we wanted to achieve with that is with regionalization there are many

facilities in rural and northern parts of Manitoba, particularly rural Manitoba, that are terribly underutilized today or inappropriately utilized.

I know in the Marquette region, just some very rough numbers, we are short somewhere close to 75 personal care home beds in that region. We probably have a hundred acute care hospital beds more than that region requires. Common sense would dictate that by converting underutilized or unused hospital beds into personal care home beds, that it makes much better use of a facility. There are some facilities that are very underutilized today in a hospital role and are looking at—in fact, even before regionalization were talking about becoming health centres, centres for community, long-term care, et cetera.

So what we realized if our policy here is not to close facilities, it is to make them relevant, and if facilities are going to become more relevant, that may require some capital need. They may have some capital needs to change their structure.

I share with the member the example in my own constituency of Pine Falls some years ago, a great demand for dialysis. We wanted to put a dialysis unit in the Pine Falls Hospital. Where do you put it? I think we took out eight or nine empty beds, beds that were not used. They did some consolidation of wards there, so that actually they could have a more efficient operation with their nursing stations. We put the dialysis unit into where there had been rooms before. No one missed the rooms because they were not being used, by and large, or were terribly underutilized, and today we have a much better used facility with a relevant need for that community being filled.

But that takes some capital. I do not know how much it took to convert those rooms. We recognize, though, if you are going to encourage people to do this, you have to have some money available on a quick basis to further those conversions of space from one function or underutilized function to a more used function.

So our Treasury Board this year has given us \$10 million for this year. I suspect many of these conversions are going to happen, and they could be relatively small conversions. They may not require a long-term planning process in terms of architectural

design. Some of them may be rather short order. So we have \$10 million in this year's budget to commit. If we require more next year, we will have to look at that again.

We also have to encourage people to get the best use out of their facilities. We have also not put a community capital contribution into the conversion program. So we have asked RHAs now to look at their needs as they do their needs survey. I know some of them have some very obvious examples that they want to proceed on. They will probably be early in the fall. Others need a little bit more time, so we expect come September to start getting the first idea of what kinds of projects we are going to see under this fund.

But I have to have some money there in order to facilitate that kind of thinking, that people knew that if they rethought the function of their facility and could get a better use of it by maybe putting in a doctors' clinic, as an example, or converting personal care home beds or whatever, putting the public health offices or home care offices into unused space, that if they realized and could justify that that was going to make the facility more relevant, they needed some dollars on a quick basis to get in and do the job, and we wanted to do this. I do not want to lose the good momentum that has developed.

So that is why this fund is there. It requires no community contribution. We are drafting up some criteria, I think, to make sure that we are going to see the dollars used appropriately. I know this \$10 million we expect on our projects to be used over three years in total. If we have a greater demand on it, we may have to look at increasing it, but at this stage of the game we think it is a good start on encouraging this kind of rational thinking of how we use our facilities to make sure they are relevant and well used.

* (1650)

Mr. Chomiak: I believe Ms. Bakken was going to discuss fire and safety.

Ms. Bakken: The money that has been allocated by the province for what we call the safety and security really speaks to the safety and security of the infrastructure and the care of patients, residents or staff

in them, and, therefore, the money can be earmarked for something like an air-handling system in an infection-control situation which would be a patient-safety issue, or it could be earmarked for replacing the brick that is falling off of a building.

I have a number of examples here that both create environments to improve the safety of patients or residents as well as to maintain the buildings in safe and effective operating. We have approved replacement of the chillers at the Brandon General Hospital. We have replaced the skylights at the Brandon General Hospital. We have done a large number of roof repairs, air conditioning equipment—I see so many roof repairs here—elevator repairs, emergency department relocations, a number of fire commissioner upgrades, flooring repairs when the floor gets to the point that it needs to be totally repaired, upgrading of wastewater systems, air handling system for tuberculosis control, fire detection devices, renovations to accommodate wheelchair accessible washrooms, fuel oil tank replacement, replacement of the outer shell at the Victoria Hospital. That is the kind of thing that has been funded out of the safety and security fund.

Mr. Chomiak: Is there a special consideration or fund with respect to personal care homes in ensuring the facilities have the appropriate wards and the appropriate security in place to deal with recommendations in the steering committee report and other reports dealing with dementia and the isolating of patients in common areas, et cetera?

Ms. Bakken: The personal care homes have access to this fund and the kind of a project that you have just described would meet the criteria for resident safety.

Mr. Chomiak: When I look at the individual projects such as the Brandon General Hospital project, I understand that Brandon is to have a facility to deal with psychiatric and/or mental health patients. Is that included within the allocation for Brandon? If it is not, where is the accounting for that in the time line?

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Chair, I know there is a separate budget fund to deal with the mental health reform, and Ms. Bakken will speak to that.

Ms. Bakken: That particular project is actually under construction at Brandon General right now. It is part of a number of projects that were approved by government as part of the mental health reform.

Mr. Chomiak: As I understand, there were exclusions previous when the Health capital was frozen for mental health projects. Can we have just the general description as to what projects are going forward and the dollar number value with respect to those areas of mental health that have been excluded from the original freeze that was put in place?

Ms. Bakken: Yes, I will start in the North. There is a project approved for Thompson which is now under construction; a project in The Pas which will go to construction very shortly. The project in Dauphin is now under construction; the project in Portage is now under construction; the project in Selkirk is now under construction. Two projects in Brandon are now under construction. They are the adult psychiatry, acute psychiatry and the psychogeriatric. An additional project in Brandon is still in design. It is the child and adolescent centre.

Our deputy minister has just pointed out to me that in the printed Estimates, the mental health capital projects for '97-98 have been voted \$8.474 million. It is part of what appears as Other Capital Projects 21.7(d) in Expenditures Related to Capital, with a total of \$18.5 million.

Mr. Chomiak: I would like to go through some specifics on the Health Sciences Centre project. It indicates in the press release that the adult and pediatric operating rooms are being dealt with. Are we constructing new operating rooms for adults and for pediatric surgery at the Health Sciences Centre, and how many are we constructing?

Ms. Bakken: The operating theatres will be new. The exact number of operating theatres is now under discussion with the Health Sciences Centre. I anticipate that an agreement will be reached in the next three months.

Mr. Chomiak: Does that include that agreement? Does that include pediatric and adult?

Ms. Bakken: Yes, it includes pediatric and adult ORs, pediatric and adult intensive care units, and pediatric and adult emergency departments.

Mr. Chomiak: Is it safe to assume that in the pediatric operating section of Children's Hospital that the present five operating rooms are going to be retired?

Ms. Bakken: Yes.

Mr. Chomiak: Is it also safe to assume that the ICU units are going to be converted or retired?

Ms. Bakken: You are getting into some of the details of architectural solution to the problems, okay, and all of those have not been worked out. We will attempt to utilize existing space if it lends itself to creating environments that meet today's standards, and there are a number of architectural solutions on the table right now, and the final one has not been determined.

Mr. Chomiak: Regardless of how many operating rooms are going to be functioning at Health Sciences Centre, adult, is it safe to assume that the present operating rooms will be retired?

Ms. Bakken: You can assume that the existing OR theatres for adults and children will be retired.

Mr. Chomiak: I know this is difficult, but is it also safe to assume that there will be an increased number of ICU beds resulting from the ultimate configuration once constructed and approved?

Ms. Bakken: The exact number of ORs and the exact number of ICUs is being planned in the context of the urban hospital restructuring, and it is being directed by the task forces that existed about a year ago. The need for increasing the number or decreasing the number will occur in the context of an urban health plan.

Mr. Praznik: What I would just like to point out is, I guess as a new minister coming into this and inheriting the plans, what I am trying to achieve with the Winnipeg Hospital Authority is the best utilization of existing resources. We have some operating theatres now in the city of Winnipeg that are underutilized or not utilized at all. Some are locked. Before we build new ones, we want to ensure that we are making use of

what we have. That obviously has a result in intensive care space and configuration of services, which has to fit in the plan. So in fairness to Ms. Bakken, some of those practical decisions have yet to have been made, and when they do that will affect the kind of numbers over which we are negotiating.

* (1700)

Mr. Chomiak: I thank the minister for that response. I was not trying to trap Ms. Bakken. The fact is that the operating rooms at Children's Hospital are the worst in the country and it is acknowledged by everyone, as well as the operating rooms, for the most part, at the Health Sciences Centre are the worst in the country, as has been acknowledged by everyone. What I was attempting to ascertain is, regardless of the configuration, the number, just trying to assume that, trying to determine that there will be, in fact, proper operating rooms that will occur in the future, and clearly that is going to be the case as a result of this project.

The minister talked about the taking out of service of 100,000 square feet at Health Sciences Centre. I wonder if we could have an explanation as to what is meant and what that entails.

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Chair, I would like to table this today, but I am not in a position to because these are still matters we are negotiating with facilities, and also this comes out of the proposal with MDS. If we are unable to conclude an arrangement with MDS, this cannot be realized. So I am not in a position to table this today, but I can tell him in total, in existing lab space across the facilities in Winnipeg, we have some 153,000-plus square feet of space. It is estimated by our department we would still require 53,000 of that, I guess, on-site work within labs in the part of the lab work that still best stay in the hospital. So it does make available about 100,000 square feet at Health Sciences Centre. My estimate is that there would be somewhere in the neighbourhood—I do not have the estimate, but it is a rather significant amount of square feet, and if we are able to make an arrangement with MDS, a suitable arrangement, it will free up somewhere around 35,000-40,000 square feet of space, in that neighbourhood, which allows for then conversion on a much faster basis than new construction.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, does the capital for the Emergency department at Health Sciences Centre imply a replacement to the existing Emergency department?

Ms. Bakken: Mr. Chairperson, we anticipate that we will have to replace both of the spaces, but again you are getting into architectural solutions. At the end of the project you will see a brand new Emergency department.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, does any of the capital entail equipment, or is that a separate line item?

Ms. Bakken: The capital budget includes the equipment that is required for the parts of the facility that are being redeveloped.

Mr. Chomiak: How will the capital function differ once the regional boards are up and running?

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Chair, Ms. Bakken may want to give some detail as to the process, but we are now dealing with regional health authorities. In essence, we are dealing with them directly on their capital construction needs as opposed to individual boards. The boards, if there still is a facility that is governing, they obviously enter into that as a facility as part of that negotiation. I understand in the Boundary Trails case, for example, the RHA is involved, but they have struck a committee or are using the former building committee or hospital board in some way because they had the knowledge of the project. Ms. Bakken may want to give some more detail.

Ms. Bakken: Mr. Chairperson, the next capital program that the government announces will be one based on the recommendations of the regional health authorities. Capital projects must come in recommended by the regional health authority and set within the context of their community health needs assessment and their business plan. When there is a nondevolved health facility, it too will have to have its capital requirements recommended by the regional health authority to ensure that there has been regional planning and prioritization of the infrastructure requirements within the health authority.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, under the budgetary line item 21.4.(d) under Personal Care Homes it indicates the grant for personal care homes as \$238,265,900. Does that entail any capital?

Ms. Bakken: Mr. Chairman, it includes the interest component for projects that have been completed. The capital component or the principal component is on page 105 under (b) the Personal Care Homes Program (1) Principal Repayments.

Mr. Chomiak: Then perhaps this question will go to the minister. When questioned during the release of the budget, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson) made the argument that the Personal Care Home funding was down some \$6.5 million because of the capital or the interest or some kind of capital-related payment.

I wonder if the minister might explain to me how that works.

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Chair, I am going to ask Sue Murphy, who is one of our senior Finance people to explain this because it was she and Linda Bakken and their staff who were challenged with the responsibility of finding the best way of spending \$150 million of new cash.

I have to appreciate, we have funded our capital facilities not on a pay-as-you-go but on a financed paydown, sinking-fund basis. Last winter, after the sale of MTS, it was our Treasury Board's proposal to us that if they gave us \$150 million from those proceeds, how could we best influence our capital program? Should we be spending it on new construction, or what is the best way to do it?

These two individuals in their respective areas spent a great deal of effort in analyzing everything up, down, sideways and over to come up with the best way to get the most value out of that \$150,000, and appreciate that their decision was made in the context of a policy decision of government which I defend here today that we would eventually move from having a Health capital budget which was a financed budget where we borrowed money and we financed the principal and interest over time, where we would convert over a number of years—and it would take some time; we are not going to do it overnight—but over time would get to

the goal of having a pay-as-you-go capital program like we do in Highways, that, in essence, whatever amount of money we were spending on capital would be spent in that year, and we would eliminate the financing costs which would be a more efficient way of ensuring dollars going into Health capital. Now, it is going to take many years to get there, but we are on that road.

* (1710)

In essence, what our hope was was that if we could maintain a constant level of funding over time as we pay down on sinking funds existing debt for construction that has already taken place, the savings on the interest would then become a new capital budget. We recognized over time that that would limit our construction to very little for the first few years until eventually we had eliminated our capital debt. This, obviously, creates some problems because capital needs regular infusion. There is work that needs to be done.

So, in that context, I am going to leave it to both of these individuals to I think answer the member's question and also if there are any others flowing from why we made the decision we did to use the \$150 million to pay down debt as opposed to new construction. So I turn it over to Ms. Murphy.

Mr. Chairperson: Order, please. Is it the will of the committee to allow Ms. Murphy to answer some questions in this capital area? [agreed]

Ms. Susan Murphy (Director, Finance and Administration, Department of Health): Mr. Chairperson, the question is related specifically to personal care homes, first of all, in the Personal Care Home line in 21.4(d), and the member is referring to what appears to be a reduction in the overall line and the expenditures for 1997-98.

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

First of all, there is a reduction in the interest component for 1997-98 of about \$8.9 million which is a direct reflection of the paydown of \$150 million in debt in 1996-97 and also a result of a reduction in interest rate between 7.5 percent and 6.5 percent. Interest rates have in fact reduced over the last period of years, and when the department is funded on an

annual basis for what its interest costs are, it is funded on the basis of what current interest rates are. So the combination of those two factors means that there is a saving in 1997-98 of about \$8.9 million.

You will notice that the decrease overall in that particular line is only \$6 million, so there have in fact been increased costs that are reflected in there as well. One of them, for example, is increased staffing levels, which were referred to earlier, of approximately \$1.9 million and some other items such as annualization of construction costs and other various increases. But that also applies to the hospital program where in the operating side there are interest costs on an annual basis of the component of outstanding debt, which is in the operating side of hospitals and personal care homes, so the same applies in the hospital. The principal repayment is in, as I pointed out before, page 105, and the principal has been reduced to some degree as well because of that \$150-million paydown.

Mr. Chomiak: Can you give me the commensurate figure for the reduction on the numbers for the hospital side as well?

Ms. Murphy: It is approximately \$10.5 million as well. Now the major part of that is a reflection of the reduction in interest rate as most of the \$150 million in paydown was for personal care home loans in 1996-97. The greater part of the paydown was in the personal care home program, then the hospital, but between the two programs, on the operating side it is approximately \$20 million in interest that was saved in '97-98.

Mr. Chomiak: So the \$8.9 million is a reduction in interest payments that would have occurred had the province not taken part of that fund and reallocated it?

Ms. Murphy: Mr. Chairperson, it is a combination of the two things; the majority is a result of a \$150-million paydown of debt, which would be similar to you or I making a lump-sum payment on a mortgage or paying our mortgage off, and the remainder of it is the interest rate reduction from 7.5 percent to 6.5 percent on short-term loans.

Mr. Chomiak: Can you give an indication as to how much principal was reduced on both the personal care home side and the hospital side?

Ms. Murphy: I would have to come back tomorrow with that. I am not certain of the breakdown.

Mr. Chomiak: Do we have figures as to what the interest payments were on the personal care home side for '96-97?

Ms. Murphy: I can get it for the member, but it is not here.

Mr. Chomiak: I think that takes care of my questioning on that particular item.

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Dyck): Item 21.7.(a)(1) Principal Repayments—

An Honourable Member: No, no, Mr. Chair. We are not there yet. Let us just carry on with his questions.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, one of the issues that I wanted to try to determine is how many net new beds are we going to see as a result of the personal care home projects. [interjection] It does not add up. I think I need an explanation as to how it is determined that there are 262 full-service care home beds that are being put in place when, in fact, some beds are going to be taken out of circulation. I just do not understand that number.

Ms. Bakken: Mr. Chairperson, could I see the document that you are referring to? Thank you. I would like to get back to you on the specifics of this, but basically the Sharon Home project is a replacement of substandard beds and the Lions Manor project will replace 62 substandard beds and build 102, so that the actual addition to the system is the difference between those two numbers, whereas the Betel Home will be a pure addition. If our numbers at the bottom here do not add up, I will provide you a written explanation tomorrow.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, we have had a lot of fun with bed numbers throughout the years, and I am not trying to be tricky on this. It just does not add up in terms of—but maybe it is something that I am not seeing. I appreciate the fact that we are going to have an explanation come back. Regrettably, I do not have a lot of questions at this point in terms of the capital. I say regrettably because I cannot find it within my card

system, but that will have to be as it may. I am suggesting we can perhaps go back to where we were, which I believe was the Home Care line, and begin to pass some of the line items and go through some of the systematic questioning and then proceed on that basis.

* (1720)

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Chairman, my staff have just reminded me that I have some things that the member has asked for. I think he asked for the “Nursing Resources in Manitoba” report for 1996. Actually, he looked for a general plan. The only caveat I would put onto this—it is a public document, but the only caveat I would put on is any of the discussions that we have had around this table with respect to roles and professions and some of the voids and changes is a caveat to these documents. They are not written in stone. I will table those. There was another matter I wanted to table. We do not seem to have it right here, but we will have it for the member tomorrow. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

(Mr. Chairperson in the Chair)

Mr. Chairperson: Item 21.3. Community and Mental Health Services (c) Home Care (4) External Agencies - Home Care \$2,314,300—pass; (5) External Agencies - Services for Seniors \$3,857,100—pass; (6) Less: Recoverable from other appropriations (\$90,000)—pass.

21.3.(d) Winnipeg Operations (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$14,065,700—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$2,116,300—pass; (3) External Agencies \$276,700—pass.

21.3.(e) Rural and Northern Operations (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$25,265,300.

Mr. Chomiak: With respect to this appropriation, I think that the minister has acknowledged and I think most observers will agree that with respect to some of the difficulties being incurred by Manitobans with health—are those in rural and in northern Manitoba, in particular. I am wondering what specific provisions and what specific attention is being paid in the context of the regionalization to the specific needs of northerners in particular and rural Manitobans where that applies.

An Honourable Member: That is 4?

Mr. Chairperson: We are on Rural and Northern Operations.

An Honourable Member: 3.(e).

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Chair, in general terms, with respect to Rural and Northern Operations, obviously there are some specific issues in physician recruitment. Although we have a clinic model in place, that is not seeming to resolve the matter fast enough. We have some work to do there.

Regional health authorities—I cannot stress enough—again, I think are going to prove to be a very effective tool because they allow for a better understanding and a better integrated operational system. So many of the issues that have been around for some time, I think we have better tools to work at them, which is now happening throughout the system. I do not know if the member wants me to be more specific in a particular area, but we have been through so many of these issues already in our discussions.

Mr. Chomiak: It strikes me or it seems to me that, given the allocation, there is almost a need for a special funding and special allocation particularly to northern Manitoba as it relates to some of the needs in northern Manitoba that are not met at the same level that we are used to in other regions of the province, and that is where I am specifically looking, whether or not there is any special—with respect to the consideration, are the northern communities, for example, rated on the same basis in terms of their funding allocations for the regional authorities, on the same basis as some other communities that have perhaps access to resources closer to the city of Winnipeg in general?

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Chair, today they are, by and large, with some exceptions, but as we move to a needs-based system of funding, given some of the real concerns in aboriginal health, those will be taken into account in going to a needs-based funding system, so we are not there yet, but we are moving in that direction.

Mr. Chomiak: This area does require some specific treatment, but for time considerations, I think we are

going to have to move on in order to deal with some of the other areas.

Mr. Chairperson: I would like to take you back just a spe here just to make sure of a number that I quoted 3. (d)(1) \$14,065,700—pass.

21.3. Community and Mental Health Services (e) Rural and Northern Operations (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$25,265,300—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$5,303,900—pass.

21.3.(f) Chief Provincial Psychiatrist (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$197,100.

Mr. Chomiak: A while ago, the previous minister announced an initiative with respect to physicians assisting in psychiatric health. That was physicians I believe who are not specifically trained as psychiatrists, but a program that allowed them to fill the gap in areas and communities in which access to psychiatrists may not be available. I wonder if the minister might give us an update as to the status of that.

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Chair, I do not have a number as to how many GPs we now have in that program. We will endeavour to get that for the member, but the program is continuing, I am advised.

Mr. Chairperson: 21.3. Community and Mental Health Services (f) Chief Provincial Psychiatrist (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$197,100—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$43,000—pass.

21.3.(g) Adult Mental Health Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$778,200.

Mr. Chomiak: This is an area where we traditionally spend considerable time. Again, it is not going to happen, although it has been canvassed pretty extensively, and I thank the minister for providing me with information last session which dealt with some of the programs in Mental Health and their application, which allowed us to have some of the initial information.

I have a few questions in this area though, however. The first question is, one of the concerns that has been expressed is the interrelationship between mental health

and its integration in the regional health authority. There has been much concern expressed concerning whether or not mental health resources and mental health concerns when fighting for resources against acute care and others may get the short end of the shrift. What structurally has been put in place to ensure that there is adequate representation in the regional authorities as well as the Winnipeg Health Authority and other bodies to ensure that the mental health community and their representatives have an adequate say in terms of developments?

Mr. Praznik: I guess this is always a difficult issue whenever you integrate services, to take one particular component and say we are going to single this out and ensure that it has a different mechanism. One is loath to do that, because you could make the argument for everything. We did try, in making appointments to the regional health authority, to ensure there was some background, but that is a first step, temporary step. We are concerned that mental health services be properly integrated when in fact that happens, but currently mental health services are today and will continue to be funded directly by the ministry in Ms. Hicks's area, External Programs and Operations, and the regional health authorities have a lot to do in building up their other areas of service. So in the current time we are not moving them into the regional health authorities. At some point in time, when there is a comfort level that this is not going to be disruptive to the work that they do, then we would look at it, but today it remains as a separately funded part and we hope to build an integration to be able to get working relationships developed so by the time it actually does happen it would be something that would not result in any diminution of service or interest.

*(1730)

Mr. Chomiak: So the minister is saying, for this upcoming budgetary year—I am sorry, maybe the minister wants to clarify.

Mr. Praznik: I thank the member. Just to clarify, it is a separate line in their budget, and it is directly under the supervision of Ms. Hicks, so they cannot take money out of that budget to do something else with it. So there is a delivery and an integration, but

budgetwise it is a separate budget item. I just want to clarify that.

Mr. Chomiak: So the provision of mental health services still comes under the operation of the regional authority, but they have a budget line item in each of their budgets that is allocated towards mental health, is that correct?

Mr. Praznik: Yes, that is correct. As well there is a special line in our organizational chart, under Ms. Hicks, as associate deputy minister. So we recognize that although there are things that integrated in delivery, there is in terms of offices, administration and working with other care providers, because Mental Health Services often have a role to play with other health services. We wanted to make sure that all the work that has been done in developing reform in Mental Health was not in any way jeopardized by moving them into the system.

Mr. Chomiak: Will that also occur in the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority?

Mr. Praznik: That is our intention at the current time.

Mr. Chomiak: Is it correct to say that is an exception to the general rule? For example, the Department of Health would not say, or does not say, that you must allocate X amount of dollars to Acute Care and X amount of dollars to Personal Care Home in your line item, as opposed to they now saying that you must allocate X amount of dollars to Mental Health. Is that a correct observation?

Mr. Praznik: Yes, it is, although just to put it into context, when we moved all dollars this year it was, by and large, on a status quo basis. We suspect as regional health authorities get more into their planning and being able to effect changes in operation, there will be natural shifts that occur. Dollars that are now budgeted for underutilized or unused acute care beds are likely to flow into personal care home beds. Where there is a greater need for home care and a reduced need for acute care, there is likely to be that flow.

So, although we have moved everything over, I guess the exception—the member is right, that Mental Health is a bit of an exception because we do not expect to see

that kind of a change, and we will probably have to ensure that does not happen in the future, but in the current way everybody came over, all those budgets came over status quo. Many of them we expect just by their nature will result in shifts beginning next year as people get better ways of delivering service, but Mental Health is not one of those that we expect to shift in, nor have we allowed for that.

Mr. Chomiak: The minister's Mental Health Advisory Committee, does it still report directly to the minister, and who comprises it?

Mr. Praznik: I think we have tabled that list, yes, on the Mental Health Advisory Committee.

Mr. Chomiak: Just for clarification, I do not recall seeing it. I did not see it on the flowchart and that is the reason. It used to be a separate item reporting directly to the minister and that is what prompted the question. I agree, I did not get—

Mr. Praznik: Yes, Mr. Chair, it is missing from that draft. There are several other advisory committees that do not show up on that draft either. Obviously if they are ministerial advisory committees, they will report to me.

Mr. Chomiak: In terms of the various categories that are being allocated and worked on now with respect to the city of Winnipeg, is Mental Health and psychiatry a separate category that is making recommendations?

For clarification, we know that there are various reviews going on with respect to the allocation of services in the city of Winnipeg be it surgical programs and be it the various programs of excellence. Is psychiatry and Mental Health a separate program, and who heads that up?

Mr. Praznik: I am going to table this. This is the list of interim clinical program managers. Currently, with respect to psychiatry, is Dr. S. Barakat.

Mr. Chomiak: There has been a lot of confusion about where psychiatric programs might be located, and there has been a lot of debate going on. Is there any way the minister can advise as to what the present status might be?

Mr. Praznik: This is an area that my deputy is much better versed in than I. I am going to, with the committee's indulgence, give him the question, because as I said, this is an area there has been a lot of discussion. He is more familiar with it than I am.

Mr. Chairperson: Is it agreed that the deputy minister will answer some questions in this area? [agreed]

Mr. Frank DeCock (Deputy Minister of Health): This was one of the areas where the design teams did not put in a lot of recommendations with regard to major changes either in mental health or in psychiatry in the city of Winnipeg. The rationale for that was because we just completed the mental health reform and a majority of the changes had been made. The ones that had been made were well into the planning stage, so there did not need to be a lot of changes to be made.

Mr. Chomiak: We can pass.

Mr. Chairperson: Item 21.3.(g) Adult Mental Health Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$778,200—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$1,948,300—pass; (3) External Agencies \$7,765,200—pass.

Item 21.3.(h) Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$178,200.

Mr. Chomiak: I again thank the minister for providing me a list of programs and funding dealing with this area. That assisted in getting a fairly good understanding as to what is going on. This area itself, however, if one is to make an exception for mental health, some allocation or some recognition of the separate nature of it, certainly within that exception, the exception of children and adolescent mental health is probably a highest priority. Is there any special provision within the context of the RHAs' establishment and, more to the point, the Winnipeg Hospital Authority board, to deal with the child and adolescent mental health on a priority and a specific basis?

Mr. Praznik: Not specifically today, but once they are up and running that may be something that they identify.

* (1740)

Mr. Chairperson: Item 21.3.(h) Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$178,200—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$141,500—pass.

Item 21.3.(j) Brandon Mental Health Centre (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$16,234,000.

Mr. Chomiak: I wonder if the minister might just give an update as to the present status of the time line for the closure of the Brandon Mental Health Centre.

Mr. Praznik: I understand April of 1998 is the time line, so that obviously necessitates some capital construction this year for the replacement beds and the suitable notification of staff, et cetera. Two projects that are referenced are the ones Ms. Bakken referred to in a capital program that will allow for that to happen and will be underway this year

Mr. Chairperson: 21.3. Community and Mental Health Services (j) Brandon Mental Health Centre (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$16,234,000—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$1,649,000—pass; (3) Less: Recoverable from other appropriations (\$3,264,400)—pass.

21.3.(k) Selkirk Mental Health Centre (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$16,791,200—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$2,558,500—pass.

21.3.(m) Public Health (1) Public Health and Epidemiology (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$1,402,600.

Mr. Chomiak: Under the Activity Identification on page 68 of the subappropriation, it is indicated that the branch is administering, they are detecting and controlling the Canada/Manitoba Meat Inspection Program. Can the minister indicate whether there has been an expansion or a retrenchment of this program?

Mr. Praznik: I will endeavour my staff. I do not have the detail on that here. If the member does not mind, I will endeavour to have that for him tomorrow.

Mr. Chomiak: I am specifically asking it because I am of the impression that some of the federal government resources that have been allocated in this area are

declining and are being devolved to the province. I wanted to see the relationship between the decline of the federal resources and the commensurate activities from the province, so that is just a clarification as to where I am actually looking, who I am going to with respect to that program.

The activities also indicate support, revision of a new Public Health Act. Can the minister clarify what this refers to and where we are heading with respect to a new Public Health Act?

Mr. Praznik: As in all pieces of major legislation, every now and again they require a review. I know Dr. Guilfoyle is part of a group that is looking at the whole act, its structure, what we are attempting to accomplish with it, what we are able to do in a world of new technology, so there is a fair bit of effort that has to go into that. It is not an act I am planning—well, certainly none this session of the Legislature. We would expect sometime in the future to have a major rewrite of our Public Health Act, but it would be just like any other piece of legislation that is probably long—it is now overdue.

Mr. Chomiak: I raised that because we did amend The Public Health Act significantly, relatively significantly last year.

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Chair, I am advised that this has been suggested, I guess, internally, that it is really time, given the change in administration of health care with regional health authorities, new changes in technology, a variety of other things that face us, that a major rewrite is needed now.

I must admit to him I have not had an opportunity yet as minister to assess all of that. I inherited that process underway. I have great confidence in Dr. Guilfoyle and the advice that he offers. I come into this somewhat new but, from the very preliminary discussion I have had with him on the matter, he makes a very strong case for a major rewrite, so I would rely on his advice and we will see what this produces.

Mr. Chomiak: During the course of hearings with respect to Bill 49 last year, one of the strong recommendations that certainly came through from public presentations of individuals who have some

familiarity with public health was that one of the changes that ought to take place in terms of changing health resources is resources applied to the public health area. I am wondering if that is reflected at all in the—and it does not appear to be in terms of the financial allocation, but I am wondering if there is any recognition of the increased role of public health, particularly outside of Winnipeg, as it relates to the new RHAs as they come into existence.

Mr. Praznik: I think we for many years have recognized that if you want to improve the health status of your citizens, being able to effect changes in lifestyle, life circumstance, can make a big difference, and, of course, many of those are public health issues. One practical difficulty is as you struggle with the day-to-day critical issues of treating illness and having a treatment-based system, it is very hard to see a movement of resources, particularly in tough times as we have gone through in the last few years, from health care services and delivery and treatment into the public health side. I know this has been a debate for some time.

Obviously, as we start to get, I think, a little bit better handle on things, regional health authorities have a role to play in augmenting the awareness of issues dealing with public health concerns—it is very important in northern Manitoba in our aboriginal communities—and somewhere in there, hopefully, we will be able to accommodate a shift of resources that will lead to better results in the future, but it is always hard to move resources from current points of crisis into other areas knowing it is some years before you see the result. You do have to do that, but it is somewhat difficult to do.

I would suspect in my very preliminary discussions with Dr. Guilfoyle that this is part of the basis, recognizing the need to have a greater public health role as part of the basis on which a rewrite of the act is flowing from.

Mr. Chomiak: I am assuming that the public health function will remain a centrally operated function under the provision of the RHAs and the Winnipeg Authority, or am I incorrect in that assumption?

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Chair, the member is partly correct. The medical officers of health which deal with a host

of, obviously, province-wide issues will remain a central function, but public health nurses, for example, and many of the service providers have already in rural Manitoba and northern Manitoba been transferred to the regional health authorities, and that will happen in Winnipeg. So, in essence, the direction on major issues of public health will be held centrally, but the delivery of public health service to the public office, in many cases, will reside with the regional health authorities.

Some exception to that, because there are policy issues from municipalities or communities, et cetera, which still may receive a service from the central function, but many of the current services provided by public health nurses, for example, will be provided under the auspices of the RHAs because they are much better to integrate with other service providers, but the policy-monitoring functions of public health will be housed in the ministry under Mr. Potter's section.

Mr. Chomiak: So public health officers will be employed by whom?

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Chair, the medical officers of health, by and large, will be employed by the province under the direction of our chief medical officer of health, Dr. Guilfoyle, or his successor, and the public health nurses, those who deliver the service, will be housed by the regional health authorities.

So, in essence, on many of these issues that require a provincial health warning or something to put out for a particular illness or bacteria in the province, they will be issued to the regional health authorities, whoever their designated person is to receive it.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, how many medical health officers do we have at present?

* (1750)

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Chair, we will have that exact number for the member tomorrow. Part of our difficulty is we are in the process of hiring at least two staff currently, and if I give him the number, I do not know if we have actually hired those individuals or they are in process, so we will have the exact count for him tomorrow.

Mr. Chomiak: There is a long history of amalgamation and nonamalgamation between the public health function and the City of Winnipeg and the Province of Manitoba. Given that Winnipeg is going to be regionalized, do we have a definitive word as to who will assume the public health function within the City of Winnipeg?

Mr. Praznik: We do not today have a definitive answer. We are into negotiations and discussions with the City of Winnipeg. They have negotiated arrangements or are with the Department of Environment over certain element of inspection service, and we are interested with the Winnipeg Long Term and Continuing Care Authority to be able to see if an amalgamation of public health and other nursing functions can be provided out of that one authority.

There are a host of administrative issues, collective agreement issues to be worked out. We are having those discussions now and ambulance is another area where we are not quite sure where best to house the ambulance service, whether the Winnipeg Hospital Authority or the City of Winnipeg. They have had some thoughts of amalgamating it with Fire. I met with the city officials last week and we advised them that in our Regional Health Authority Amendment Act we have provision for a number of areas to correct or to change or amend parts of The City of Winnipeg Act and several other pieces of legislation that require the City of Winnipeg to perform some of those functions. If we conclude satisfactory arrangements with them, the act as we have proposed it to the Legislature will allow for those sections to be repealed on proclamation. And so we have allowed for that to happen. Hopefully we can work a reasonable agreement in which case those authorities would be changed in other statutes.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, further to my earlier question concerning the meat inspection program, if the minister could tomorrow provide us with information about the national harmonized food inspection system and the various resources that are being allocated towards that as referenced on page 68 of the subappropriation book.

Mr. Praznik: Yes, Mr. Chair, my staff will endeavour to have that information tomorrow.

Do you want to call it six?

Mr. Chomiak: As the clock nears six o'clock, I just ask that—this is always mandatory in the Estimates—an update with respect to the tobacco enforcement legislation and any developments in this regard. The minister periodically receives correspondence from myself and others with respect to enforcement and other related matters and if we could just have an update. [interjection] The Tobacco Act, the control, minors. It would be appropriate if we could perhaps have that information if it is possible for tomorrow.

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Chair, as the member appreciates, it is not an issue I have become familiar with in terms of its administration in the last few months, but I will endeavour to get an update from my deputy on that for the member tomorrow. I gather, since it has not been a huge burning issue in my department, perhaps it is actually going well. I thank the member for the question.

Mr. Chairperson: Order, please. Is it the will of the committee to call it six o'clock? [agreed]

The time being six o'clock, committee rise.

* (1500)

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

The Acting Chairperson (Mrs. Shirley Render): 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 Education and Training.

Would the minister's staff please enter the Chamber. We are on Resolution 16.2. School Programs (c) Assessment and Evaluation (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$2,988,400. Shall the item pass?

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): Madam Chair, I understand that we are discussing School Programs, 16.2(c). The minister's staff are here, and I wanted to ask some questions about a number of issues here. I think the one that perhaps the minister has received a great deal of correspondence on deals with assessment and deals, particularly, with the Grade 3 assessment.

The people in Alternative Education in Winnipeg, in particular, but not exclusively in Winnipeg, I believe, have written a number of letters. I think I have had copies of close to 50 of them that have gone to the minister to protest the establishment of the Grade 3 math exam. The concerns of these parents I have raised in Question Period. I have also raised them with the minister before at committee last year, and the parents themselves also made presentations on this.

In my concerns, what I have tried to emphasize to the minister is that this is a program. The Alternative Education program is one, I think, we should all be proud of. This is a program where as I have often said parents line up at three and four in the morning in order to ensure that their children receive a place in the program. This is the program where parents play a vital and extensive role in the classroom.

This is a program with a particular philosophy, where parents play a part not just as part of a school advisory committee, not just as in partnership with the teacher over matters concerning their own child, but where they are concerned about the development of co-operative learning and their concern is for the whole class as well as for their own child. They believe strongly in assessment. They are very satisfied with the kind of assessment which they have received in the past. They are very satisfied, indeed enthusiastic is the word they use frequently, about the kind of assessment and partnership that they have with their child's teacher. They believe that Winnipeg No. 1, in particular, has given very strong support to the Alternative Education program, and indeed that is true.

It is an education program which depends upon co-operative learning, which does not depend upon the kind of encouragement of standings of students, first in the class to the bottom in the class, which does not believe in drawing the lines of "pass and fail" in the way that one test on one day does. But they believe very strongly in assessment and in continuous assessment. They are enthusiastic about the kind of assessment they have received in the past. They have registered in a particular program, offered by their school division, which offers and sustains a particular kind of philosophy. That philosophy is shared by a thousand families across the province. About 12 schools are involved in this. It is a relatively small

program enthusiastically supported by parents actively involved in the classroom.

When I asked the minister about this in Question Period, my question was one which, in a way, was stimulated by one of her predecessors, Clayton Manness. Manness always said you listen to parents. The minister says the same thing. Every Minister of Education in this particular Tory government wants to make that same kind of claim. They want to choose, it seems to me, the parents to whom they will listen. The minister claims that parents have written to her supporting these Grade 3 math exams, and I do not doubt that some have. Here we have parents representing over a thousand families who have said, no, this is not for my child, this is not the kind of education that I subscribe to.

I ask the minister particularly to understand that our enthusiastic support for the teachers, for the other parents and for the children in these classrooms is something which we hold very dear. We see the Grade 3 math exam as something which is counterproductive, is not conducive to the kind of learning which we want to encourage in the classroom.

They are not saying they want to have their philosophy imposed upon others, but they are saying we chose this, we chose a program offered by a regular school division, and we chose it for particular reasons, and we now find that the minister is imposing one particular set of educational philosophies in a classroom which is not set up for that.

They do not want other parents necessarily to follow their particular philosophy, but they do want the government to do as it has said it is doing, and that is listening to parents, but basically what the government is doing is choosing which parents it will listen to. It is applying a very rigid philosophy of standard tests right across the province in all four core areas every year. It is going to be a \$15-million project annually by the time the government has everything in place. The parents in this particular program are very concerned about that cost, but their most important point is that this is not the education for which they signed up. This is not the philosophy they want in their Grade 3 classroom.

* (1510)

Now, where are the letters that the minister has in support of the Grade 3 testing? As I said, I do not doubt that she has some, but what she also has is many letters saying, this is not for us, and asking for essentially to be excluded from the Grade 3 test, not to be asked to withhold their children from school. Many of them, I think, in their letters to the minister have said, look, this is where this may be leading, and we do not want to do that; we want to have the kind of education system which our school division has offered, for which we have signed up, which we fully support; we want the support of the minister. That is what they are asking for.

It is always interesting that Clayton Manness would say, well, who has the most important role, the state or the family? I must admit it was a question which often took me always a minute to consider. It was very interesting to see his perspective in that. Sometimes he would be using it to support issues of home education, but he also I think did respect the role of the family. And that is what the minister is doing here, it seems to me, saying that the state is more important than the family.

What these parents are requesting is not something which is going to negate the whole process of testing at the Grade 3 level. The absence of five or 600 children is not going to negate the statistical viability of the tests, because after all we know that the minister has said that 20 percent absence from tests, such as we had in the snowstorm this year and the snowstorm last year, does not negate the statistical viability of these tests. So it is obviously not the numbers which concern the minister. It is, it seems to me and seems to these parents, I think, an issue where the government is saying (a) we are going to listen to some parents and not others; and, (b) the state knows better.

I want to ask the minister, if she could—I have, I think, tried to summarize the concerns of the parents both on a philosophical basis as well as on the issue of cost. I wonder if the minister would like to respond to that and to try and give us a sense of why it is so supremely important to this minister to ignore these parents, to throw their views out of the window, and to

say that the state will be supreme and these tests must be held in this classroom every year?

Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Education and Training): Madam Chairman, I should say, first of all, just to make sure that the record shows a really clear balance as to what actually happens here. From listening to the member's comments, one would think listening to the member's comments that students are being subjected to a test for which they have to pay special attention for the whole year in daily discussions in class, et cetera, for which the learning program has to alter, for which students get marks back, for which there is widespread opposition.

I think it is correct for the record to show what has actually happened. Because the member's comments—and I do not think she is intending to do it, but they leave an impression that is not quite accurate in terms of what is really happening out there. I should say for starters that the member indicated that she thought I would have received about 1,000 letters, or you said there were 1,000 parents involved. Essentially, I have received letters from some of the parents in two schools, some of the Grade 3 parents in two schools, nowhere near 100 letters, like, a very, very statistically small number of letters.

(Mr. Marcel Laurendeau, Chairperson, in the Chair)

So I have gotten letters from the parents of Grade 3 students in Laura Secord and letters from some of the Grade 3 parents in other schools. They are vastly outnumbered by the indications from the majority of parents and taxpayers supporting exams. So when the member says that I have received a great deal of correspondence opposing Grade 3 standards assessment, and perhaps I have had some supporting it, just the use of the words "a great deal of correspondence" leads you to think that it is a great deal instead of a relatively small number, and saying that you do not doubt that maybe I have had some people indicating support implies that there has not been a lot of support; in fact, those two thoughts need to be reversed.

I have received around maybe 50, 60 letters on this topic from parents of Grade 3 students in two schools that are alternative schools, and they are form letters.

They are form letters that someone has typed up that other people have filled in. I am not doubting their real desire not to have their children assessed, but the assessment need not have any impact whatsoever other than the few hours that we ask to have them sit and write the exam, because as the member said here that these parents do not believe in the first-in-the-class to the bottom-of-the-class philosophy. Indeed, students would have no way of knowing whether they are first in class or bottom of the class. We do not look at it that way.

Unless the parents ask for the results, children never get the results. These are results given out only if the parents want them or the teachers wish to share them, and given that in Laura Secord School none of the parents believe in the assessment, they do not have to worry. All we want to do is just make sure the children are able to compute to a certain level. You said they do not believe in the pass or fail. It is totally irrelevant for their purposes because these are diagnostic tests, and, as I said again the parents and the teachers—the teachers do not need to give the results to the parents. If the parents do not want to know the children's mark, and in this case they would not, then the teacher just does not give them to them. The teacher does not have to give them out at all unless the parents want them.

Let us clearly understand what is happening here. The alternative program is in no way at all impacted by the fact that the Department of Education wishes to assess children at the end of Grade 3 to see if they can compute and do problem solving to a certain level. Those pieces of information are for diagnostic purposes only so that we can in turn say that our children in Manitoba have achieved a certain level of learning, so that teachers themselves can take that information and, if there are gaps showing in the learning, can prepare for the next year's teaching to try to address those gaps or to build upon strengths that are identified. So there should be no impact whatsoever.

All we do is we say at the end of June, we wish the children to pause for a couple of hours while we do an assessment of their ability to compute and problem-solve. We wish to do that for all students as part of our responsibility. When we guarantee that we will deliver in education to the children of Manitoba, we wish to assess that to satisfy ourselves that in fact that learning

has taken place as promised and we go out and collect \$1 billion from the taxpayers of Manitoba to pay for the education system in any one given year. That is where the many thousands of letters that I do receive on the topic of assessments come in. I would say these letters on balance, when you put them into equation, I would have 50 to 60—let us really stretch it and say 100—opposed to who are in the alternative program opposing their children writing Grade 3 exams and several thousand—I have not calculated or counted them up—of people saying that as part of their accountability as citizens of Manitoba, as part of the government's accountability, they want to know that when they pay a billion dollars to ensure a well-turned-out, well-educated populace, they want some guarantee or some proof that their money is going to produce a well-educated populace.

Hence, we assess every third year; Grade 3, Grade 6, Grade 9 and Grade 12, and at the Graded 3 level it is simply a diagnostic assessment. Teachers just teach what they teach. We go in and say here is a test. We want to know how your students do computing and problem solving. That gives us the ability to be able to say we are honouring our obligation to the taxpayer, we are able to indicate to you that children have achieved a certain level of learning that will enable them to go on to the next level of learning, and we are being accountable to the public, as the public has asked us to do, with some exceptions occurring here and there. I suppose in terms of responding to the majority of people, the vast majority do want some indication that there is a standard that is being met. But this in no way interferes with the alternative program except they will lose some three hours of instructional time while they pause to administer it.

* (1520)

The children do not have to be told ahead of time that they are going to be given a test that is in contravention of all that the parents have struggled in terms of philosophy or whatever to achieve for them, because that is not accurate. We have found that where students become upset about testing it is because generally adults have told them they have something to be worried about. In schools where it is accepted as just a normal part of the way in which things happen, there is very little if any anxiety. But here, the alternative

program teaches and the results are given back to the school division. They do not have to share it with the parents, and the parents in this case would not want it.

The parents, as the member said, the reason they do not want these Grade 3 exams is because they do not believe in the first-in-class to the bottom-of-the-class philosophy, nor do they believe in the pass-and-fail philosophy and that is fine. The parents do not have to receive the information. It is purely diagnostic. It is not a pass or fail. These marks do not count towards a student's final grade; it is purely diagnostic. It is purely for teachers to be able to prepare for the next year by assessing what they have learned and for the department, as well, to ascertain that across the province certain understandings have, in fact, been learned by the students of Manitoba. The member asked what was the purpose of the testing program in Manitoba and the standards test purpose will be to give an accurate, balanced and well-rounded profile of student growth and achievement.

Most parents in most places would like that, but if parents do not want it, teachers do not have to provide it. In fact, in some areas teachers have chosen not to provide it, and parents have written to the department in far greater numbers than the people at Laura Secord saying they want access to that information. They want to have that profile to help them better understand their children's progress so that they can help at home et cetera, et cetera.

But it says standards testing will be complemented at the school level by tools and procedures such as portfolios, demonstrations, exhibitions, teacher observations, all of those things that are part and parcel of the alternative programming. We say to schools, share this information with parents, but if parents do not want it to be shared with them, then certainly schools do not have to share it. We are saying to schools where parents want that information, we encourage you to share it. Even then they do not have to. Certainly if parents do not want the information, then schools should not have to provide it to them. Parents do not have to use the information, but teachers use these tests for decision making as to what factors maybe should be in next year's teaching, et cetera. That is one of the purposes of the tests.

The present course of action complements the implementation of new curricula, supports the Best Practice of Teaching as it relates to specific subject areas. Optimal preparation for provincial testing is achieved by sustained use of provincially mandated curricula. This fact enhances the accountability of the education system to students, parents, the community.

We have a commitment to the delivery of curriculum-congruent examinations. All of our examinations, if you go through them question by question in relation to the curriculum, are all curriculum-congruent. So it does not require any teaching to a test. We do not encourage teaching to a test. We encourage the teaching of good, curricular material. Since the good, curricular material contains the type of material that we would like students to know, the testing is like a literacy test.

The language arts testing is basically a literacy test. You cannot study for it. You cannot prepare for it. You have either acquired the knowledge and learned how to apply it or you have not. So in the alternative program there is nobody that should ever have to say that they are preparing students and teaching students to a test. That is the fallacy in the member's argument, and it may be the fallacy in the information that the parents in the alternative program have been provided because, in reality, this test does not interfere in any way, shape or form with the alternative program, aside from the fact that we remove the children for a few hours to do the assessment, and the parents, if they want to know nothing more about it than that, need know nothing more about it than that. If they do not want it to be recognized as, for their children's purposes, a testing instrument, they do not have to. We just want the information. It will show us that there is the accountability we have promised the ratepayers.

Part of education renewal, provincial testing seeks to ensure that effective educational strategies are used consistently and appropriately across the system and that all students have the same opportunity to achieve success at school. Educational renewal represents the government's commitment to revitalize the public education system for the current and future generations of students.

The purpose of provincial testing is to determine levels of performance based on pre-established criteria

for particular grade levels. The classroom teacher, however, remains the primary assessor of students. Student assessment is the continuous, systematic, and comprehensive process designed to determine the extent to which student learning outcomes have been achieved. This assessment process involves careful planning, systemic implementation, and comprehensive analysis, interpretation, and reporting of results. It is an integral part of teaching and learning.

I think that those looking at assessment should be very, very careful not to wade into the trap that I suspect the member opposite may have waded into or that some parents may have been led to believe. That is that, because there is a standards assessment at the end of every third year, that somehow no other form of assessment takes place. That is absolutely, totally, and horrifically wrong. Assessment takes place all the time. In the alternative program, as the member herself indicated, assessment takes place all the time.

As a province, we are not saying that this alternative program is a state-run program. The alternative program is clearly there as a choice for parents, because we believe in choice for parents. It is an approved program. School board has approved it. The Department of Education has blessed it in terms of that is a program that is there for students, an alternative program, parents' choice, and we support that. So this is clearly a case of parents being able to make a choice, and somehow the member has come to believe—and I think she has maybe been given incorrect information. She may wish to take a look at how the alternative program works and see what the actual impact of taking three hours to write an assessment does. It just simply takes away three hours of instructional time, and it need do nothing more than that unless people want to create an impression that it does do more than that and then make that a self-fulfilling prophecy and then turn it into a big political football. That can happen, and I suspect that maybe has happened.

* (1530)

The results of provincial testing are reported by schools and school divisions as a supplement to other reporting information, including teachers' anecdotal comments about student growth and achievement. Manitoba Education and Training will provide

interpretive comments with the student performance data to assist schools using the test results, but it is the local responsibility of schools to place the test results in a context that ensures the best results, the best interests of students are addressed. Test results provide valuable data and information that enable all those working with the child to make adjustments to replace deficits and enhance assets leading to greater success.

I have just been passed a note from my staff saying that the Grade 3 exam is a maximum of two hours, and I recognize that. I am saying that probably with the—you have to pause and so on—you probably have a half hour both days where you are either getting things set up or taken down. The actual writing is two hours. You probably lose a half hour in getting out the papers and putting away your books, et cetera. So we are talking 40 hours and 20 minutes and 40 hours and 20 minutes, two days, and so—pardon? Oh, 40 minutes, I am sorry. Well, then if it were 40 hours I would share the member's concern. I meant 40 minutes, I am sorry.

Winnipeg No. 1 has always stated that it complies at Laura Secord School and the alternative education with the curriculum. So if we take a look and Winnipeg No. 1 says that the Alternative Education program at Laura Secord and other schools complies with our curriculum, and we take the fact that our exam test skills and abilities are curriculum congruent, then there is no need for those students to have to teach to a test. They just need to teach, because if they are teaching the curriculum and we come in just to check to see if those skills have actually been learned, there is nothing new that the teachers have to do. They can carry on with their particular style of teaching, and they need do nothing differently, nothing differently than what they do, because we do not in any way point to nor require a particular approach to grouping of children for instruction, to methodology of teaching. We do not say, here is the curriculum and you must teach it this way. We say, here is the curriculum, and whatever method they are using to teach it is fine. They will end up hopefully learning the curriculum and when we go to assess it then, if the curriculum has been taught, it should show that in the assessment.

I want to also indicate that the Grade 3 mathematics standards test does not conflict with the philosophy of

learning in alternative programs. It does not conflict. The way in which they teach and the way in which they learn has no conflict at all with us going in and asking for approximately three hours to assess the progress. As one form of assessment, the standards test complements the variety of classroom assessment and the variety of evaluation practices the teachers are expected to use or choose to use to guide and support a range of instructional strategies to accommodate diverse learning styles.

We have never said you can only teach one way. All we want to know is that at the end of the day, in terms of our accountability to taxpayers for the money we collect from them, that we are turning out a well-educated populace, which can then sustain the world in which the taxpayers who pay for it live for the future so that we have a sustainable society of educated people.

Many more thousands of parents have asked for that accountability than the less than a hundred who have asked for us not to assess the students just because they have had a different teaching style. We have no problem with the teaching style, none whatsoever, and we are not asking them to change it. We are not asking them to do anything differently, but we need to support, and we do, a wide range of instructional strategies, because children do not all learn the same way. As a result, students and parents are provided with an accurate, balanced and well-rounded profile of student progress and development.

The Grade 3 mathematics standards tests do not count as part of the final grade. They are diagnostic. The test results are to be used by classroom teachers to enhance classroom instruction and improve student learning opportunities and experience. Most parents want the results. We have said to school divisions, you know, we encourage you to release the results, but if parents do not want them, they do not have to have them. We found out, very loudly and clearly, that this year in terms of popular demand that province-wide the parents were demanding the release of the results. They absolutely insisted on the release of the results. That was a far, far greater request from the public than the, by comparison, relative small number who do not wish their children to participate in assessment at Grade 3.

The Grade 3 mathematics standards test reflects the learning outcomes, that is, the grade- and subject-specific knowledge and skills that students are expected to learn. These learning outcomes help to ensure that teachers have consistent, high expectations for all students regardless of gender, race and social standing across the province. These are regardless of those factors, and I think that is important, because it gives all students the opportunity and the right.

Teachers in alternative programs have the opportunity to supplement curriculum outcomes with program-specific learning outcomes.

I just want to harken back to one thing I said, when I said that parents were demanding the results. They were demanding the results. They wanted their student's own mark, and I would not think in the alternative school, they wanted their student's mark. The school did not have to give them. We eventually actually published, not individual marks, but the school-by-school marks as a result of public demand, but the individual student marks, first of all, schools do not have to give them out, period.

Most of them are because most parents are demanding them, but where parents are not interested in the assessment process, I would imagine they would not want the marks and the school does not have to give them the marks. So for all intents and purposes, the two hours spent writing the exam and the half hour spent clearing away the books and getting out the exam paper could just be an exercise like children today were going to have an exercise in doing this and this and this, or we are going to have a guest speaker or we are going to have some other activity. It need be no more significant for those children than that, unless people want to make a big issue of it, which I think in the current atmosphere may have happened.

The parents may feel in some way that the teaching and learning has changed. That is what I found in those 60 letters that I got. Those form letters were designed to sort of imply something that the teaching and learning experience was going to be different because at the end of the year, there would be an assessment. That is not true. The teaching and learning experience did not change and need not change in any way, shape or form, because it is all based on a curriculum anyhow,

and then the alternative schools teach that same curriculum. They just do it with different methodology. This test does not test the methodology. It just assesses how much the children have been able to absorb and apply in their everyday lives.

* (1540)

We know—and we ran an election on this. I think there was a lot of discussion about this in the election. School effectiveness research indicates that schools with high expectations, a clear mission and frequent monitoring of students' progress, which is what alternative schools do, can promote a variety of positive student outcomes including achievement and behaviour. It is also what assessments do. Standards assessments place high expectations, clear mission and frequent monitoring, every third year, of the student body. High expectations of success, for example, help to reinforce an academic emphasis and a positive learning environment.

Standards tests provide a variety of benefits to students, teachers and the public. Standards tests help to reduce inconsistencies in student learning and performance expectations, assessment and evaluation practices among schools and school divisions. Alternative schools can continue with their ongoing assessment. The member opposite indicates that they do constant assessment, and they can continue to do that. Nothing stands in their way. It is a fallacy and a false argument to say—[interjection] Pardon? Two minutes? We have got time limits here? I did not know that. I better hurry up, because I still have a lot I want to say. We can do it in a series of questions, I suppose. How much time do we have? [interjection] Okay.

Test results and, in particular, the professional development available to teachers participating in the test development and marking process help to strengthen teaching and learning opportunities, and we have talked about the valuable professional development experience of marking before.

Schools are required to administer the Grade 3 mathematics standards test, and students are entitled to receive regular assessment and evaluation of their academic performance and achievement.

I will stop because I do not want to end up putting the chairman in the position where he has to stop me, but I just want to conclude with this one sentence. It is a fallacy, it is not the truth to think that the alternative program has to change its methods, its way of doing things one little bit because we come in at the end of the year and ask for a couple of hours to do an assessment of students' abilities to compute and problem solve at a relatively high level that is the standard for the province.

Ms. Friesen: Well, it seems to me that there are a number of fallacies in that response.

One is to say that high expectations, clear mission and monitoring can only be achieved by a standards test. That is not the case at all, and I think that the minister might want to recognize that. Nobody here is opposing assessment. What parents of their children in alternative programs across the city are concerned about is that they do have, in fact, a different approach to the delivery of curriculum. Yes, the minister is saying that the curriculum is the province's, but what I am beginning to wonder is if, in fact, the minister is not misunderstanding the alternative education program. Yes, the curriculum is the same. The methods of teaching may be different, but what is most important is that the timing is different.

When the minister comes in and says we know better than these parents, the views of these parents do not count, we will test these children for these concepts at this age, then I think that we might begin to recognize that there is some misunderstanding on the minister's part about the way in which curriculum is taught in the alternative classrooms.

I want to read some of the letters that we have received from these parents, and I know that the minister has read them. I am not going to use any names, but I do want to express the sense of these parents and their concern that their views should count. We are parents, they say; we do not want this; we are pleased with our daughter's education; we are now standing up with our daughter because we feel that the quality of her education and that of her younger sister is at stake.

A multi-age, Mr. Chairman—and this is the part that I think the minister might want to think about. What these parents are saying is that a multi-age classroom is not set up to teach the curriculum in one year. It is set up to teach the curriculum over a number of years. In this case in the one-to-three classroom, or later on in a four-to-seven classroom. The same curriculum may not be delivered at the same time, because what the alternative curriculum does is to take the interests of the class, that co-operative sense of the collective—

Mr. Chairperson: Order, please. The honourable minister, on a point of order.

Mrs. McIntosh: No, Mr. Chair. I was just asking if I could obtain a copy of the document from which the member was reading. I thought the page maybe could get one for us. I did not want to interrupt the proceedings.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Chairman, yes, there is one that has been sent to the minister already, but certainly I will check them.

Mr. Chairperson: Order, please. On the minister's request, I am going to take it under advisement. I am not sure at this time if you have to table it. Because you are reading from the letter, I believe there might be a ruling that you have to table it, but I would like to research that first, and I will get back to the committee in just a little while.

Mrs. McIntosh: I would appreciate having it in enough time to be able to have this discussion on it. That is the problem. If I get the information tomorrow then the—if it is a letter that has already been sent to me, then the member should have no trouble. I do not mind it being tabled with the name blocked out. I just want the content for discussion.

Mr. Chairperson: I will make a decision in a few minutes here I believe. Are you prepared to table it now?

Ms. Friesen: I will block out the names, yes.

Mr. Chairperson: Okay. The honourable member will get the names blocked out and then we will have it tabled.

Ms. Friesen: Do you want to take a recess?

Mr. Chairperson: The committee will recess for five minutes.

The committee recessed at 3:47 p.m.

After Recess

The committee resumed at 3:53 p.m.

Mr. Chairperson: The committee will come to order.

Ms. Friesen: Before we recessed I was discussing the difficulty that the minister might be having with understanding the way in which alternative education is taught. Using a letter that I think expresses it very well, the teaching of curriculum in the alternative classroom is a cyclical process. It is one that is not where the students are taught, perhaps, in a lockstep manner, but the interests of the classroom, the project-base method is one that is followed.

By the end of a certain period, most of the curriculum is taught, but it may not be taught in the order in which a test requires it to be tested. And so that is the concern of parents, that the multi-age classroom, the co-operative framework do not lend themselves to the testing that the minister wishes to impose. That is one issue. I think the second issue is that the parents have said very clearly that they do not want this, and it still continues to puzzle me why the minister wishes to impose this Grade 3 testing over the wishes of the parents.

The minister really has two arguments in response to that. One is that she has thousands of letters, and I think I am quoting accurately, supporting assessments. I wonder if the minister would tell us how we can see the evidence for that and whether, in fact, that evidence supports the testing of children whose parents clearly do not want it. Are those parents ones who want to impose this upon others? My sense is that it is not, that Manitobans are generally a very tolerant group of people and that the imposition on a group of parents like this, who very clearly do not want the testing at the Grade 3 level, and they are very specific, I do not think

they are—I am going to be a Doubting Thomas on this and say, I have not seen these thousands of letters. In fact, I do not think any of them have been copied to me.

Now, that does not mean they do not exist, but I would like the minister to indicate to us where they exist, how we can have evidence of her argument that she has received thousands of letters on this, and whether, in fact, those letters would support the examining of children at the Grade 3 level whose parents clearly do not wish it.

The second argument the minister made was that she fought an election on this, and I think she is on better ground there. She argues that the election was fought, the evidence is clear that the government won, and that assessment at all levels was part of that election. So I think that is a stronger argument, but I am interested in the minister's thousands of letters which she claims to have received, and I think the parents whose perspective I am trying to put here would also be interested in that.

I do believe that there is across Manitoba, not just in the case of alternative parents, some very serious concerns about the costs of these tests, even from those parents who do support testing in a variety of areas. Some parents I think support testing at the Grade 12 level, some would support it at other areas, some would support it in some subjects, but not others. I think there was a range of opinion on tests, but I do understand that the cost of these tests, my sense is close to \$15 million when it is up and running in four subjects at four different levels, is something which is of serious concern to parents.

On the Grade 3 tests, I think the minister will find in areas away from alternative education that there have been concerns that this is being marked at the very highest expense level, that is, the centralized marking in Winnipeg with the cross checks and everything that is dealt with in other tests. Certainly opinions have been expressed to me and I expect to the minister as well that the Grade 3 tests, if they are diagnostic, if they are as the minister claims not disturbing in the classroom, then why can they not be marked by the classroom teacher? The issue of costs seems to me most easily addressed by the minister at that level, but, again, we do seem to have a very rigid approach to testing right across the

province and one which seems to me, in this case, in the case of the alternative parents, not to take account of the parents' wishes.

I keep coming back to that because it is a government which says it listens to parents. Now, in the Dakota forum that it had, there were some parents, as the minutes of that forum some five or six years ago now, I think—some parents were very enthusiastic about testing. Some parents were enthusiastic about testing at different levels. I do not know that those minutes carry enthusiastic testing for all students at the Grade 3 level in several subjects. I think at the senior high level there is a greater interest in testing across the province, but, again, not entirely enthusiastic or fully supportive as the minister perhaps wishes to say.

The third forum that the government held I attended, and I do not recall testing being part of the discussion. That forum at Yellowquill School dealt with parent advisory councils, with the role of parents in education, the partnerships, the very important partnerships that they play. The first Parents' Forum I do not believe had a formal report, so it is difficult to evaluate what the full sense of that was.

So I am puzzled by what kind of evidence we can look at other than the election to show that thousands of parents are supporting the assessment at the Grade 3 level and, in particular, would insist upon the assessment in the alternative schools over the express wishes of children.

Now, the minister says that it will have no impact on education, that it is merely—I think the comparisons she used were ones where, it is like having a guest lecturer; it is like having a guest into the classroom; it is like a particular kind of activity.

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

But I think however much parents try to ensure that their children face a test with equanimity, that they are calm, well-prepared, understand that it is diagnostic, I think there is an atmosphere amongst children in a school, a peer atmosphere, which makes it more difficult for parents and which perhaps becomes the overriding atmosphere. This is not something

necessarily that parents and teachers have control over. It does happen. I think the minister has been a teacher. She understands that. The day of the test; preparing for the test; how did you do on that question; what did you do on that one?

* (1600)

All of those things become part of the atmosphere of a school and in particular of a classroom, and that is what these parents are saying. The multi-age classroom, the co-operative framework that they have chosen, the very active partnership that they have entered into with the school are not conducive to the kind of atmosphere which inevitably in any school accompanies a test. Of course, there are not alternative schools in the sense that the minister wants to talk about them, although perhaps Harrow School at one point would have considered itself a fully alternative school—I am not sure it does at the moment; it has other programs—but most of the alternative programs run in schools which are dual or triple track, and so the atmosphere of the test extends throughout the school and throughout the playground.

So, again, I come back to the sense of here are perhaps 500 or 600 children whose parents are expressing in a number of ways that they think that this is appropriate. The numbers must not affect in the minister's mind the statistical viability of this test because she is prepared to accept 20 percent not writing at other levels, and she said that that was acceptable in Alberta.

Indeed, I checked up on that because I was surprised. I actually thought that 20 percent not writing would affect the statistical viability, but I did call Alberta and they said, no, that is the way we work it, and we have always worked it, and we do not have a plan B, and we are prepared to allow that number of students not to take part.

So given that and given that the minister has said that she does follow the Alberta example on that, although I understand this coming year there will be a plan B for the Grade 12 winter exams, I wonder again why these parents, small in number, but very, very enthusiastic about the kind of education they have received, are to have their children tested at the Grade 3 level over their

express wishes. Why is it that the wishes of these parents do not count?

Mrs. McIntosh: It is unfortunate. I do not want to be arguing semantics, but I do think it is important that the member try to change her habit of taking what has been said and just twisting it a little bit to make it sound like something different.

For example, the member indicated, when the minister says we as government know better than those parents do, that is not of course what I said. When the member says a number of things, when the member says the minister claims she has had correspondence, there is an emotional evaluation put upon the word that I think she understands very well as do I. You can take words, and you can say "claims" and "alleges," and they are not inaccurate, but they leave a connotation that encourages the listeners to suspend belief. The member knows that; she is an intelligent, well-educated woman. I know that as well. So the general public may not recognize the subtlety of the game that is being played here, but the articulate listener will, and it belittles the lofty motives for which we are gathered in the House to take words and put emotional connotations on them in that way.

The member, for example, indicated that I said there were two reasons for having tests, one being that I have received thousands of letters or I claim I have received thousands of letters, and the other reason being that we fought an election. Well, I did not say those were the reasons for having tests. I encourage her to search Hansard. I was responding to a question she asked as to what support we had for the tests. That is not a reason for having a test. I stated clearly the reason for having the test. That is based upon the research, the extensive research that is there, and my answer was very, very clear that there is a tremendous amount of research indicating that where you have proper assessment, standards assessment of this type with high expectations, that students will learn better, and the teaching and learning experience will be improved. Those were the reasons.

The fact that we have received thousands of letters and thousands of votes was in answer to the question on what support do you have. So when the member says back to me that I have said the two reasons we are

having tests are because of thousands of letters and thousands of votes, she again leaves an impression for which she has already had an answer, that we have not taken research on learning; strong, solid educational research on learning and assessment, and the vital role that assessment plays as part of the learning experience into account. Of course, that is misleading to anybody listening.

I also made clear and distinct references to best teaching practices. Those are all in my answer. I invite her to read Hansard and she will see that I did not give thousands of letters and thousands of votes for the reason for having exams, and I repeated it several times because I have learned I have to with this member and still it did not seem to sink in. Thousands of letters and thousands of votes showed support for the rationale, the rationale being the extensive research that has been done on this topic.

I may draw the member's attention to what some of that specific research is. I made reference in my earlier answer to best practice in teaching. Best practice in teaching reading, and there are all kinds of items in here, many of which may be utilized in the alternative system, which I do understand and I thought I indicated to the member that I did understand how that system worked, but I will go through that again in a minute to show how her concern about the timing at which things are learned again bears no relevance to them having to change anything in order to have a standards exam. I will explain that in a minute.

First, in terms of best practice in teaching reading, you will have reading aloud; time for independent reading; choosing your own reading materials; exposing children to a wide and rich range of literature; teacher modelling; primary instructional emphasis on comprehension; using strategies that activate prior knowledge; how do students make and test predictions; structure help during reading; provide after-reading applications; social collaborative activities with a lot of discussion and interaction; grouping by interests or book choices; silent reading followed by discussion; teaching skills in the context of whole and meaningful, of literature, writing, before and after reading; use of reading in content fields, historical novels in social studies, for example; evaluation that focuses on holistic higher ordered thinking processes; measuring

successive reading program by students reading habits, attitudes, comprehension; exclusive stress on the whole class or reading group activities or individual teacher selection of reading materials for individuals or for groups; student selection. There are so many. The list is extremely lengthy. You could continue on.

You could go into the primary instructional emphasis on reading subskills, such as phonics, word analysis, syllabication, or teaching reading as a single one-step act or solitary seat work. You can group according to reading level. You can group in different ways. You can do a whole series of things. Some of these things that are things that are on the increase were first named on the second set. You could look at things that are no longer considered to be things that you want people to do. You do not maybe want them teaching isolated skills in phonics workbooks or drills with little or no chance to write and so on.

In terms of research again, take a look at the selected bibliography, Anderson. There is a book called *Becoming a Nation of Readers: the Report of the Commission on Reading in Washington, D.C.*, by Anderson, Hiebert, Scott and Wilkinson. There is a book by Roger Farr, *The Teaching and Learning of Basic Academic Skills in Schools*. here is a book called *Putting it all Together, Solving the Reading Assessment Puzzle*, Reading Teacher. There is a *New Policy Guidelines From Reading, Connecting Research and Practice*, that is by Jerome Harst, National Council of Teachers of English. There is the book *The Struggle to Continue, Progressive Reading Instruction in the United States*, that is by Patrick Shannon; *Reading Process and Practice* by Constance Weaver. There is a selected bibliography of *Teaching Writing*, and again you can go through a lengthy list of things in terms of teaching writing that show the number of things that are being done and the number of things that are decreasing in terms of being done.

* (1610)

We are writing across the curriculum as a tool for learning now, more and more. We are writing for real audiences more and more and so on, but selected bibliographies in *Best Practice in Teaching Writing*. Again, all of these leading up to the emphasis on the assessment being a way in terms of evaluation to really

measure and to continue the progress by being able to build upon known skills and foundations in a very clear and concise and consistent way.

We have a list of books for Best Practice in Teaching Writing and Assessment and so on, writing and response, theory practice and research. You had asked for research to support Grade 3 tests when parents do not want it. We are breaking new ground, so research neither supports or defeats it in that sense, but we design our tests at all levels to comply with the principles of fair assessment which are endorsed right across North America.

I can provide the member with a list of 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, I can go on with dozens of books on how to assess reading and writing in terms of research. In terms of mathematics we have an increase in terms of best practices in teaching mathematics with evaluation, having an assessment as an integral part of teaching, focusing on a broad range of mathematical tests and taking a holistic view of mathematics, developing problem situations that require applications of a number of mathematical ideas, using multiple assessment techniques including written, oral and demonstration formats.

When we look at the increase in teaching practices in terms of problem solving, communication, reasoning, mathematical connections, numbers, operations, computations, geometry measurements, statistics, probability patterns and functions, all of those items again, a selective bibliography on this for best practices, and I know the member agrees with best practices and all of these books: Aims Educational Foundation; Teaching and Learning Mathematics in the 1990s; Curriculum and Evaluation Standards for School Mathematics; Maths Wise, Teaching Mathematics in Kindergarten to Grade Eight; Professional Standards for Teaching Mathematics. You know, this one here happens to be by the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics in the United States of America: Helping Children Learn Mathematics; Mathematics Assessments; Miss Model's Good Questions and Practical Suggestions, again the National Council Teachers of Mathematics; Family Maths; New Directions for Elementary School Mathematics, even the term that we use, New Directions, again not by us

but by Trafton; Living and Learning Mathematics, Heidi Mills and Timothy O'Keefe, and so on and so on and so on and so on.

The list is extremely long. I have a list, a long, legal page here of book titles just on that one topic alone, and I could do it for every subject area, because we have all the research documents listed here, and I am going to come back to some of the research statements that support what we are doing here, but I just wanted to address before I did that some of the charges the member made, and I will come back and hopefully will have enough time to give her all the rest of this information on the research that has been done and the fair student assessment practices that I know the member supports, upon which all our testing is based.

The member has said three or four times that I have ignored the desires of these parents, and how can I, and I guess I do not feel I have ignored their wishes, because their concern was that their alternative program in some way would be changed, and it need not be, it does not have to be. The fact that they have been somehow told that it would be because someone is pausing to assess their children's progress is really sad. I wish they had not felt that. We could offer to go to those schools and work with any teachers who may as yet be unable to see how our assessment and their curricula in no substantive way constrain their philosophy or schools philosophy. I would be pleased to do that if in fact they asked me to do that, but they did not.

Nor did the schools incidentally ask for an exemption on those exams, but we do have to take a look at all of this research, which is the reason, not the support, but the reason for having proper assessment of this nature being done right across North America, not just in Manitoba, but right across North America. It is a fact in a democracy that people do have a right to their views and they can and should indicate support at election time for the party that espouses their views and they do that. My obligation in the end is to bring in those policies that we have indicated we believe in, that research shows are good and for which there also appears to be support. That is not the reason, the support is not the reason. The support is the support and I hope the member is able to understand that.

But our tests do support the curriculum, and the curriculum is being taught in the alternative process. The member says the fact that we are doing an assessment requires a lock-step approach, and that, of course, is utter nonsense. That is total and absolute nonsense, that to have an assessment test that would go in and measure a certain standard of literacy, mathematical literacy, to say that that requires a lock-step approach to teaching is absolute nonsense.

There is a good basic curriculum prepared by teachers who understand reading and writing, and that good basic curriculum is followed in the alternative program. The diagnostic purposes to which the tests are put provide teachers and parents, if they want the information, with solid, valid information in a nonjudgmental way. It is sound educational practice to say here is where your child is at this moment. Here is a photograph of your child's progress.

The standards tests are not unlike putting a bar on a high jump. There will be a peg on the bar where you can put the high jump, and the children can jump over it. Some will jump it at a lower or a higher level, but there is a range. It might start at two feet and go up to four feet or whatever, and some children may be jumping over it at the two-foot level. That is very good for teachers to know. Janie is jumping at the two-foot level. That is good for me to know. Now I can work with her to get her to the three-foot level. It might also be very useful for the teacher to know, goodness, gracious, Janie is jumping at the four-foot level; it is time for us to move on to the next level.

All of these are things that the teacher may well be able to determine with her own testing or his own testing methodology. Is it not good to have it confirmed by a standards test? What teacher would not want to have their own assessment confirmed with a standards test? I know of no teacher, who doing his or her own assessment and accurately indicating where their child is, would not welcome a verification of their diagnostic assessment. It is always comforting to know that you have assessed properly, that you have an accurate photograph of the child, and it is also very helpful if you missed the assessment correctly to get some other assessment that would help. I mean, constant improvement for the child is what this is all about. I think if any principal felt that students would

be harmed by writing the test or the program destroyed by writing the test, the principals would have asked for an exemption because we do have exemptions.

* (1620)

But I guess what I find interesting is that I do understand fully the nature of teaching the alternative program, and I do not concur that by teaching in a different way or manner or over a different time period, that students should not be assessed at a particular point in time. Any student in an alternative program who is of a certain chronological age associated with Grade 3 can or should write a test associated with Grade 3 for diagnostic purposes to measure the progress and find out where he or she is at that point. If the child is not able to perform all of the functions associated with Grade 3, then the teacher and the parent, if the parent wishes, can assess their performance and confirm that which they already knew, assess the information, look at motivation, look at capability, look at is this where we expected this child to be now.

This is a help. A child may well in an alternative program be well ahead of the standard. This helps the teacher, again, get a good measurement that the child has moved ahead at his or her own pace and has arrived at a particular stage in learning that is beyond the Grade 3 standard. It cannot be measured on a Grade 3 standards test. That is a confirmation to the teacher of their own diagnostic performance, and that is helpful. What teacher would not want that? If parents do not want to hear it, they do not have to. The Grade 3 assessment provides one more piece of information that the classroom teacher can use in order to make decisions about teaching and learning, and, as I say, it can confirm what they hopefully have determined in their working.

I should also indicate that the member, I think in her answer, left the distinct implication that some students in the alternative Grade 3 age grouping might actually be at the end of Grade 4 or Grade 5 or some other thing, or below that, depending upon where their learning is. But in fact, I think the member, if she understands fully how the alternative program works—and she says she does, so we assume she does; the member claims that she understands fully this process—then she knows as well that the Winnipeg

School Division makes every effort to ensure that the students do not get too far out of line with the congruency in other schools because they know that children will move from time to time. They want to make certain that as children move out or into and out of the alternative program that, if they transferred to another part of the province or another province, they will not be out of kilter. So Winnipeg No. 1 has indicated to us that they try to keep it fairly congruent with the grades in other schools. It may not be exactly the same because they are able to move back and forth, but they do try to keep it fairly similar.

Our tests assume that the curriculum has been taught. In turn, it assumes best practice, which is anything but the lock step the member referred to. Best practice is not lockstep, and that is what we use in our schools. The alternative program may not use it the same way other schools do, but I am sure even in the alternative program that they pay attention to best practices. Again, I have a lot of material here and I could just spend the next half hour reading all of the book titles in, but I do not want to miss some of this other opportunity. I guess that is all I will say on that, but I will come back now to some of the information that I think would be useful.

John Bishop at Cornell University did a reanalysis of data collected as part of the second International Assessment of Education Progress, IAEP; the member may have heard of it. He found that holding the social-class background of students constant, just the same socioeconomic background, students from Canadian provinces with examination systems, regardless of how they taught but where they had examination systems, were substantially better prepared in mathematics and in science than students from provinces lacking such exams.

He also found that there is no evidence that external exams caused any of the undesirable effects that opponents of external exams have predicted. Reading for fun went up, not down as predicted. Mathematics teachers decreased their emphasis on low-level skills, computation, et cetera. Science teachers arranged for a student to do more, not fewer, experiments, and if the member wants to read that particular reference, I refer her to John Bishop's work "The Impact of Curriculum-Based External Examinations on School Priorities and

Student Learning," which is from Cornell University, and it is a fairly well-respected university.

A lot of the myths that people who oppose exams—and I know the member says that they support exams in assessment, but I have never heard one word yet to indicate support—in everything that has ever been said from the opposition about standards and exams leads me to believe that while they say they support exams and assessment, they have never found one detail about them that they have supported. I have been told by certain friends of mine who happen to be teachers that the NDP is being strongly supported by certain members of the union, because the NDP has indicated that they will get rid of standards exams if they ever come to power. I believe that, based on everything I have heard the member imply about the wretched impact of exams on students, the terrible things it does to them and the way in which nobody wants them except people who vote Tory. This is based on research. It is based upon knowledge and understanding that I would hope the member would ultimately come to embrace.

This is not going to do anything to the alternative program regardless of what timing they learn or anything else. All we want to do is a snapshot of children at the end of June in Grade 3, a two-hour snapshot so that we can in clear conscience say to the public, you hold us accountable to do an assessment, to ascertain for sure that children have learned to compute and problem solve. We give you a billion dollars every year to do that, we want the accountability so we can give that to them. But the reason the testing is done is because all research shows that which I have indicated to the member in some detail.

The Principles for Fair Student Assessment Practices for education in Canada—there is a developmental process, develop and selecting methods for assessment. My staff has just handed me an interesting thing. These are some of the comments from students received during the Grade 3 math pilot last year. I will not read the name of the teacher. It has been blacked out, or the name of the student has been blacked out. As the member did with her letter, the member submitted a letter from some parents saying they did not want their students to write the Grade 3 assessment exam, because

they learn their math with a different methodology than most other schools.

Here are just a few. These are from students: I thought this test was easy. I mean, come on, 14 divided by seven. That is too easy. I think I performed well on the test. It, the test, was long but not by much. That is one student.

Here is another student. We can table these. I think the names are gone. Oh, here is a name still showing here: When I wrote the math test I felt excited because I never wrote one before and it was exciting. Some of the questions were hard and some were easy but most of all I had a really good challenge. I think I did well on the test. Well, I hope I did. The test was sort of difficult to me but I managed okay. It was exciting.

When I first thought of taking this test—this is another letter—I told my parents, no, I do not want to go to school, it is the Grade 3 math test. Then I remembered that in this Grade 3 math test this is just the stuff we learned from the beginning of Grade 3, but I wondered if it would be more difficult than the regular math sheets we have, but I found out when we did the Grade 3 math test that it really was stuff we had already learned and that it was really easy.

* (1630)

This is—names are here so—Dear such and such, my teacher, I think there should be more questions because this test did not show all my thinking. I can think of a lot more than what is just on this test. I thought this was a fun test. I think the instructions should be more clear. Thank you for making up this test, but I think the questions should be harder so I can show all my thinking.

Here is another letter. I think that the article with the example in a newspaper about the combinations with tee shirts and jeans, our whole class said that was really easy. I personally think it was pretty easy but some adults might have had a bit of trouble on that question. If some adults did have trouble on the question, here is what I did to explain it to them. And then she has, or he has, a little thing that shows how he explained it to the adults who could not do it.

Another student, Grade 3: I thought the question you put in the newspaper was very easy. I was surprised to know that some adults had trouble solving the question. Here is how it is done, and then again the answer. Then another letter: Before the exam I was nervous, but after the exam I felt better. Part B was way easier. When we finished paragraph 4 I was really anxious about flipping the page to part B. I could see through the last page of part A and I could see a car. Then I got curious to know what kind of math would be on part B, so I turned it over. I think I did a pretty good job, but I—okay, I will come back, Madam Speaker. The member had asked me about anxiety for students. The central marking I will do in the next answer.

Ms. Friesen: Most interesting comments from the students, I am very glad to hear them. The minister has talked about students' comments. She has also talked about teachers' comments and how teachers should welcome and, as many of them do, some confirmation of their own assessments. The minister offered a bibliography of support for standard testing. My sense is that apart from the particular one that she mentioned from Cornell University, that many of the books on that list encourage many forms of testing, many forms of assessment, and so the evidence for that, perhaps, is not quite as striking as the minister would like to indicate.

But the issue that I have indicated and suggested is that it is the parents. The minister wants to talk about students. She wants to talk about teachers and that is all well and good, but the issue is that these are parents who have asked that their children be excused. This is a government which claims that it has listened to parents, and I am puzzled by the way in which these parents are not being listened to.

I think we have been around that one for a number of routes now. Let us have a look a little bit further at the Grade 3 test. The minister says that it is a diagnostic test, and so I am interested in knowing what is planned for the release or the publication of the information. The minister has said that parents need not ask for it, and that is quite correct. Does the minister intend to release these results school by school as she has for other exams, or are the Grade 3 tests as diagnostic tests to be dealt with in a different way, or is the minister leaving it to the divisions to release as they see fit?

I am also interested in the way in which diagnostic tests are to be used. A diagnosis is an indication of a certain level of ability or of inability. What does the minister have—it is the minister's test, it is the province-wide test—what proposals, what handbooks, what directions, what guidance, what professional development, what assistance is the minister offering for classrooms and for teachers to deal with the results of this diagnosis?

Mrs. McIntosh: I will try to go a little faster. I have noted down the member's question. I will finish up quickly my answer to the other and then come back and answer this, so I will try to speed through it a little more quickly. I think it is important that I read just a few more of these student's letters, because I think it does indicate the impact on students, and I think it would be important for the record for them to be here.

I mean, we get letters—like, I remember the show, was it Perry Como that used to say, we get letters, we get stacks and stacks of letters?—on a whole wide variety of topics all the time and most delightful of all, of course, are the letters from children. Here is a student, anyhow, that said that she was curious to know what was going to be on the test. This student says, I do not think the test was too long. I wish it was one day long. It was not difficult reading the questions. Some were hard to understand what they meant. I do not think the questions are all easy; some are hard, but some of the questions were easy. This is Grade 3, so the language may not be Grade 12 level. Some were like the ones we do in class and I had fun.

This is another student. I felt I probably did well on the test. The test was kind of hard and kind of easy. The test was not too long. Reading the test was easy to read. The questions were easy. They were the same as the ones we do in school.

This letter is about the Grade 3 math test that you are in charge of. This math test was fun, but I think you should put more questions in it. I also think you should put it into three parts: part A, part B, and part C. I liked all the questions. Thank you for thinking up the test. Thank you again for reading my letter.

Those kinds of letters are interesting, because, first of all, it says with the right psychological approach

students can look at these tests and actually find them fun. Where teachers say tomorrow you are going to be assessed, and we are going to see how much you have learned about your math and take some positive approach, students generally will think that. Where the student is told by whomever—parents, teachers, system, media, whatever, next week you are going to write a test and this test will determine whether or not you know, and it is going to be very scary and very big, and some big change in life will occur if you do not do well on this exam, then the students will come in absolutely terrified.

(Mr. Chairperson in the Chair)

On a diagnostic test, there is no reason for them to be fed that line. I think this also shows that students rose to the challenge, the questions that expanded their mind they considered to be fun, and they wanted more challenge. It also shows that some questions were easy, some questions were hard, which shows that we were being able to reach for to assess those students that move way beyond the provincial standard and those that are still underneath it because the range of abilities is there. This is not a pass-fail test.

In terms of fair assessment, I think this needs to go into the record as well because these are the types of things we are looking at when we are using tests. If any of these are contradictory to the alternative program, the member might wish to tell me which ones are in contradiction with the alternative way of teaching, because I do not believe they are.

* (1640)

First of all, the Principles for Fair Student Assessment Practices for Education in Canada, which is what we use, defines the assessment method; indicates what we are intended to measure and how we are going to use it; warn the users against common misuses of the assessment method and describe the process by which the method was developed; include a description of the theoretical basis, rationale for the selection of conduct and procedures, et cetera; provide evidence that the assessment method yields results that satisfies intended purpose; investigates the performance of students with special needs and students from different backgrounds; reports evidence of the

consistency of validity of the results produced by the assessment method for these groups; provide potential users with directions, answer sheets, et cetera; review printed assessment methods and related materials for content or language generally perceived to be sensitive, offensive or misleading; describe the specialized skills and training needed to administer an assessment method correctly, and the specialized knowledge to make valid interpretations of scores; limit sales of restricted assessment materials to people who are qualified; provide for periodic review and revision of content and norms; provide evidence of the comparability of different forms of an instrument where forms were intended to be interchangeable; provide evidence that an assessment method translates into a second language is valid, et cetera; advertise an assessment method in a way that states what it could be used for—

Point of Order

Mr. Chairperson: Order, please. The honourable member for Wolseley, on a point of order.

Ms. Friesen: Perhaps, I should tell the minister that I have the Principles for Fair Student Assessment Practices in front of me, and perhaps I should remind the minister of what the question was which dealt with the Grade 3 exams and the use of diagnostic tests, the publication of results, and the way in which the department was intending to provide assistance to teachers dealing with the results of those diagnoses.

Mr. Chairperson: Order, please. The honourable member did not have a point of order. It might have been clarification.

* * *

Mrs. McIntosh: I appreciate the member's point. She had asked a series of questions in the question before. I had indicated I would like to finish the answers to those questions, took note of the question she had asked last and presented them.

If she has the Principles for Fair Standard Assessment Practices for Education in Canada, then perhaps she would not mind if I just tabled mine for the record,

because while she has them, all of this is going on the record, and she left some questions that had implications inherent in the question; you know, Mr. Chairman, how you can be damned by the question sometimes?

I would like to table this to let anybody reading Hansard show that the implications in her earlier questions, that we are doing this in lock-step and that we are doing it with no reason, et cetera, that that shows—and I would like those back, by the way, because I do not have any other copies after you have taken a copy for the record.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I will proceed then to the answer. She asked about central marking, she asked about release of marks, and she asked about diagnosis. First of all, she said in her preamble to her question on this time, she said that the bibliography supports many kinds of assessment, and that is exactly my point. The bibliography supports many kinds of assessment, including standards assessment, and specifically standards assessment. Each of those documents supports standards assessment, but obviously other kinds, and we have said repeatedly here today that assessment is ongoing. It occurs and should be occurring with every teaching experience.

I have information on central marking that my staff has provided me, and I have some more research on best instructional practice, which, incidentally, is a Stanley Knowles professor, ironically enough, research on best instructional practice supporting higher level of student achievement inextricably linked to the systemic implementation of best instructional practices which includes assessment and testing, from Brandon University, a Stanley Knowles professor. I think that is quite interesting.

There is a whole series of acceleration alignment assessment, CBL computer-based co-operation, co-operative learning criteria, expectations, feedback, learning styles, mastery, meta-cognition, motivation, orderly environment, peers, peer tutoring, remediation, school ethos, study skills, time on task, et cetera, et cetera. I will not go through the whole bibliography here, although it is yet another very, very lengthy set of bibliography.

Mr. Chairman, what I have tabled with you is not the bibliography. What I have tabled is the Best Assessment Practices. The bibliography—anybody reading this who would like the bibliography can contact my office. It is extremely extensive, very long, can fill up many, many, many bookshelves.

I want to try to take these in order. The Grade 3 diagnostic test is a diagnostic test. Will we release the information school by school? Yes. We will not be releasing individual marks. We will not do that, but the overall photograph of the province is useful information. It is part of the accountability. It was not our intention in the first instance to release those, but Brandon School Division, I think, made the decision for the people of Manitoba by its actions. It sparked such interest.

By trying to hide the marks or ignore the marks, Brandon School Division sparked such all-persuasive, all-pervading interest across the province that we just felt that we had to release the marks in response to that public cry, but not student by student. The public pays for the schools. They may be interested in every three years receiving a snapshot of certain grades just to get a handle on the type of learning that has been absorbed and understood and can be applied, but not with individual students.

Every provincial standards test will have a report that goes to school with interpretive results indicating strengths and weaknesses, and a technical report also is developed that goes to divisions and schools. That is for internal use. That is not for the broader public. Teachers and principals can then take a look at their diagnosis and see if treatment is required.

The member made reference to a medical diagnosis, and the same principle does apply. We might issue, from the Department of Health, for example, a statement saying that the public in Manitoba is generally healthy. We have also, as we do, have done recently interested a public statement on diagnosis saying we have a real problem with diabetes in our aboriginal community. Now, we do not say which patients have diabetes, but we will say this particular community has a problem with diabetes, and therefore we need to take corrective measures. We need to have, you know, programs on nutrition, et cetera, et cetera.

That is a diagnosis. It is made public in a generic way, but not with the names of individual patients.

It is to let the public know the state of health care in Manitoba, the particular problems we are facing, the triumphs we have had where we say measles has all but been eradicated, or measles has had a resurgence. We publish the picture for the people to know because we take many millions—for Health we take a billion and a half from them to run the health system. So it gives them an ability to get a sense of what their dollars are providing in terms of how students are able to absorb and apply information in a relevant way for becoming meaningful members of society. The public depends upon them to become meaningful members of society, because we know that without a well-educated populace, society begins to decline.

* (1650)

This will also help parents mix and match there as they go into schools of choice. Perhaps they would like to go to an alternative school where the standards tests may show that all students have, in fact, gone way beyond the Grade 3 level and are actually doing Grade 4 work. It may cause people to say, I am going to get in that long lineup to go to the alternative school, or it may cause them to say, you know, my son has had a terribly hard time keeping up to the Grade 3 standard, and I see that at this particular alternative program the students are still working at the Grade 2 level, reinforcing and reinforcing before going on to the next, and that is what my child needs. So therefore maybe I would like to go there. So it may have that impact, but basically it is to inform the public.

The individual diagnostic results that go to the schools are there for professional development in the schools. Regional sessions will be conducted by the department, by divisions to assist in the interpretation of results, and all of the workshops that are presented in math and English language arts incorporate assessments issues, both provincial and local.

My staff is planning a fall session called an executive seminar for senior school division officials, one topic in workshop being on present-day assessment methods to assist in a clear understanding that our testing is not accurately described as standardized tests or standard

tests, but are in fact standards tests. That is something very different. The nature and purpose of standards testing is not the same as the others.

I will just want to indicate that schools will receive, with this, student profiles. They will get student profiles in terms of strands, levels, aggregate. They will get the interpretive guide to help them in using the profiles. They will get a school summary and a provincial summary, plus the divisions will receive a divisional summary as well. Interpretive comments will also be prepared to aid in overall meaning of results. I said we are going to have the regional workshops.

All of our standards tests should be used for decision making regarding instruction at the classroom level. That is what they are intended for. That is the main focus. It is to inform, for accountability purposes; it is to diagnose, for continued learning. It does not need to contradict what is already happening in the classroom. It is an enhancement, and it harmonizes very well with it. The information gives a teacher one more tool to make decisions about individuals or groups within the classroom regarding emphasis on instruction. So the tests are for formative purposes, to help form the next level of learning.

The member asked about local versus central marking. There has been a tremendous amount of research done on this as well. The member probably is aware of this, but she did ask the question, so for the record I will indicate that one could do regional marking and you would get marks. One could do divisional marking and you would get marks, and you could do individual classroom marking and you would get marks. But the further you get away from a central marking system the less consistency you are going to have in terms of comparing apples to apples.

We had indicated that we could additionally try a standards test being marked locally. It raises a number of questions, a number of issues surrounding the reliability of scoring. The main question is: Can teachers in 40 or 50 divisional marking sites mark an examination in the same way consistently for all students? So we used the June 1996 pilot test on Grade 3 mathematics standards to compare central versus local marking.

Schools participating in the pilot were asked to double mark 20 percent of their test papers at the local level. These double-marked papers were sent to the department to be re-marked by a central team. The results of the central marking were compared to the results of the local marking and surveys were then conducted to obtain feedback from markers, coordinators and administrators.

An analysis of results of central versus local marking has shown that discrepancies in marking have occurred from division to division. A student's paper marked in one division could receive a significantly higher or different mark from the marking team in another division, but of course that is the problem that universities and employers have had for decades in Manitoba since the ending of departmental exams, which were 100 percent pass/fail, and they were scary stuff. They would get 80 percent in one division, which did not mean the same as 80 percent in another division, hence they have not been able to accurately assess students at the university level or for employers as to whether or not they really did, each, know 80 percent of the work, because some marked more easily than others and some taught a different curricular content.

Mr. Chairperson: Five minutes.

The committee recessed at 4:56 p.m.

After Recess

The committee resumed at 5:08 p.m.

Mrs. McIntosh: I indicated that when we analyzed the results of central versus local marking, we saw discrepancies occurring between divisions—not within the division but from one division to another. Finalizing the scoring key can only be completed after a large sample of student papers have been examined. The key must be finalized by the group responsible for marking. If it is done locally, variations may occur in the key from one marking site to another. Staff involved in the Grade 3 mathematics pilot indicate that it is more efficient to train teachers to mark centrally. Standards tests require nontraditional types of questions

and must be scored in new ways using rubrics. Many teachers do not at this point—although many do, many also do not yet have the experience in working with rubrics. So training is required for teachers whether the tests are marked locally or centrally. We have found that the accuracy of doing it centrally is much greater than when you break it up.

* (1710)

The 1996 SAIP experience in the scoring of the 1993 mathematics tests in three different sites revealed a number of inconsistencies in marking that had to be rectified subsequently. The next SAIP mathematics test will be marked in one central location. The conclusion, then, was that the 1996 pilot on central versus local marking indicated that at one extreme one division marked 20 percent lower than central marking, and at the other extreme a division marked almost 10 percent higher. Other divisions were between these two extremes. By marking centrally, the children then are not penalized. We recognize that it is certainly more convenient to mark locally and probably less expensive, so we continue to look for ways to get the same accuracy that you get centrally. Marking on a local way, as yet we have not determined or discovered a method that will give us the same degree of consistency and accuracy. So unless, or until, we are able to find a way that is as accurate, we will likely be remaining with the central marking as the most accurate and consistent.

Aside from the locus of marking and to go back, or to repeat a point from an earlier question—and this will conclude my answer, Mr. Chairman, for this particular series of questions. New Directions states that standards testing will be complemented at the school level by tools and procedures such as portfolios, demonstrations, exhibitions, teacher observations, et cetera. They will be developed to give students and parents an accurate, balanced, and well-rounded profile of student growth and achievement. Standards testing must therefore never exceed in value the important assessment work being conducted on an ongoing basis at the classroom level.

Manitoba Education and Training has recommended very strongly to the field that careful consideration be given to the weight attached to any one assessment activity, and that the greater the variety of assessment opportunities taken, and the greater the variety of tools

used, the greater the chance students will have of revealing what they know and what they can do. I just wanted to emphasize that to show that the standards testing is not the only and absolute way of testing. It is one of a variety of assessment methods, and we believe and encourage a wide variety of assessment tools on an ongoing basis to maximize opportunities for students.

I think I have covered the points raised in the last question, and if I have not the member can perhaps indicate that when she is asking her next series of questions.

Ms. Friesen: A number of things that I think were interesting in the minister's response, one of them I do not know if she wanted to leave that on the record, but she seemed to imply that students who were anxious about tests may have been. and I am quoting, "fed a line." I do not know who she thought was feeding them a line, whether it was parents or teachers, but it seems to me an unusual interpretation of student concerns about exams.

I asked the minister about the impact of the diagnosis and what the next step was. She gave me a number of responses and some of those are very interesting and very helpful. But I had already earlier asked the minister to provide, as through freedom of information which we did receive, the interpretations of the Grade 12 or 40S and 40G math English and French summary reports. My sense of those summary reports was that they contained a lot of the mathematical scores, the means, the medians, the deviations, et cetera, and that is helpful for some people, but the written response or the written evaluation of the exams seemed to me, at least the ones that we received as being public, were very limited in their information for parents and teachers.

I was interested that the minister said that there was a second type of evaluation which went to schools. Now we were talking at that time in the context of only the Grade 3 diagnostic exams, so one part of my question is: Is there the same kind of larger interpretive report on the senior exams and presumably on the Grades 6 and 9 and 12 exams, as they come up, that is going to schools? The public one that I got, really the conclusion was a page long. It contained generalizations which I am sure are helpful to teachers

but really did not take things very far. For example, teachers should try to integrate mathematics with other subjects so that students could obtain a better understanding of the usefulness of mathematics in solving daily problems. Students need to communicate their mathematical ideas more clearly and effectively. When solving word problems, a final statement answering the problems should be made by the students. Students should understand that mathematics is a language and needs to be communicated properly.

Now I can certainly understand that that is one of the conclusions from the mathematics exams, but from a parent's perspective or the larger citizen's perspective here, it seems to me that that is not the kind of detail that really helps us understand where teachers should go next, where students should go next, and what the overall impact of the exam has been. So I am interested to ask the minister a second question here which is: Is there going to be a larger evaluative report that goes to the schools? Is there anything from that evaluation which leads to curriculum, the whole substance of examination and curriculum being a cyclical process that if you are going to have exams and you learn something from them that that leads to some specific changes, additions, subtractions, perhaps, from the curriculum. So how is that process being addressed? And, for example, in the 40SG mathematics English and French summary reports, in specific terms the summary report says that the lowest results for the English mathematics 40G examination with a trigonometry, the lowest results on French mathematics were on consumer mathematics. That is a very specific criticism of, I would think, both the curriculum, the teaching, and the student's understanding. So what is the next step in those two areas? I am just using it as an example of how these exams are being used to develop, to adapt the curriculum or to instruct teachers in areas that need strengthening, and how that instruction is to be given.

* (1720)

I am also concerned, and the minister has made a number of references—and, indeed, was reading the Principles for Fair Student Assessment Practices for Education in Canada. She was reading from the section which deals with exams which are external to the classroom. One of those, No. 5, principles accepted by

educators across Canada, and I think that is the purpose of using this particular document. It is one that has received wide support across Canada at all levels of education. The fifth principle that it elaborates on is, and I quote, that a good exam or an appropriate exam should investigate the performance of students with special needs and students from different backgrounds. It should report the evidence of the consistency and validity of the results produced by the assessment method for these groups. Now, I did not see any assessment of that in the one that was made public. Is that the issue of different backgrounds and of special needs students? I take those as two different categories. Is that in the second and larger report that is made to the school divisions and to the individual schools?

Mrs. McIntosh: Mr. Chairman, I will begin just by responding to a bit of the preamble. The member indicated that I had said that where examinations were not made into a big deal but rather just an ordinary part of learning that they were comfortable, but where they were, I think she said I had indicated “fed a line” that they could become quite agitated, and she did not know who would feed the line. I believe, if she checks Hansard when this comes out, I had indicated that students, in my opinion, from observation, and in the opinion of a lot of people from observation, there are many, many schools where assessment is seen as an integral part of learning. It is customary. It is frequent. It is not considered unusual, and students tend to take it as just a matter of course. Therefore, they have a comfort level that enables them, some of these students whose letters I just read, to actually feel the test is fun.

I believe I indicated fairly clearly in my answer that where students are, as the member says, “fed a line” or given to be made to believe that the test will be traumatic, hard, scary, negative, have serious consequences for them, et cetera, and I said specifically they could be given this information or have this attitude of fear instilled in them by, and I said the media, by homes, by schools or general public commentary.

We know we have school divisions whose boards will put out information about the damaging aspects of exams. I have been to a division where that is the feeling, that exams are not good and exams will harm the children's psyche, lower their self-esteem, damage

them psychologically, et cetera, et cetera. That then is given to the parent councils as information by the school division. The parents then become very fearful. The children then become very fearful, and the media will then report parents fearful of exams and so on. That is what I meant by that. That happens, and it has happened.

I can walk into divisions, and you can just tell. You walk into a certain division that believes in assessment and sees it as a normal part of the learning process. There is a comfort level that is quite extraordinary. You walk into divisions that see it as a fearful thing that say, well, you know, we are going to use these tests for merit pay or whatever other fearful connotation they can put to it, and the whole system right down to the student in the classroom is affected. So that is clarification on that for the member.

Is there a larger report that is going to go to schools? The member is making reference to the fact that in our public summary report issued after the January Grade 12 exams, we did not include any contextual information. We simply said things such as students did well in calculation, generally speaking, but not as well in problem solving. We did not reference it contextually to say, in division A, the reason they did not do as well in problem solving is because of this, this and this. That, we felt, is information that the school division could and should, in terms of laying down its school plans, address those kinds of particular contextual things.

The next report, however, probably will have a bit more contextual material. We have noted several things in broad, sweeping principles. The one I have just mentioned, students had done well in calculation but not generally well in problem solving. We noted that 13-year-old girls are now performing as well as 13-year-old boys in science, but 16-year-old girls still lag behind 16-year-old boys, that type of thing.

Contextually why, that we have left to the divisions to explain. You know, why did we see these particular results in our division? What are our school plans for addressing any concerns that we might have identified as things that need addressing? But still, in the end, schools themselves will have the broader set of indicators of student performance, and, therefore, they

have to, themselves, inform their public of much more contextual information because they are the ones who have it. We can give the overall picture; they can provide the detail. We will give a little more detail, but we still want them to be the ones controlling the detailed information since they are the ones living it.

The member questioned a previous reference to fair assessment and special needs. Every reasonable effort is made to enable students to demonstrate learning in relation to the objectives or the expected learning outcomes set out in the curriculum of the course or the subject area that is being examined or tested. Students with learning disabilities, cognitive disabilities and physical disabilities—visual impairments, hearing loss, that type of thing—may be granted one or more of the following adaptations, provided the adaptations do not alter the validity of the examination or the test.

Adaptations that may be allowed for one subject area—for example, mathematics—may not be allowed for another subject area such as English language arts. But the kinds of adaptations we are talking about are—they could include the use of a word processor, a Braille writing device, typewriter, specially printed assessment instruments, large print or Braille versions. We may allow additional writing time for people who have a physical disability with hand movements and so on. We allow breaks during which the student is supervised if there is a problem with sitting still for too long. We will allow alternative settings outside the classroom with continuous supervision. We can adjust the setting of the examination or the test. We can have other subject-specific adaptations as approved by the Assessment and Evaluation Unit of the School Programs Division or the Direction des services de soutien en éducation of the Bureau de l'éducation française.

I do not know where the other—but a survey of Grade 3 teachers was conducted in connection with the Grade 3 mathematics standards test pilot to determine the number and types of students who might have to be exempted or require special accommodations when the standards tests are written in June of '97. Teachers were provided with draft criteria as part of the survey. Preliminary figures indicate that in the opinion of classroom teachers, about 5 percent of students should be exempted from writing, and the major factors

addressed are emotional or psychological; learning disabilities; physical disabilities; language difficulty; and multihandicaps.

Teachers also indicate that about 8 percent of students would require special accommodations in the writing of standards tests, and those main accommodations would be allowing more time, reading the test to the student, other things such as Braille. For French Immersion that figure was 10 percent, Mr. Chairman.

The examination in standards testing programming provides provincial information with respect to areas of the curriculum the students have difficulty with or where they are strong. The curriculum development process has taken information from local, as well as national assessments and development committees take all of this information, as well as the research in best practices when the curriculum development process is underway.

One example of this is the emphasis that we now have on problem solving across the curriculum. Professional development activities could be tailored to divisional or regional needs, and the department has worked very closely with the regions in the implementation of curriculum and will continue to do so. Some Manitoba school divisions have taken local and provincial information to provide their community with a comprehensive set of information and to let their publics know what their priorities for continuous improvement are.

* (1730)

I mentioned we have workshops and sessions with local school divisions to go through the details of their own profiles to assist them, and it may help if I refer to, without going through all the detail, the provincial examination development process from our own provincial documents, page 1 and page 2. The provincial examination process outlines the development of pilot tests, pilot test administration, pilot test marking, provision of pilot test, notification process, examination administration, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera and that is in our New Directions document for the member's referral.

But we do go out to the divisions and conduct more detailed information on their own divisional profile with them, and that is not public but it is intensive analysis for the divisions to assist them. Did I miss anything? I think that addresses the points in the most recent question.

Ms. Friesen: The questions I was asking were coming from the evaluation of the examinations. My suggestion was that the ones that have been made public so far are useful but are of limited use to the general public, and so I had asked the minister about additional ones, and in so doing, what I was doing was taking the document which the minister had introduced into this discussion, which establishes fair student assessment practices across Canada and took two—and I am going to add another one now—elements of evaluation for the exams.

It seems to me that what it says is that the examining body should investigate the performance, not the needs. The minister in her response spoke about the needs of students who are to write, how many needed braille, how many students there would be in this category, but Fair Student Assessment Practices says that your evaluation should investigate the performance of students with special needs. So I am not sure the minister understood the question.

The second part of it was that it should investigate the performance of students from different backgrounds, and the minister's response on that was that was up to the division. Now, that seems to me rather difficult for a division to have enough information to understand where their results fit with those of others. If we are evaluating people from different backgrounds, surely it is only the province which has the full range of information that will enable a fair evaluation of that test and its effect and impact on students from different backgrounds. How can one division do that? How can it place itself in comparison to others when it does not have the same range of information that has been made available to every division?

In addition, the minister did suggest that this was the way she was proceeding, and yet the actual details of the procedure seem to me to be quite different from the Principles for Fair Student Assessment.

In addition, I wanted to ask the minister about the sixth element of Principles for Fair Student Assessment Practices, and that is No. 6 which says that the examining body should provide potential users with representative samples or complete copies of questions or tasks, directions, answer sheets, score reports, guidelines for interpretation and manuals. Now, I read that out in specific detail because I am concerned about the mathematics exams at the Grade 12 level and the concerns that were expressed by parents and teachers in Brandon about the level of information which was provided.

The evaluation in the report that was done by the Brandon University professors in the mathematics department indicated that the difficulties that they believe occurred in that exam, and I am quoting from their report. They say: We believe that this shift in emphasis could be the major problem, the shift from 40 percent to 60 percent for the short and long answers.

The minister and I have exchanged questions and answers on this in Question Period as well, but in their evaluation, the professors from Brandon pose a number of alternatives, I guess for preparation and performance, and they argue that students in one scenario are likely to study from old exams. I wondered if the minister had anticipated this, that this is how students would study and whether she was prepared to make exams public so that the strategy is available to everyone. I believe I did indicate to her that British Columbia does this on a regular basis, and she said last year that that was something she would look at.

The professors make the point that the students' performance on 1997 exams depends on what students are told to expect and how they study for it. That is where it seems to me the principle No. 6 in the Principles for Fair Student Assessment Practices is a very important principle, that potential users have representative samples or complete copies of questions or tasks, directions, answer sheets, score reports, guidelines for interpretations and manuals. I talked to the Alberta Department of Education, or at least our staff did, and this seems to me to be the practice in Alberta where this kind of provincial standards assessment has been in place for a long time.

So I would like to know from the minister whether, in fact, those samples, complete copies of questions, task directions, answer sheets, score reports, guidelines for interpretations and manuals were distributed as part of, in this case let us say, the math exam. Were they distributed for other exams? What level of information is provided? Can the minister, for example, table the representative samples, the complete copies of questions, the task directions, answer sheets, score reports, guidelines for interpretations and manuals that were sent out to each school division in advance of the 1997 tests?

* (1740)

Mrs. McIntosh: Mr. Chairman, the series of questions are basically on one topic, but there were two. The member had indicated that in my previous answer she had asked why our public information was not that detailed, and I had provided that answer to that question. If I heard her question correctly, I really thought that she had said the information that we put out was not detailed, and she had asked why. I had responded that we gave the generic overview that it was up to the school divisions to provide the detail if they wished that released. So it was in that context that I was answering her question.

She had also asked the question about the performance of students with special needs and students from different backgrounds. That was a pretty specific question, and in providing the answer to that, then I spoke to under what circumstances such students might be provided special compensation or exemption. But, if she was looking for different information on that, investigating the performance of students with special needs and students from different backgrounds, to indicate that we do expect to receive some information back when the special needs review is complete that may assist us in a variety of ways with decisions on these types of students, but in the meantime the answer I provided for that was in response to a definite question that she had asked.

The member refers to correspondence from the university of Brandon professors who were provided information from the Brandon School Division and not from any other source. So I say that in light of the fact that if you read the correspondence given to the

Brandon professors from Brandon School Division, you may find some information not there. The Brandon professors provided an answer, which was to use old exams, et cetera. We do not have an abundance of old exams at this point in standards assessment, in the standards test, because they are relatively new. But that is not a bad idea.

The questions being done in class following the curriculum, if you are following the curriculum, then the chances are that they have already had a lot of questions of the type they would have seen on the exam in class. The professor, Grant Woods, at the University of Manitoba, who is a mathematics professor there, volunteered to me, and apparently we have correspondence from him that you might be interested in seeing—Brandon, of course, did not submit his perspective—Professor Woods volunteered to me when I was out at the university not long ago that the mathematics Senior 4 examination that was written in January was absolutely, exactly the kind of exam that would measure the type of material students needed to be able to take his courses at the university. I understand we now have a piece of correspondence from him reiterating that, that that is the type of exam that is required if students are to be able to perform at a level satisfactory for him to be able to begin teaching at the university level at which he teaches.

The member did not ask any questions about the suitability of the exam. From that, I am assuming that the argument that was put forward by Brandon that the exam was not curriculum-congruent or did not address relevant information, I believe that argument is now gone, because it is clearly known and understood that the exam was curriculum-congruent, that it did contain material that students who had taken the course should have known or should have been able to answer, had they absorbed and been able to apply the information. Those arguments are gone.

What the member is now asking us is: What material did we give these students in Brandon or anyplace else to enable them to know what was going to be on the exam in a generic sense? We did not give old exams, as I indicated, partly because we really do not have a lot of old exams at this point, although certainly we did give, in the year before we actually provided samples of the kinds of questions that were going to be on the

exam and distributed those from the department and I think correctly assumed that most divisions this year would use those same samples again or develop their own samples as most divisions did from the samples we had sent them.

Just to indicate what we did do, the exam difficulty and design, and I will repeat that, because I think it is important, the exam difficulty and the exam design were communicated to all schools in the fall of 1996. Along with that, they received the information that long answer questions had the poorest results in the June '96, 40S mathematics examinations, and that students required more practising in answering long-answer questions. That is consistent with the press release that we had put out, because this was also not just communicated to divisions, but it was a press release in the spring of '96. It was not just a press release, but it was reported in the media fairly widely. I was also on radio talking about this as well on more than one radio station. So this was well publicized, sent directly to them, and publicized in the media as well. They also received notice that a significant portion of the marks, 60 percent, for the January '97 exam would be based on long answer questions.

We provided this information to help schools predict more precisely the format and difficulty of the 1997 examination. By widely distributing this information in the fall of '96 and talking about it publicly—and I myself had discussions with school divisions on it throughout the fall term, in a generic way, you know, attending meetings of teachers and trustees, et cetera. In talking about exams, I would frequently say, for example, you received notice that problem solving was a problem and that we are asking you this fall to work harder on problem solving and trying to improve those techniques, because you are going to have more questions on it in the next exam. So, I mean, those kinds of comments were widely made throughout the fall.

The levels of difficulty for questions on the examination were determined and assigned by the mathematics 40S exam development committee and approved by the department. All 40S provincial examination questions were derived from the objectives of core, compulsory modules outlined in Mathematics 304, 301, 300, curriculum guide 1989. So they were

not new in that sense. Each question on the mathematics 40S January 1997 provincial examination was matched to the mathematics 40S curriculum.

When we were doing the review, and the review and screening procedures that were followed were, I think, pretty rigorous and designed to make sure that anybody who had learned the material in the curriculum, regardless of whether or not they prepared as indicated under No. 6, would be prepared for the exam. The mathematics exam questions were selected on the basis of the table of examination specifications related to the curriculum guide. Three examination forms were developed by the committee. An external review committee independently examined and modified the mathematics questions. All three forms of the mathematics examination were piloted in English and French throughout the province in 16 schools. We used about 600 students in the pilot. The pilot examinations were marked by the mathematics teachers, and individual student results were forwarded to the schools that participated in the pilot.

The SAS system was used to conduct an item analysis of the multiple choice questions and a distribution of marks for the long answers. The development committee reviewed the statistics and modified the questions in each form. They selected one of the forms for the first semester and a second form for the second semester. After the statistics for the first semester examination were available, the Mathematics Development Committee met to review the results, statistics and comments. It is only after all of that was done that, based on that information, the development committee modified the examination questions on the second form and recommended this exam.

* (1750)

So the process for preparing students was quite thorough. The letter that we sent to all teachers of mathematics 40S was sent by Norman Mayer from our department, who is here with us today from Assessment and Evaluation. It indicated amongst other things, it was sent to all teachers of mathematics 40S from the Assessment and Evaluation Unit, and it was sent out at the beginning of October 1996. It says, this is a reminder that the province-wide mathematics 40S three-hour examination for the first semester will be

administered between the hours of this and this on this and this date, which was January 22, Wednesday, 1997.

An additional 15 minutes prior to the examination will be required to prepare and assist students in completing the information required in the answer sheets. You will be receiving a copy of the administration manual from supervising teachers before the examination date so that you may familiarize yourself with the detailed processes to follow before, during and after the examination. If you have not received the manual prior to the examination date, please check with your principal. You are reminded that this examination is based on the mathematics 40S curriculum and information contained in the examination specifications enclosed with this package.

So they had examination specifications included with the package and a reminder that it is based on the mathematics 40S curriculum.

It then went on to say: The examination consists of multiple-choice-select and written-response-supply questions in the approximate ratio of 40 percent to 60 percent, respectively. Experience has shown that students tend not to perform as well on the written-response sections of assessments in examinations as they do in the multiple-choice section. Students should be encouraged to answer written response questions—and that is underlined—in a concise and complete manner. Students may not use notes, textbooks or dictionaries during the exam. Nonprogrammable, nongraphing calculators are required to write this examination. Calculators must be checked at least two days in advance of the examination to ensure that the student's scientific calculator does not include programming or graphing features. The examination counts for 30 percent of each student's final grade, and marks will be reported to your school as a score out of 30.

Mr. Chairperson: The hour being five to six, committee rise.

Call in the Speaker.

IN SESSION

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Marcel Laurendeau): The House will come to order.

Committee Changes

Mr. Gerry McAlpine (Sturgeon Creek): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to make some committee changes and rescind the committee change that was made in Public Utilities and Natural Resources earlier today.

I move, seconded by the honourable member for Pembina (Mr. Dyck), that the committee change made earlier today, we rescind the change for the member for Arthur-Virden (Mr. Downey) for the member for Brandon West (Mr. McCrae).

Motion agreed to.

Mr. McAlpine: I move, seconded by the honourable member for Pembina (Mr. Dyck), that the composition of the Standing Committee of Public Utilities and Natural Resources be amended as follows: the honourable member for Emerson (Mr. Penner) for the

honourable member for Gimli (Mr. Helwer); the honourable member for Morris (Mr. Pitura) for the honourable member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Tweed); the honourable member for Arthur-Virden (Mr. Downey) for the honourable member for Pembina (Mr. Dyck).

Motion agreed to.

Mr. McAlpine: I move, Mr. Deputy Speaker, seconded by the honourable member for Pembina (Mr. Dyck), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Law Amendments be amended as follows: The honourable member for St. Vital (Mrs. Render) for the honourable member for Gladstone (Mr. Rocan).

Motion agreed to.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The hour being six o'clock, this House is now adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. tomorrow (Tuesday).

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, June 9, 1997

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