

**Fourth Session - Thirty-Ninth Legislature**  
of the  
**Legislative Assembly of Manitoba**  
**DEBATES**  
and  
**PROCEEDINGS**

**Official Report**  
**(Hansard)**

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**MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
**Thirty-Ninth Legislature**

<b>Member</b>	<b>Constituency</b>	<b>Political Affiliation</b>
ALLAN, Nancy, Hon.	St. Vital	N.D.P.
ALTEMEYER, Rob	Wolseley	N.D.P.
ASHTON, Steve, Hon.	Thompson	N.D.P.
BJORNSON, Peter, Hon.	Gimli	N.D.P.
BLADY, Sharon	Kirkfield Park	N.D.P.
BLAIKIE, Bill, Hon.	Elmwood	N.D.P.
BOROTSIK, Rick	Brandon West	P.C.
BRAUN, Erna	Rossmere	N.D.P.
BRICK, Marilyn	St. Norbert	N.D.P.
BRIESE, Stuart	Ste. Rose	P.C.
CALDWELL, Drew	Brandon East	N.D.P.
CHOMIAK, Dave, Hon.	Kildonan	N.D.P.
CULLEN, Cliff	Turtle Mountain	P.C.
DERKACH, Leonard	Russell	P.C.
DEWAR, Gregory	Selkirk	N.D.P.
DRIEDGER, Myrna	Charleswood	P.C.
DYCK, Peter	Pembina	P.C.
EICHLER, Ralph	Lakeside	P.C.
FAURSCHOU, David	Portage la Prairie	P.C.
GERRARD, Jon, Hon.	River Heights	Lib.
GOERTZEN, Kelvin	Steinbach	P.C.
GRAYDON, Cliff	Emerson	P.C.
HAWRANIK, Gerald	Lac du Bonnet	P.C.
HICKES, George, Hon.	Point Douglas	N.D.P.
HOWARD, Jennifer, Hon.	Fort Rouge	N.D.P.
IRVIN-ROSS, Kerri, Hon.	Fort Garry	N.D.P.
JENNISSSEN, Gerard	Flin Flon	N.D.P.
JHA, Bidhu	Radisson	N.D.P.
KORZENIOWSKI, Bonnie	St. James	N.D.P.
LAMOUREUX, Kevin	Inkster	Lib.
LEMIEUX, Ron, Hon.	La Verendrye	N.D.P.
MACKINTOSH, Gord, Hon.	St. Johns	N.D.P.
MAGUIRE, Larry	Arthur-Virden	P.C.
MARCELINO, Flor, Hon.	Wellington	N.D.P.
MARTINDALE, Doug	Burrows	N.D.P.
McFADYEN, Hugh	Fort Whyte	P.C.
McGIFFORD, Diane, Hon.	Lord Roberts	N.D.P.
MELNICK, Christine, Hon.	Riel	N.D.P.
MITCHELSON, Bonnie	River East	P.C.
NEVAKSHONOFF, Tom	Interlake	N.D.P.
OSWALD, Theresa, Hon.	Seine River	N.D.P.
PEDERSEN, Blaine	Carman	P.C.
REID, Daryl	Transcona	N.D.P.
ROBINSON, Eric, Hon.	Rupertsland	N.D.P.
RONDEAU, Jim, Hon.	Assiniboia	N.D.P.
ROWAT, Leanne	Minnedosa	P.C.
SARAN, Mohinder	The Maples	N.D.P.
SCHULER, Ron	Springfield	P.C.
SELBY, Erin	Southdale	N.D.P.
SELINGER, Greg, Hon.	St. Boniface	N.D.P.
STEFANSON, Heather	Tuxedo	P.C.
STRUTHERS, Stan, Hon.	Dauphin-Roblin	N.D.P.
SWAN, Andrew, Hon.	Minto	N.D.P.
TAILLIEU, Mavis	Morris	P.C.
WHITEHEAD, Frank	The Pas	N.D.P.
WIEBE, Matt	Concordia	N.D.P.
WOWCHUK, Rosann, Hon.	Swan River	N.D.P.

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, May 10, 2010

*The House met at 1:30 p.m.*

**Mr. Speaker:** O Eternal and Almighty God, from Whom all power and wisdom come, we are assembled here before Thee to frame such laws as may tend to the welfare and prosperity of our province. Grant, O merciful God, we pray Thee, that we may desire only that which is in accordance with Thy will, that we may seek it with wisdom, know it with certainty and accomplish it perfectly for the glory and honour of Thy name and for the welfare of all our people. Amen.

### ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

#### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

##### **Bill 230—The Municipal Amendment and The City of Winnipeg Charter Amendment Act (Defamation Protection)**

**Mr. Stuart Briese (Ste. Rose):** I move, seconded by the member from Carman, that Bill 230, The Municipal Amendment and The City of Winnipeg Charter Amendment Act (Defamation Protection), now be read a first time.

**Mr. Speaker:** Moved by the honourable member for Ste. Rose, seconded by the honourable member for Carman (Mr. Pedersen), that Bill 230, The Municipal Amendment and The City of Winnipeg Charter Amendment Act (Defamation Protection), be now read a first time.

**Mr. Briese:** This is a bill—Bill 230 is designed to give municipal councillors, mayors and Reeves the same protection from defamation when they're in their council meetings and committee meetings as we have in this House.

**Mr. Speaker:** Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion? *[Agreed]*

### PETITIONS

#### **Multiple Myeloma Treatments**

**Mr. Hugh McFadyen (Leader of the Official Opposition):** I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

These are the reasons for this petition:

Health Canada has approved the use of Revlimid for patients with multiple myeloma, a rare, progressive and fatal blood cancer.

Revlimid is a vital new treatment that must be accessible to all patients in Manitoba for this life-threatening cancer of the blood cells.

Multiple myeloma is treatable, and new, innovative therapies like Revlimid can extend survival and enhance quality of life for the estimated 2,100 Canadians diagnosed annually.

The provinces of Ontario, Québec, British Columbia, Saskatchewan and Alberta have already listed this drug on their respective pharmacare formularies.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

That the provincial government consider immediately providing Revlimid as a choice to patients with multiple myeloma and their health-care providers in Manitoba through public funding.

And it's signed by G. Holowka, C. Taplin, E. Lysenko and many, many others.

**Mr. Speaker:** In accordance with our rule 132(6), when petitions are read they are deemed to be received by the House.

#### **Waste-Water Ejector Systems**

**Mr. Leonard Derkach (Russell):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

These are the reasons for this petition:

Manitobans are deeply committed to protecting the environment, and they want to be assured that provincial environmental policies are based on sound science.

In early 2009 the provincial government announced that it was reviewing the Onsite Wastewater Management Systems Regulation under The Environment Act.

Affected Manitobans, including property owners and municipal governments, provided considerable feedback to the provincial government on the impact

of the proposed changes, only to have their input ignored.

The updated regulation includes a prohibition on the installation of new waste-water ejectors and the elimination of existing waste-water ejectors at the time of any property transfer.

Questions have been raised about the lack of scientific basis for these changes, as a Manitoba Conservation official stated on October 8th, 2009, edition of the *Manitoba Co-operator*, have we done any specific studies? No.

These regulatory changes will have a significant financial impact on all affected Manitobans.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request the Minister of Conservation to consider immediately placing the recent changes of the—to the Onsite Wastewater Management System Regulation under The Environment Act on hold until such time that a review can take place to ensure that they are based on a sound science.

To request the Minister of Conservation to consider implementing the prohibition on waste-water ejector systems on a case-by-case basis as determined by environmental need in ecologically sensitive areas.

To request the Minister of Conservation to consider offering financial incentives to help affected Manitoba property owners adapt to these regulatory changes.

And this petition is signed by K. Bauereiss, C. Marzoff, D. Liske and many, many other Manitobans.

#### **PTH 15—Twinning**

**Mr. Ron Schuler (Springfield):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

These are the reasons for this petition:

In 2004, the Province of Manitoba made a public commitment to the people of Springfield to twin PTH 15 and the floodway bridge on PTH 15, but then in 2006, the twinning was cancelled.

Injuries resulting from collisions on PTH 15 continue to rise and have doubled from 2007 to 2008.

In August 2008, the Minister of Transportation stated that preliminary analysis of the future and current traffic demands indicate that local twinning will be required.

The current plan to replace the floodway bridge on PTH 15 does not include twinning and therefore does not fulfil the current nor future traffic demands cited by the Minister of Transportation.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request that the Minister of Transportation consider the immediate twinning of the PTH 15 floodway bridge for the safety of the citizens of Manitoba.

Signed by S. McFadden, L. Crampton, C. Osborne and many, many other Manitobans.

#### **Ophthalmology Services—Swan River**

**Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

These are the reasons for this petition:

The Swan Valley region has a high population of seniors and a very high incidence of diabetes. Every year, hundreds of patients from the Swan Valley region must travel to distant communities for cataract surgery and additional pre-operative and post-operative appointments.

These patients, many of whom are sent as far away as Saskatchewan, need to travel with an escort who must take time off work to drive the patient to his or her appointments without any compensation. Patients who cannot endure this expense and hardship are unable to have the necessary treatment.

The community has located an ophthalmologist who would like to practise in Swan River. The local Lions Club has provided funds for the necessary equipment, and the Swan River Valley hospital has space to accommodate this service.

The Minister of Health has told the Town of Swan River that it has insufficient infrastructure and patient volumes to support a cataract surgery program; however, residents of the region strongly disagree.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the Minister of Health to consider rethinking her refusal to allow an ophthalmologist to

practise in Swan River and to consider working with the community to provide this service without further delay.

And this is signed by H. Rasmussen, J. Rasmussen, A. Saseniuk and many, many others, Mr. Speaker.

\* (13:40)

### **Mount Agassiz Ski Area**

**Mr. Stuart Briese (Ste. Rose):** I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

And these are the reasons for this petition:

For several decades, the Mount Agassiz ski area, home to the highest vertical between Thunder Bay and the Rocky Mountains, was a popular skiing and snowboarding destination for Manitobans and visitors alike.

The operations of Mount Agassiz ski area were very important to the local economy, not only creating jobs, but also generating sales of goods and services at area businesses.

In addition, a thriving rural economy generates tax revenue that helps pay for the core provincial government services and infrastructure which benefits all Manitobans.

Although the ski facility closed in 2000, there remains strong interest in seeing it reopened and Parks Canada is committed to conducting a feasibility study with respect to the Agassiz site and future opportunities in the area.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request the appropriate ministers of the provincial government to consider outlining to Parks Canada the importance that a viable recreation facility in the Mount Agassiz area would play in the local and provincial economies.

And to request that the appropriate ministers of the provincial government consider working with all stakeholders, including Parks Canada, to help develop a plan for a viable, multiseason recreation facility in the Mount Agassiz area.

And this petition is signed by B. Birnie, J. Campbell, K. Sallion and many, many other fine Manitobans.

### **Multiple Myeloma Treatments**

**Mrs. Heather Stefanson (Tuxedo):** I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

And these are the reasons for this petition:

Health Canada has approved the use of Revlimid for patients with multiple myeloma, a rare, progressive and fatal blood cancer.

Revlimid is a vital new treatment that must be accessible to all patients in Manitoba for this life-threatening cancer of the blood cells.

Multiple myeloma is treatable, and new, innovative therapies like Revlimid can extend survival and enhance quality of life for the estimated 2,100 Canadians diagnosed annually.

The provinces of Ontario, Québec, British Columbia, Saskatchewan and Alberta have already listed this drug on their respective pharmacare formularies.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

That the provincial government consider immediately providing Revlimid as a choice to patients with multiple myeloma and their health-care providers in Manitoba through public funding.

And Mr. Speaker, this petition has been signed by L. Leeder, L. Noble, R. Thom and many, many other Manitobans.

### **Pet Ownership–Tenancy Agreement**

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Manitoba Legislative Assembly.

The background and the reasons for this petition are as follows:

Tenants and landlords can benefit from a province-wide policy that treats all Manitobans the same regardless if they own pets.

Research shows that tenants, including seniors, who have pets are more socially connected, have better health, less depression and higher levels of fitness.

Allowing tenants to keep their pets leads to less strain on organizations like the Winnipeg Humane Society.

The Province of Ontario has legislation which ended discrimination against pet owners, and this has been in place successfully since June of 1998.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

That the provincial government ensures that landlords cannot discriminate against pet owners purely based on the fact that they have pets.

That the provincial government ensures that any provision in a tenancy agreement prohibiting the presence of animals in or about a residential complex should be void.

Signed by C. Bautista, C. Peters, W. Houston and many, many others.

### **Waste-Water Ejector Systems**

**Mr. Larry Maguire (Arthur-Virden):** To present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly, Mr. Speaker.

And these are the reasons for this petition:

Manitobans are deeply committed to protecting the environment, and they want to be assured that provincial environmental policies are based on sound science.

In early 2009, the provincial government announced that it was reviewing the Onsite Wastewater Management Systems Regulation under The Environment Act.

Affected Manitobans, including property owners and municipal governments, provided considerable feedback to the provincial government on the impact of the proposed changes, only to have their input ignored.

The updated regulation includes a prohibition on the installation of new waste-water ejectors and the elimination of existing waste-water ejectors at the time of any property transfer.

Questions have been raised about the lack of scientific basis for these changes, as a Manitoba Conservation official stated in the October 8th, 2009, edition of the *Manitoba Co-operator*, quote: "Have we done a specific study? No." End quote.

These regulatory changes will have a significant financial impact on all affected Manitobans.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request the Minister of Conservation to consider immediately placing the recent changes to the Onsite Wastewater Management Systems Regulation under The Environment Act on hold until such time that a review can take place to ensure that they are based on sound science.

To request the Minister of Conservation to consider implementing the prohibition on waste-water ejector systems on a case-by-case basis as determined by environmental need in ecologically sensitive areas.

To request the Minister of Conservation to consider offering financial incentives to help affected Manitoba property owners adapt to these regulatory changes.

And Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by R. Demare, K. Moncrief, S.M. Anderson and many, many others.

### **Medical Clinic in Weston and Brooklands Area**

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background to this petition is as follows:

Community-based medical clinics provide a valuable health-care service.

The closure of the Westbrook Medical Clinic has left both Weston and Brooklands without a community-based medical clinic.

We petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

To urge the provincial government to consider how important it is to have a medical clinic located in the Weston-Brooklands area.

Mr. Speaker, this is signed by H. Watson, J. Silvester and T. Roderechs and many, many other fine Manitobans. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

## **COMMITTEE REPORT**

### **Committee of Supply**

**Ms. Marilyn Brick (Chairperson):** Mr. Speaker, the Committee of Supply has adopted certain resolutions.

I move, seconded by the honourable member for The Maples (Mr. Saran), that the report of the committee be received.

***Motion agreed to.***

## TABLING OF REPORTS

**Mr. Speaker:** In accordance with section 42 of The Ombudsman Act, subsection 58(1) of The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, subsection 37(1) of The Personal Health Information Act and subsection 26(1) of The Public Interest Disclosure Act, I am pleased to table the Annual Report of the Ombudsman for the year ended December 31st, 2009.

### Introduction of Guests

**Mr. Speaker:** Okay, prior to oral questions, I'd like to draw the attention of honourable members to the public gallery where we have with us from the River West Park School, we have 27 grade 9 students under the direction of Mr. Todd Johnson. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Charleswood (Mrs. Driedger).

On behalf of all honourable members, I welcome you all here today.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### Economy Growth Rate

**Mr. Hugh McFadyen (Leader of the Official Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, as a result of the NDP's governed mismanagement of Hydro, rates are going up to record levels. As a result of their mismanagement of the Province's finances, we now have the highest debt per capita in western Canada and climbing at a rate that's unsustainable. Thirdly, as the result of their policy of isolation, Manitoba has been left out of the New West Partnership.

The result, Mr. Speaker, of this triple play of mismanagement is that we've got new economic numbers just released this morning that show that Manitoba's economy is expected to have the slowest rate of growth outside of the Maritimes, below what they are projecting in their own budget.

I want to ask the Premier if he will acknowledge that his economic policies are failing Manitobans.

**Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier):** Mr. Speaker, Manitoba has, in this budget, a program to stimulate 29,000 person-years of employment, and the members opposite, if they were able to implement their program, would be driving the unemployment numbers up.

The reality is, is that Manitoba—the unemployment numbers were released last week.

Manitoba has the lowest unemployment rate in the country as a result of the programs we put in place.

**Mr. McFadyen:** Well, Mr. Speaker, he's projecting more than \$2 billion worth of deficits over five years, so those numbers would suggest an absolute record of mismanagement, and we see hydro rates going up because of political interference and mismanagement.

\* (13:50)

We see the highest debt per capita in the West, more debt than Saskatchewan and Alberta combined, Mr. Speaker, and we have a policy of isolation that's leaving Manitoba out of the New West Partnership.

And now the Conference Board is saying, this morning, Mr. Speaker, that Manitoba's economy is going to grow by 2.2 percent in 2010, below the projected national average of 3.3 percent, tied with Nova Scotia and P.E.I. for the second lowest among the provinces.

I want to ask the Premier: His budget is based on certain projections, which are higher than those which came out this morning. Will he now acknowledge that his policies are failing?

**Mr. Selinger:** Mr. Speaker, again, the members opposite would have actually generated more unemployed people in Manitoba with the way they voted on the budget. They voted against keeping teachers in classrooms. They voted against keeping nurses at the bedside. They voted against having police officers in the streets protecting communities and people. They voted against all of the public investments we made, including 29,000 person-years of employment, which has resulted in the lowest unemployment rate in the country.

The members opposite know full well that when it comes to Manitoba we never go down as much, which is why we had the best growth rate in the country last year. We never go up as quickly, which is why we are a steady-as-she-goes economy, with solid investments to create assets that will generate economic growth into the future, and the members opposite have always, consistently, voted against it.

**Mr. McFadyen:** Mr. Speaker, the culmination of 10 years of mismanagement has us at record levels of debt and climbing at 10 percent this year. The highest rate of growth in spending in this year's budget is debt, not health care, not education, not public safety, but servicing the NDP debt.

We have, Mr. Speaker—we have political interference in Hydro, which is driving up rates on Manitoba families. We have a policy of isolation from the New West Partnership and no plan other than more debt and a tin-cup approach to begging Ottawa for more money.

Will he acknowledge that these are spent policies of the past, which will do nothing for the future of Manitoba's economy?

**Mr. Selinger:** Mr. Speaker, just to put the facts on the record once again. Manitoba's cost to servicing the debt is 6 cents on the dollar under this government. It was 13 and a half cents under the dollar—on the dollar when they were in government. It was okay when they were in government to have a debt-to-GDP ratio of 32 percent, and 13 cents on the dollar. It's not okay when we have 6 cents on the dollar and a debt ratio of 27 percent, which is a superior performance.

We are outperforming them during the recession. We outperformed them during the good times. They know that. We are working with western Canada on the drug formulary. We're working with western Canada on climate change. We are continuing to work with the whole country on labour mobility. We believe that there's one country that needs to be lifted up, and all the provinces and the federal government have very similar programs to work through the recession. Only the members opposite want to slash and burn their way back to prosperity.

#### **Football Stadium Use of Tax Increment Financing**

**Mr. Speaker:** The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition, on a new question.

**Mr. Hugh McFadyen (Leader of the Official Opposition):** Well, Mr. Speaker, carrying on with their policy of misusing public money and smoke and mirrors related to their approach to economic development, on November the 26th, 2008, the Minister of Local Government put out a news release in which he said that TIF legislation would include development of Winnipeg's inland port, rapid transit and affordable housing in downtown Winnipeg. Nowhere in that release did it say anything about misusing TIF for the Premier's top priority, the stadium.

I want to ask the Premier: Why is it that he's now going back on the commitments made by his own Minister of Local Government, when it comes to

misusing TIF financing to create a phony picture of economic development in Manitoba?

**Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier):** Mr. Speaker, it was less than a month ago that we announced that the TIF legislation would be put in place and would offer very significant incentives for downtown housing. That was an announcement we made with the City, and that program will generate more people living downtown.

We are also using it as a backup policy to redevelop Polo Park, so Polo Park can add up to \$140 million of capital investment, up to another 2,200 person-years of employment. And at the same time, we're going to build a new stadium at the university, which will be owned by the university. It'll be owned by the City. It'll generate 25 person-hundred person-years of employment.

When you put the two together, Mr. Speaker, we're growing the economy. We're improving our facilities for the public and for the university. And the members opposite are always voting against it. They oppose it, but they have no plan. They have no concrete ideas to put in front of the public. They're just nattering nabobs of negativity.

**Mr. McFadyen:** Mr. Speaker—

**Some Honourable Members:** Oh, oh.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. Let's have a little decorum, please. Order.

The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition has the floor.

**Mr. McFadyen:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I know he's borrowing his rhetoric from Gary Doer. But he certainly isn't borrowing the promises and policies of Gary Doer, who said he would never use TIF legislation to build a stadium.

The other promise that was made in November of 2008 by the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) when he put out his news release in November of 2008 said, and I quote: "Money collected from a community revitalization property would then be invested only in the same designated area." That was the member for Thompson in November 2008. That was the position of the former Premier Gary Doer when he made his promises.

I want to ask this Premier: Why is he breaking promises made by the member for Thompson?

**Mr. Selinger:** Mr. Speaker, we are solving a very significant problem—we are solving a very significant

problem in Winnipeg: an old stadium that could require up to \$52 million of repairs that will last for only a decade.

We're building a new stadium which will be a permanent public asset, owned 50 percent by the university, owned 50 percent by the City of Winnipeg. It'll be available for community use. It'll be available for use by university students all year-round with a soft dome. It'll also be available for use by the Bisons and the Winnipeg Blue Bombers. It will generate significant employment opportunities at a time of recession, will help lift people out of recession.

All of these things will be done, and it will open up Polo Park for further retail development. It's a class A shopping centre; it'll even be better when the old stadium site is redeveloped, and we will have a larger economy.

Why are the members always opposed to growing the economy in Manitoba? Why are the members opposed to making things better? They want to nitpick things. Once again, Mr. Speaker, we're moving forward; they're trying to take us backwards.

**Mr. McFadyen:** Mr. Speaker, we're strongly in favour of what the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) said in November of 2008. We think that the member for Thompson was right and we think that Gary Doer was right, that you don't miss-take money—you don't take money from schools and reallocate it. Now, I know the members opposite are sensitive about this, but what we are in support of is what Gary Doer said, what the member for Thompson said. What we're opposed to is the weakest economic growth west of the Maritimes. That's what we're opposed to.

And I want to ask the Premier, because the member for Thompson said in November, money collected would be invested only in the same designated area: Did he consult with the member for Thompson before misusing TIF in the stadium announcement or was the member for Thompson just out of the loop, Mr. Speaker?

**Mr. Selinger:** Mr. Speaker, the stadium at Polo Park right now generates zero tax revenue. When it is moved and redeveloped at the University of Manitoba, the site at Polo Park will generate tax revenues for the municipalities and for the school divisions. This will expand the economic base of the

province. It will expand the resources available for public education and for the municipality.

The member's opposed to economic development. He has no plan. He has no alternative. He's opposed to economic development. We seek positive ways to move the economy forward. We seek better assets for our universities. We seek better assets for the public to be able to use, and we seek further retail opportunities at Polo Park. All of these are excellent, excellent outcomes for Manitoba. The members opposite want to drag us for-backwards. We want to move forward, and we will move forward.

\*(14:00)

### **Community Economic Development Use of Tax Increment Financing**

**Mrs. Heather Stefanson (Tuxedo):** Mr. Speaker, clearly the Premier can't seem to answer the question, and so I would ask the former minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton), who said in 2008, and I quote: "Money collected from a community revitalization property would then be invested only in the same designated area." End quote.

Clearly, funding a new stadium in Fort Garry from property taxes in the Polo Park area, through TIF legislation, contravenes the minister's promise that TIF money would only be used for property in the same designated area.

Mr. Speaker, does the minister stand by his commitment that he made one and a half years ago?

**Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier):** I thank the member for the question.

We are unified on this side of the House about moving Manitoba forward. We are unified about generating more employment opportunities for Manitobans. We are unified in building the kind of—

**Some Honourable Members:** Oh, oh.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. Let's have a little decorum, please.

**Mr. Selinger:** This government wants to generate economic opportunities in the north when we develop hydro. Members oppose that. We want to generate economic opportunities for recreation.

I was just up in Dauphin on Friday for the RBC Cup. It was a tremendous opportunity with tremendous leadership from the volunteers in the

community. But it was only possible because we helped contribute towards a new multiplex there that allowed the hockey games to occur.

When you build these kinds of assets, the community can rally around them and use them to generate economic opportunities. That's what we're doing on the stadium. That's what we're doing in Brandon. That's what we're doing in Dauphin. That's what we're doing in Portage la Prairie. That's what we're doing in Thompson, Manitoba. That's what we're doing all across the province, Mr. Speaker.

**Mrs. Stefanson:** I asked—I was asking the question of the minister who clearly made these statements through a press release that they issued some one and a half years ago. I'm simply asking if he stands by his commitment that he'd made one and a half years ago. TIF legislation, Mr. Speaker, is supposed to be used to help bolster blighted communities. It's not meant to take money from kids' educations and fund NDP pet projects.

Mr. Speaker, I am asking the minister once again: Does he stand by his commitment that tax money taken from TIF legislation be used and should stay in the same communities that it's taken from?

**Mr. Selinger:** I welcome the opportunity to once again put forward our program to move Manitoba forward.

I think people should know that the members opposite voted against the new MTS Centre downtown; they opposed it. The new MTS Centre has been a tremendous asset for Winnipeg. We're bringing people from all over the globe to perform there. It's the home of the Manitoba Moose. It has been something that has made a real difference to the quality of life in this community, and the members voted against it.

They're voting against the stadium. They vote against everything that moves Manitoba forward. Manitobans know that.

We seek constructive, practical, pragmatic ways to move this province forward, and that's why this budget has money for 29,000 person-years of employment and major projects: schools, hospitals, CentrePort, that will move Manitoba forward.

**Mrs. Stefanson:** Mr. Speaker, perhaps the Premier doesn't understand his own legislation and his own press release, the press release issued by the member for Thompson some one and a half years ago that stated, and I quote: "Money collected from a

community revitalization property would then be invested only in the same designated area."

Mr. Speaker, is that their commitment? Are they going back on their commitment now, and is it their plan to then bring forward, yet legislation again, to change the TIF act and make changes so that they can then take money out of one designated area through TIF legislation and give it to another to help fund whatever project they feel is necessary for any given day?

**Mr. Selinger:** Mr. Speaker, the objectives in the TIF legislation allow for economic development programs. They allow for the restoration and revitalization of older areas. They allow for the opportunity to redevelop communities so that there's a broader economic base. That's what's going on here.

The stadium project allows for a bigger economy in Manitoba with the redevelopment at Polo Park. It allows for a facility at the university, which will take the University of Manitoba into the same ranks as the University of Calgary which has McMahon Stadium, into the same ranks as McGill University which has their own stadium.

We are moving the Manitoba situation forward at the university, at Polo Park, in the north and in rural areas, and the members opposite just keep want to dragging us backwards.

#### **Auto Theft Increased Offender Violence**

**Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach):** Mr. Speaker, the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) seems to have more security around him than the average car thief in Winnipeg.

Mr. Speaker, last fall we saw that the Minister of Justice, he held a reception, he handed out the cake and he hung up the mission accomplished sign on car thieves. The former minister of Justice wanted to pull the police off of the auto theft unit. Unfortunately, there's been an insurgency and this insurgency is among car thieves who are more violent, who are more reckless and who care less about human life than ever before, and this was demonstrated again this weekend by the car thief who tried to hit an officer after stealing a car.

Does this Minister of Justice not acknowledge today that what they have done, being soft on crime over the last 10 years, has caused these car thieves to be more violent than ever before?

**Hon. Andrew Swan (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** Mr. Speaker, it is a good chance again to speak about the Winnipeg Auto Theft Suppression Strategy, which this government brought in in partnership with law enforcement, in partnership with MPI and in partnership with the Department of Justice.

Auto theft is at its lowest point in 17 years, Mr. Speaker, lower than it's been at any time since 1992 and largely because of the WATSS program, because of the immobilizer program, because of resources for our police—claim to drop 75 percent since 2004. There continued to be—the auto theft in Winnipeg and in Manitoba, that is a concern. Certainly any issue, any concern for our police officers is a tremendous concern for us and that's why we're continuing to improve our outcomes on auto theft.

**Mr. Goertzen:** The fact remains that these car thieves are more violent than they've ever been in the past history and they've grown up under this NDP system of justice. A system of justice that ignores 10 to 12 thousand outstanding warrants, a system of justice that gives these car thieves a pat on the back, a hug and maybe even a Slurpee to boot from the Minister of Justice.

Why won't he acknowledge today—will he not acknowledge today that after 10 years of NDP soft-on-crime justice policies that car thieves are more violent than ever before and the people who are paying the price are on the front lines. They're our officers. They're the ones who are paying the price, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Swan:** Well, in case the member for Steinbach wasn't listening, car theft is lower than it was in 1999, in fact, lower than any year since 1992. We have consistently worked with the federal government to try to get stronger laws, and, indeed, it was an all-party mission that went to Ottawa back in 2007 to ask for the federal government to bring in improvements to the Criminal Code and improvements to the Youth Criminal Justice Act.

The federal government has introduced changes to the Youth Criminal Justice Act. I will be meeting with my colleagues from Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia this week to talk about how those federal reforms could be even stronger. We think there's further room for improvement. We'll be working with other provinces across the country to make sure that judges, police have the tools they need to deal with repeat auto theft offenders, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Goertzen:** The minister can't have it both ways, because today he wants to say it's the federal government's responsibility and, yet, last fall he was handing out cake, put up the mission accomplished sign, and said what a great job he had done. He didn't mention anything about the federal government then, and under the same Criminal Code that every province is under, we've become the knife capital of Canada. We're still the auto theft capital of Canada. Break and enters are up. There are more violent home invasions. There are more car jackings and 10 to 12 thousand outstanding warrants are out with people on the streets today.

Crimes under this government, violent crimes against people have gone up because the criminals know that they're always going to get a soft landing under this NDP government. Why won't he admit that 10 years of soft-on-crime policies, Slurpees, baseball tickets for car thieves, that they have resulted in more violent criminals than ever before in Manitoba.

**Mr. Swan:** Mr. Speaker, the member opposite is just wrong. Auto theft is at its lowest rate in 17 years and it continues to decline. Violent crime continues to decrease in Manitoba. One of the things the member said was talking about violent crime and, indeed, if the member would've read the report on robbery, Manitoba actually experienced the greatest decrease in robbery of all provinces in Canada over the past few years.

The member opposite should also know that in terms of domestic violence we've gone from being the jurisdiction with the highest domestic violence homicide rate to being the lowest rate in all of western Canada.

\* (14:10)

I don't understand, Mr. Speaker, why the member opposite opposes everything we do to put more police on the streets, why the member opposite opposes more Crowns, and why the member opposite takes on and votes against everything we do to make this a safer province.

### **Manitoba Hydro Bipole III West-Side Location**

**Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East):** Residents of northeast Winnipeg continue to question why this NDP government politically interfered with Manitoba Hydro and directed them to build Bipole III on the west side rather than the east side of the province.

Mr. Speaker, why is this NDP government forcing Manitoba Hydro to spend \$1.75 billion more than they need to on a line that is longer, less environmentally friendly and makes no sense?

**Hon. Rosann Wowchuk (Minister charged with the administration of The Manitoba Hydro Act):** I understand that the member opposite is having a meeting this evening on Hydro, so—

**Some Honourable Members:** Oh, oh.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. I'm going to ask the members to be courteous to one another, because we have an agreement in place that questions are 45 seconds and answers are 45 seconds, and when we get too long of an interruption it's taken away from one or the other. And I'm just asking the co-operation of all honourable members, please.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** So I would remind the member while she's having this meeting that she put some facts on the table that, indeed, the costs of 1.7 that she refers to as the cost of the converter, Mr. Speaker, and a converter is needed with either line. A converter is needed for reliability of supply. And I would remind the member opposite to read *Hansard* from the public—when we had the public meeting with Mr. Bob Brennan who, indeed, said at that time the converter was neither—needed no matter which way we built the line.

So I hope she tells her constituents that.

**Mrs. Mitchelson:** Mr. Speaker, I'd like to invite the minister to my meeting tonight at Gateway Recreation Centre at 7 p.m.—it's at 7 p.m. at Gateway and, quite frankly, people in northeast Winnipeg are a little upset that the government didn't have the courage or the nerve to come out into our community and consult them regarding Manitoba Hydro. My constituents have—and they're Hydro ratepayers—have better ideas on how to spend their hard-earned tax dollars rather than the 1.75 billion that this government is wasting on their reckless decision to force Manitoba Hydro to build on the west side of the province.

Will they listen to the engineering experts, reverse their decision and build Bipole III on the shorter, cheaper and more environmentally friendly east side?

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Now, Mr. Speaker, there have been many meetings held on this issue. There have been meetings held with the elders on the east side of the

province, and we listened to people across the province.

And we have—are indeed concerned about protecting the boreal forest, Mr. Speaker. And we—are interested in ensuring that we have a reliable supply for Manitobans, and that's why we have to build another line. That's why we have to build—Hydro has to build a converter so that if one converter goes down, there is a backup.

And I will remind the member that she wants to talk about this—this was talked about in the last election, Mr. Speaker, when we made it clear to Manitobans where, if we were government, we would route the line and the members took a different position. Manitobans voted on it.

**Mrs. Mitchelson:** And I'd welcome the Minister of Finance, the minister responsible for Manitoba Hydro, to come into my community for the first time, Mr. Speaker, and debate with the taxpayers.

The ratepayers in northeast Winnipeg are seeing their hydro rates go up as the direct result of the mismanagement and the political direction to Manitoba Hydro to build the power line on the west side of the province of Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, professional engineers have said the east side is the right option. Manitoba Hydro has said the east side is the right option. Manitoba taxpayers are saying, save us the \$1.75 billion. Will they finally, today, make the right decision, reverse their decision, and build Bipole III on the east side of the lake?

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Mr. Speaker, we need a new hydro line for two reasons: we need Bipole III for reliability of supply for Manitobans; we need Bipole III for export sales. The member—

**Some Honourable Members:** Oh, oh.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. I need to be able to hear the questions and the answers. Let's have a little decorum, please.

The honourable Minister of Finance has the floor.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Member opposite, Mr. Speaker, wants to roll the dice on \$20 billion worth of sales for Manitobans, for revenue for Manitobans and get into it because she knows full well the line could not be built during the timeframe that the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. McFadyen) said that it could be built.

And I will remind the meeting—member opposite that I was in her part of the city for budget consultations. She didn't stay for all of the meeting, but there was discussion on Bipole III.

#### Point of Order

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. The honourable member for River East on a new question?

**Mrs. Mitchelson:** No, on a point of order. Point of order, Mr. Speaker—yes, I—

**Some Honourable Members:** Oh, oh.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. I remind the House that matters of privilege and points of orders are very serious matters, and I need to hear every word that is spoken to make a ruling. So I'm asking the co-operation of members, please.

The honourable member for River East on a point of order.

**Mrs. Mitchelson:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, the budget consultation in northeast Winnipeg was attended by more NDP MLAs and political staff than there were people from northeast Winnipeg, and the staff from the NDP party were filling out the surveys.

**Some Honourable Members:** Oh, oh.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. Remind all members that points of orders are to be used to point out to the Speaker if there's a breach of a rule or a departure of the practice of the House—*[interjection]*—order. Points of orders should not be used for means of debate. That's why we've allowed that 45 seconds for questions and the answers. If you remember, in the past there was no preamble, no postamble on supplementary questions, and if members have something further to add, they have that opportunity within that 45 seconds. That's why that was worked out between all party members.

So I hope members will remember that, and the honourable member does not have a point of order. Let's continue.

#### Agriculture Industry Producer Income Levels

**Mr. Cliff Graydon (Emerson):** Agriculture Canada recently released 2010 farm income projections show that in Manitoba, realized net—farm income will fall 57 percent. The same report also stated that net operating income for the average Canadian hog farm is forecasted to decline to \$1,719 in 2010, which is

well below the 2004–2008 average of \$72,842. We're seeing these hog barns being razed in Manitoba; the number of pork producers has fallen nearly 1,000 over the decade this NDP government has been in power.

Mr. Speaker, will the Minister of Agriculture finally admit that his government's policies have failed Manitoba's family farms?

**Hon. Stan Struthers (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives):** Well, Mr. Speaker, I think the member opposite should tell the whole story, the number of hogs in the province actually increased by 2.9 percent over that same time frame.

\* (14:20)

We know for sure that '09 was a tough year, especially on the livestock side, and that's why we work together with the federal government with the programs that we do have to try to meet the needs of Manitoba farmers, Mr. Speaker, and that's a commitment we will continue forward with.

I would ask the member across to join with us to work with the federal government to make the best possible situation for the Manitoba farmer, instead of coming in here every day and making up more problems, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Graydon:** Mr. Speaker, we have been asking the federal government to help: \$4.4 billion goes into his budget.

Mr. Speaker, this NDP government's failed policies that had a tsunami effect on rural Manitoba. Small family hog operations have faced severe economic challenges due to factors such as low price, high input, trade issues and a high Canadian dollar. They're also facing increasingly regulatory costs imposed by this Minister of Agriculture. The family farms continue to disappear under this minister's watch because he refuses to put science ahead of emotion. When the family farmers leave their communities, rural businesses and industries also take a hit.

Mr. Speaker, will the Minister of Agriculture finally stand up for our family farms and our rural communities?

**Mr. Struthers:** Mr. Speaker, this minister and this government will continue to stand up for family farms with a number of different measures.

You know, Mr. Speaker, dating right back to when we equalized hydro rates in this province,

something that the members opposite—the big champions of rural Manitoba—something they never had either the foresight or the courage to do when they had their chance. We did it. We do it over—and we do it over and over again on behalf of your constituents. I think you should get on board with us.

**Mr. Graydon:** Mr. Speaker, what they're doing now with hydro rates is they're mortgaging our grandchildren.

Mr. Speaker, as this minister waffles and panders to those not connected to agriculture, the industry dies a slow, painful death. During the late 1980s and the 1990s—remember those years—the focus was on diversification, creating growth and prosperity in rural Manitoba. Municipalities saw huge increases in assessments from farm buildings and new homes being built. Thanks to the masters of mismanagement, the NDP, this has all come to a grinding halt.

Mr. Speaker, will the minister admit that the wrong-headed policies of his government have created chaos? Will he stand up for the family farm and create a business climate that's conducive to farming and not killing family farms?

**Mr. Struthers:** You know, in one question here earlier, the member for Emerson lined up all those different things that are impacting the family farm: the COOL legislation; the high dollar; the farm input costs, all the rest of it, and then, in the next breath, he implies that it's something different than that, Mr. Speaker—

You know, we have come through on our commitment in terms of the farm property tax credit, Mr. Speaker, something that we got a lot of hot air from members opposite about, but we actually did it.

I mentioned the levelling of hydro rates. How can members opposite look their constituents in the face, knowing that when they were in power they allowed rates for rural Manitobans—the same farm families he claims to present today—they left those rates higher than what they paid in the city, Mr. Speaker?

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

#### **Health-Care Services Preventative Health Initiatives**

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Mr. Speaker, our provincial health-care costs are growing at an alarming rate, and this Minister of Health has yet to grasp the concept of preventative health as a means

of controlling and reducing government expenditures. This is a minister who has yet to develop a comprehensive plan to deal with the diabetes epidemic facing our province. She doesn't even know how many people in Manitoba today have diabetes.

I want to know why this government, with its massive deficits and out-of-control spending, isn't embracing the concept of preventative health care as a means of controlling costs, or maybe they are and we just simply haven't heard about it.

Can the Minister of Health please tell me if her government is committed to preventative health care as a way of reducing health-care costs, and can she provide us with an example?

**Hon. Theresa Oswald (Minister of Health):** Well, yes, we are, Mr. Speaker, thank you very much. I'm very pleased to inform the member that there are a number of initiatives going on across departments on the issue of preventative health care.

I think the fact that Manitoba was first in the nation to create a Ministry of Healthy Living, a ministry dedicated to the promotion of good health is a very significant step. Many other provinces, as you're well aware, Mr. Speaker, have followed suit.

We know that we have initiatives through Healthy Child Manitoba ranging from, you know, assistance with—for parents with good nutrition, with providing more exercise opportunities. We know that through our Healthy Kids, Healthy future task force, that was an all-party task force, Mr. Speaker, that a number of initiatives have come forward.

We know our initiatives on diabetes, specifically, range not just about treatment, Mr. Speaker, but on prevention as well.

**Mr. Gerrard:** Mr. Speaker, you know, I'm glad that the Minister of Health and her government at least speak about preventative health care and, of course, this will bode well for Bill 218, The Residential Tenancies Amendment Act, or Fluffy's law, which is a large part aimed at preventative health care. I'm sure the Minister of Health will support Bill 218 tomorrow because the potential for significant reductions in health-care spending is there with her support.

The minister must be aware that Australian studies have shown that increases in pet ownership can translate into a 5 percent reduction in overall national health-care expenditures through increased

pet ownership and lower rates of cardiovascular disease, of mental illness and depression.

Can the Minister of Health tell us today if she will support Bill 218, a bill that could save the Manitoba government millions—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

**Ms. Oswald:** Mr. Speaker, as the member knows I always find enjoyment in debating legislation and discussing preventative health care with the member.

It was an unbridled pleasure, I assure you, to travel around Manitoba with the member on the Healthy Kids, Healthy Futures Task Force. I think about it often. I do want to tell the member that we have a history of adopting his legislations, sometimes with amendments, as we did with The Apology Act, which I believe was good for Manitoba and have said so on the record.

And so I look forward to the opportunity to debate his legislation and look forward to the member's support in getting all of our legislation through.

#### **City of Thompson Need for Pediatricians**

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster):** Mr. Speaker, if you're a child in the city of Winnipeg and you need to see a pediatrician, you can, generally speaking, be able to see one within the week—a day or two, quite often, is all that's required.

If you're a child in northern Manitoba—20,000 children, estimated, that rely on needing a pediatrician in the city of Thompson. Mr. Speaker, the minister has failed in recognizing the value of having a full-time pediatrician for the community of Thompson and, as a result, 20,000 children's health is, in fact, put at risk. Quite often, they're having to wait months in order to be able to see a pediatrician. I believe that that is shameful and that this government needs to do more.

My question to—is to the minister: When can Thompson anticipate a pediatrician full time?

**Hon. Theresa Oswald (Minister of Health):** Well, Mr. Speaker, I quite sincerely want to thank the member for the question. Perhaps he didn't have an opportunity to hear the announcement today, in partnership with the federal government, to announce the expansion of the northern residency program, a made-in-Manitoba program that the federal government was so excited about they came on

board, and said, how can we help? And I applaud the federal government for joining in to provide more of those residencies for northern Manitoba, a program recognized now across the nation as being one of the best ideas to come across in improving access to doctors in northern Manitoba. The federal Tories were there. The Manitoba NDP was there. Almost everybody was there.

#### **Economy Statistics Canada Labour Force Report**

**Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia):** Mr. Speaker, while Manitoba is not immune to the effects of the global recession, the province's labour market continues to show a relative stability thanks in no small part to the sound fiscal management by this government over the last decade and a solid economic plan going forward.

Would the Minister of Entrepreneurship, Training and Trade please advise the House of the recent results of the latest Statistics Canada labour force survey and how Manitoba's labour force is performing?

**Hon. Peter Bjornson (Minister of Entrepreneurship, Training and Trade):** I'd like to thank the member for the question.

\* (14:30)

There've been—17,900 people entered the workforce over the past year, and now more Manitobans than ever before are working—619,000 in Manitoba's workforce as of May 2010. Four out of every five workers full-time employed, according to Stats Canada, and the lowest unemployment rate in Canada at 4.9 percent. The labour force grew by 5,400 people, employment was up by 6,800 jobs and full-time jobs increased by 6,500.

It's all good news. And I can see why members opposite want to shut it down, because our budget continues to move forward and create more employment opportunities, but members opposite will continue to vote against those initiatives.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** Time for oral questions has expired.

#### **MEMBERS' STATEMENTS**

##### **Manitoba Council of Canadian-Filipino Associations**

**Mr. Mohinder Saran (The Maples):** Mr. Speaker, on April 30th, I was honoured to be present at the

inaugural dinner of the Manitoba Council of Canadian-Filipino Associations.

With the mandate of working towards a harmonious and unified Filipino community, the MaCCFA is a new organization that will promote our local Filipino community and all it has to offer to the wider world. In the wonderfully full cultural landscape of Canada, the MaCCFA is trying to raise the visibility of its diverse member groups and, as such, will help all of our other communities.

The dinner held at the Philippine Canadian Centre of Manitoba, and I was honoured to attend it as a special guest. All guests thoroughly enjoyed themselves, and I congratulate the event's organizers on a strong start to the council's activities.

Mr. Speaker, the Manitoba Council of Canadian-Filipino Associations will create an environment in which to develop and discuss the vision uniting the Filipino community and how best to sew the—that community into the strong and vibrant fabric of our province and country.

Good luck to the MaCCFA and, in particular, Rowena Oquendo, the council's president. I look forward to working with them in the future.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

#### **CJ97.1 Radio Station**

**Mr. Stuart Briese (Ste. Rose):** Mr. Speaker, those of you who live in rural Manitoba know the importance of community. Being involved in local events and sharing in the experiences of those around you make living in a small town the unique experience that it is. Having a local radio station is a great way to bring people together and keep them informed of events. I'm pleased to share with this House that Neepawa and surrounding areas, Carberry and Minnedosa and Gladstone, have a new radio station—CJ97.1, the Voice of the Heartland.

CJ97.1 was launched in Neepawa on April 17th, from the studio in the Neepawa Resource Centre, the same building that houses NACTV, the local access channel. Voice of the Heartland can be heard as far away as Brandon, Portage, Laurier and Strathclair, and it provides a 24-hour broadcast, including news, weather, sports and local events. Neepawa has long had a unique local television station that keeps the community informed, and the new radio station will be another connecting point for Neepawa and the surrounding area.

The new radio station was approved by the CRTC in January and is on the air now, ready to participate in the Homecoming celebrations taking place in Neepawa from May the 12th to the 15th. The Voice of the Heartland is eager to showcase the great things that Neepawa and the surrounding communities have to offer to the thousands of visitors that are expected to come out for the Homecoming celebrations.

I would like to congratulate Bill Gade, the owner of CJ97.1, on bringing another radio station to rural Manitoba. Gade, who is only 29, already owns three radio stations, and is dedicated to bringing radio to small communities in Manitoba. His efforts are already being appreciated as people tune into CJ97.1.

I also want to recognize the radio hosts and every person who is involved in the broadcast of the new station. Local radio is important to rural Manitoba, and I truly appreciate the efforts of everyone involved in broadcasting the new Voice of the Heartland.

Thank you.

#### **Royal Bank Cup**

**Hon. Stan Struthers (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives):** Mr. Speaker, many of our province's boys and girls are brought up with hockey sticks in their hands and the love of hockey in their hearts, but only a lucky few make it to the greatness in Canada's national sport.

From May 1st to 9th, dozens of these top young players gathered in Dauphin to go for the gold at the annual Royal Bank Cup. The RBC Cup is Canada's Junior A championship held annually in cities across Canada. Participating teams had to first win their regional Junior A league before advancing through to a regional playoff. This year's champs, the Vernon Vipers, play in the B.C. Hockey League.

The young talent displayed at the RBC Cup each year makes for an incredible spectacle. Hosting this great tournament brings much pride to Dauphin and all of Manitoba. A dedicated team of local volunteers and organizers began planning the event over two years ago. Its smooth execution showcased Dauphin's ability to pull together such a major production in a grand way. This was a busy weekend for Dauphin, which had to accommodate over 100 of the players and their families, trainers, support staff and media, including TSN. Support from the community was great and far-reaching, as many came out to watch the games and help out. A great

opening ceremony featured Charlie Major on April 30th, which set the tone for the whole event.

Congratulations to the Dauphin Kings on a great season and the pride they brought to Dauphin by winning 50 games this season, winning the MJHL championship, winning the Anavet Cup against Saskatchewan, and doing our community and our province proud at this year's RBC national championship.

Congratulations are also due to all of the five teams at the cup which showed great skill and sportsmanship. The real champions, Mr. Speaker, of this event, were Randy and Kit Daley, the event's co-chairs and their dedicated team of volunteers for all their hard work.

A big thank you, also, is in order to the coaches, RBC officials, Manitoba Junior Hockey League officials, players and their families for being part of our community for the last week. It was very much a pleasure having you here.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

#### **Winkler and District Chamber of Commerce Gala Dinner**

**Mr. Peter Dyck (Pembina):** On April the 15th, I was pleased to attend the Winkler and District Chamber of Commerce gala and dinner. The annual gala event celebrates the success of local business in the community.

This year's P.W. Enns Business Achievement Award recipients included Elias Woodworking & Manufacturing Ltd., Wiebe Funeral Homes Ltd. and Spent Brothers Premium Meats. The success that they have had has gone a long way in profiting Winkler and district as a whole, and, I was proud to help celebrate this important achievement.

Although this past year has not been easy for many industries across the country because of the global recession, businesses in Winkler have persevered. They have proven that by working hard and working together, positive results are sure to follow.

Winkler's population is currently on a steady increase which has given business in the community the opportunity to thrive. Although Winkler's population is just under 10,000, the city supports a much larger market of approximately 65,000 people. This has made the Winkler and District Chamber of Commerce not only a valuable part of the Winkler

community, but also an essential part of a much wider network.

The work that the Winkler and District Chamber of Commerce have done to protect and expand business and the business relations in the Winkler community is significant to the operation of the city. As we continue to look forward in the years to come, we will rely more and more on the work of the Chamber of Commerce to expand industry in our growing region and I know that we can count on them to do so.

Mr. Speaker, I hope that all members of the Legislature will join me in congratulating Elias Woodworking & Manufacturing Ltd., Wiebe Funeral Homes Ltd. and Spent Brothers Premium Meats, for receiving the P.W. Enns Business Achievement Award.

The Winkler and District Chamber of Commerce has also done a tremendous job of expanding business in the Winkler area and should be recognized for their efforts. Thank you.

#### **Women's Hospital**

**Hon. Flor Marcelino (Minister of Culture, Heritage and Tourism):** Mr. Speaker, women have unique health needs that require specialized care from a facility that supports them and provides outstanding service. I am very pleased that we have such a facility in Manitoba; the Women's Hospital, located in the Wellington constituency, which just celebrated its 60th anniversary.

On May 6th, 1950, when most of the Red River Valley was consumed by floodwaters sweeping the province, the former Maternity Pavilion of the Winnipeg General Hospital opened its doors and welcomed several mothers and new babies.

Since renamed, Women's Hospital has seen the birth of over 225 babies since that time. While the hospital has provided ever better and more specialized services over the years to women giving birth, need has outgrown the current facility. In response, our government committed to build a new state-of-the-art Women's Hospital and recently started clearing the way for the new hospital at HSC located across the street from the Children's Hospital.

\* (14:40)

The new Women's Hospital will be a centre of excellence in maternal and women's health, and will feature larger private rooms. The new Women's Hospital will also respond to the growing needs of

First Nations' women and their infants by including more prenatal and postnatal care, and expanding Telehealth links between doctors in Winnipeg and outlying regions. With input from the community, the facility will reflect a culture of hope and a connection to healing and nature.

But, Mr. Speaker, not all women who utilize the Women's Hospital do so during joyous times in their lives. Many women seek help and care from the hospital when they are facing life-threatening illnesses, mental health and addictions challenges, physical ailments, surgery and treatment. The Women's Hospital is there to assist women from all walks of life and at every stage of life.

Women of Manitoba are grateful to the Women's Hospital for the last 60 years of compassionate care, diligent efforts to advance the health of all women, patient care, research and training. I'm confident the hospital's commitment to the women of Manitoba will continue to strengthen over the next 60 years.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

#### House Business

**Hon. Bill Blaikie (Government House Leader):** Yes, Mr. Speaker, today we will resolve the House into Committee of Supply to consider the Capital Supply resolution.

**Mr. Speaker:** The House will now resolve into Committee of Supply.

Madam Deputy Speaker, please take the Chair.

### COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

#### CAPITAL SUPPLY

**Madam Chairperson (Marilyn Brick):** Will the Committee of Supply please come to order.

We have before us for our consideration the resolution respecting Capital Supply. The resolution reads as follows:

RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$1,587,768,000 for Capital Supply, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2011.

For the information of the committee, according to our rules, as the 100 hours have now expired, this resolution is not debatable.

**Resolution agreed to.**

Committee rise. Call in the Speaker.

## IN SESSION

### Committee Report

**Ms. Marilyn Brick (Chairperson):** Mr. Speaker, the Committee of Supply has considered and adopted the capital resolution.

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

**Motion agreed to.**

### House Business

**Hon. Bill Blaikie (Government House Leader):** I would ask the leave of the House, then, to resolve, once again, into Committee of Supply.

**Mr. Speaker:** Okay. The House will now resolve into Committee of Supply.

Madam Deputy Speaker, please take the Chair.  
[interjection]

By leave. Is there leave?

**Some Honourable Members:** Leave.

**Mr. Speaker:** Leave has been granted.

### COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

#### Concurrence Motion

**Madam Chairperson (Marilyn Brick):** Will the Committee of Supply please come to order.

**Hon. Bill Blaikie (Government House Leader):** I move that the Committee of Supply concur in all Supply resolutions relating to the Estimates of Expenditure for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2011, which have been adopted at this session whether by a section of the Committee of Supply or by the full committee.

**Motion presented.**

**Madam Chairperson:** On May 4th, the Official Opposition House Leader (Mr. McFadyen) tabled the following list of ministers of the Crown who may be called for questioning in debate on concurrence motion: the Minister of Health (Ms. Oswald), the

Minister of Family Services and Consumer Affairs (Mr. Mackintosh).

These ministers will be questioned concurrently.

The floor is now open for questions.

**Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood):** Can the minister tell me when I can expect to receive all of the information she committed to during Estimates? We had discussed a number of items, and particularly around the cardiac surgery program, plus many more, and she had made a number of commitments. And, in fact, with the cardiac surgery program, indicated that I would be getting something fairly soon. And I have received absolutely nothing on any of the commitments she made.

I wonder if she could tell me when we could expect to receive anything.

**Hon. Theresa Oswald (Minister of Health):** I can commit to the member that the department is working swiftly on a number of issues that we committed to get to her. I can also tell her that I will ask them to prioritize the cardiac responses—I think that that's what I hear her saying—to make sure that we can get them to her as swiftly as possible. But, indeed, I'll ask them to move just as swiftly as they can in providing her with the information that I committed to provide.

**Mrs. Driedger:** Thank you. Can the minister indicate how many RHAs are currently running deficits right now in their—particularly from their third quarter financial statements? And I'm assuming now that they've all reached their end of their fourth quarter and there must be information available to the minister. Can she indicate how many of them actually ended up running a deficit in the last fiscal year?

**Ms. Oswald:** Yes, of course, we have ongoing conversations with our regional health authorities concerning their ongoing financials. We know that regional health authorities are being provided information about the funding details for the upcoming year.

I can commit to the member to provide information for her about the status of year end and going forward. I don't have that information in front of me.

**Mrs. Driedger:** Can the minister tell us whether or not RHAs are allowed to run deficits?

\* (14:50)

**Ms. Oswald:** Yes, we know that we work with our regional health authorities on financial planning. We work with them in response to the community health assessments that they do. We know that with the very aggressive and ongoing recruitment that we have been doing in filling nurse vacancies and filling doctor spaces as well as other health professionals, that budgets can be very dynamic. There are times when there are positions that are budgeted for that aren't able to be filled, which leave regional health authorities in temporary—admittedly—surplus situations. And there are times with, you know, very aggressive recruitment and supernumerary positions that regional health authorities can find themselves in deficit situations. The conversations that go on between Manitoba Health and regional health authorities, of course, are designed to support regions to do the most aggressive recruitment that they can and the development of their programs while staying within budget.

So we know that there have been situations of deficit in the past. There have been situations of modest surplus in the past, and we work very hard to stay as close to balance as possible. So it has happened, and we will continue to support regions in getting as close to their target as possible.

**Mrs. Driedger:** Can the minister indicate, with the deficit that the government is running right now, what will happen, then, for all of these RHAs if they have—if the majority of them have actually run a deficit in the last year? How does she intend to manage those deficits?

**Ms. Oswald:** Yes, this is, of course, a very challenging time across the nation and around the globe when it comes to government budgets, and I don't think that you can pass a day, at least in Canada, without finding a story somewhere commenting on spending on health care. And we have, in this budget, continued to commit to work on innovation in the context of our health budgets. We know that there are lots of great minds within our health system and outside of the health system that have lots of advice to give us, which is why we have committed to develop a health innovation network to continue to provide—or put an emphasis on the front line and provide the best possible care that we can, and access to care that we can, while doing so in the most fiscally responsible way.

The member knows—an example of this, of course, one of our best recent examples is the development of the two-operating-room model at

Concordia Hospital for orthopedic surgery. We know prior to the development of that innovation that surgeons were able to complete roughly three operations a day when it came to hip and knee operations. But, with the use of physician assistants and this two-operating-room model, we've been able to go to eight surgeries a day, you know, bringing down wait times and also increasing efficiencies. This is but one example.

Innovations with advanced access for our primary care—you know, I could go on, but I would say the focus in working on maintaining programs while sustaining affordability of health care has got to happen through collaboration, co-operation and through innovation, and that is, indeed, our plan as we told Manitobans in the budget this year.

**Mrs. Driedger:** I know in the past the government has bailed out some of the RHAs when they've run deficits, and the, you know, the challenges, I do acknowledge, are significant in terms of health care. I know that for a number of years the RHAs have been working very hard to manage, and have come in on a surplus. Many of them have. I am concerned right now that they may not be in that same situation, that many be—could end their year in a deficit position.

And my question to the minister was, you know, how does she intend to manage this? They've already committed to running up a significant deficit in the next year. They ran a deficit in this past year. They're looking at, you know, multiple years of running deficits. What is her expectation of the RHAs if they're going to be in this tight position and don't feel that they have the money in order to carry out their programs?

I know that there is some concern being expressed, that they're going to have to cut, that there's going to be some serious challenges they have to face. So what are we going to see this government do in terms of managing all of these RHAs going back into deficit positions?

**Ms. Oswald:** Madam Chairperson, certainly, the issue of budgeting for health care is one that is very complex, and we know that we have, within the context of our regional health authorities, individuals that work very carefully and closely to manage the flow of money, and to manage investment and expenditures, just as we do in Manitoba Health, to be paying, you know, very close attention to the best possible investments that can be made as we go forward.

At the same time, you know, we expect our regional health authorities to be responsive. And while all regions in the province have in place things like pandemic plans, for example, we saw last year as H1N1 approached us, a timing, you know, that none of us really could've predicted, and a severity in the first wave that few other jurisdictions experienced. We expected regional health authorities to be nimble and provide care first and to be dealing with the issues of increased costs and increased funding from the government as a secondary issue.

So we want them to be nimble and responsive. We want them to be accountable for the budgets that are set and we're going to continue to work with them, as we have in the past, to support them in the event of situations that may arise, that may not be expected. And we're going to support the regional health authorities in going forward to provide the best possible care.

I'm not going to sit here and say that this year or next year or, you know, quite frankly, any year is easy when it comes to managing budgets for health but we're going to continue to work through collaboration and innovation, I believe, the two most important ways that we can to maintain a budget.

**Mrs. Driedger:** Has the minister laid out any expectations of the RHAs in terms of addressing the funding challenges down the road? Are there any specifics that she has put forward?

I know other provinces have looked at a number of things. I know that in this budget, the minister has granted an increase, or has been granted an increase in health care but not near to the same level as previous years. She's held back, you know, a certain percentage, compared to what has been put forward in the past. And I'm—I suspect that if the RHAs are going to be running deficits, they're going to have to do some things in order to find the kind of resources they need so that they don't have to make cuts.

Has the minister laid out any specific expectations of the RHAs in managing their budgets?

**Ms. Oswald:** Madam Chairperson, certainly, we have regular meetings with our board chairs and our CEOs of regional health authorities to speak about a number of issues, budget chiefly among them. And we have been very clear with the RHAs that ongoing communication and teamwork have to be paramount, that we don't want communities to be surprised by interventions that an RHA might take. We really need to collaborate and work together.

We know that our budgets are, you know, in the neighbourhood of 3.8 to 4 percent per RHA, an increase, indeed, not as high as some other years. So the emphasis on innovation and lean management has been an ongoing conversation. We know other jurisdictions, you know, Ontario or B.C., they're looking at 1 or 2 percent. They're going to have even greater challenges.

\* (15:00)

We have not directed RHAs to freeze in their hiring, as we've seen happen in other jurisdictions. We know that we want to have front-line care at the bedside and we want to fill vacancies wherever possible in a planned way. We know that we have committed to the public to build capital infrastructure, which, of course, the member knows is only part of the cost. When you expand a program there's ongoing operating. So we have committed in our budgets to take care of those things that we have announced and we're committed to do going forward. We know that a number of the member's colleagues have questions about projects that are not yet announced that they have very passionate interest in, and these are the kinds of things that we're going to have to look at very carefully on a case-by-case basis.

We have not told the regional health authorities to freeze their capital plans and their asks for capital plans they prioritize. We have not made that request, and we are going to continue to go forward to fulfil the commitments that we've made and to look at new opportunities whenever we can. But there's no question that in these fiscal times we are going to have to be strategic about that.

**Mrs. Driedger:** The minister has confirmed in Estimates that her government has borrowed money for all of the health capital projects, so that what she will continue to do, I'm assuming by her response now, is continue to borrow money to ramp up the capital health debt and then make payments on that on an annual basis. And, I think, if my calculations are close, that probably we're seeing her having to take \$150 million out of this year's budget to pay towards capital costs.

So, you know, it's interesting to say, well, we're not going to, you know, make any changes to moving ahead with that, but there seems to be a certain slowdown occurring. Can the minister indicate what happened to the commitment for the Misericordia Health Centre? There was a

hundred-year-old building there that was going to be torn down and then two towers built, and there were a lot of headlines made by this minister a few years ago and that seems to be going absolutely nowhere. What happened to that particular health project?

**Ms. Oswald:** Madam Chairperson, again, I did comment to the member in Estimates that projects were debt financed. We have been very aggressive over the last 10 years in newly constructing or renovating or partially rebuilding over 100 health facilities across Manitoba, and it has been a very ambitious agenda, there's no question about that. As we go forward in the next couple of years, we will not be able to be as aggressive. That's just a fact. But we will not be freezing our capital program.

On the specific subject of status of what is happening at Misericordia, we know that we have made investments there. Concerning the development of the PRIME program, capital infrastructure was done for that. We've made capital investments in the sleep area, and there are more plans actively under consideration, not at my fingertips at the moment in terms of where the status of that project is, but I can commit to the member to get her an update of where we are on the Misericordia proposals.

**Mrs. Driedger:** I'd like to indicate to the minister that it's easy not to freeze capital projects if all you're doing is borrowing the money all the time. I mean, you can keep borrowing and borrowing and then, you know, continue to do any kind of project. I've wondered about that in the past, why it was always through borrowing and not through financing. I know that CancerCare, for example, had been financed on a cash basis in the past in the '90s. In fact, there were a number of health projects at the time that were cash financed, including some mental health projects.

I still don't understand why, when this government was bringing in so much money from the federal government, why, in fact, some of their projects weren't financed on a cash basis, because now what she's done is, basically, I think, tripled the health capital debt. It's now \$1.2 billion, when money could have come and been used on a cash basis to finance some of it. I appreciate that, you know, debt financing makes sense for some, but I don't know why they chose never to finance anything on a cash basis. There was a precedent for that, and, in fact, now what we see, you know, is \$150 million

a year that—some of that could have been spent on front-line health care, and now it's going to be spent just on paying down debt.

So I'm not quite sure why the government didn't do some of the capital infrastructure through a cash basis. I understand that, you know, a number of facilities needed to be updated. I know that, you know, we've got a crumbling infrastructure, you know, in health care as we do in education and anything else. Buildings are getting old, and changes need to be made. So I can appreciate that we need to, you know, either fix old buildings or build some new ones. So, you know, I understand that part of it. What I don't understand is why it was all debt financed.

But, having said that, I certainly am curious about what's going on with Misericordia because there were significant promises made with that. You know, the photo op and all of that happened, and now we don't hear a thing about it. In fact, the latest rumour out there is that the government has, indeed, contrary to what the minister is saying, has, indeed, halted that particular project.

Now, in her mind, I suppose, if she's slowed it down and halted it for a few years, she's not going to say that it's been cancelled, that it's just going to be delayed, but the fact is there doesn't seem to be any going forward with it. I note that one of the other things that—you know, the financial problems this government has—I note that one of the things that the government has put into place in order to manage some of their financial challenges is to freeze nurses' salaries for the next couple years. And from that we will likely see many salaries right across the whole health spectrum frozen for a couple of years.

Can the minister indicate—because if, you know, if these negotiations don't go exactly as she's indicated, and there's, you know, we've been told that there is no increased base—or put into this current budget, what's going to happen if, you know, if the government can't come to an agreement with the nurses' union? With the fact they haven't built any, you know, any salary increases into the budget, what's going to happen if they don't come to an agreement with the nurses? You've all—they've—government's already cranked up, you know, the debt and the deficit. What will they do if they don't have a success in their bargaining?

**Ms. Oswald:** Yes, Madam Chair, again, going back to the issue of capital, we, once again, have had a very aggressive agenda in rebuilding or renovating

over a hundred facilities, and we committed to do that and followed through with those commitments. A lot of the time in doing those projects, programs expanded, and that does require an investment of ongoing operating—increased ongoing operating. And, certainly, that, in conjunction with the very aggressive recruitment exercises that have been going on for a decade, seeing net increases of over 2,500 nurses and net increases of 345 doctors; net increases in almost in every other health profession—not every, but almost every.

\* (15:10)

We know that the investment of dollars that we've had coming from Manitoba taxpayers, coming from, you know, Canada's taxpayers when it comes to the Canada Health Transfer that we have, you—we have done a lot to rebuild a health-care system that was in trouble.

Again, we know, recently, that as the world went through a recession and governments around the globe were making decisions about how to evoke stimulus and how to do stimulus spending, that one of the choices, I lament, is the federal government's decision to explicitly exclude health care from the possible projects that could be considered. I—there's a lot of very good work that has gone on in partnership with the federal government and provincial governments. But, as the member knows—if not from her colleagues, certainly I do—that, in some communities, the single-most important capital infrastructure project that could have happened in that context might have been a health-care facility.

And so that was something that was really unfortunate and we know that, as we go forward, it's something that, regardless of political stripe, I, you know—federal governments have to make decisions regardless of which stripe they are—that it would certainly be my hope that, should we ever find ourselves in that situation again, where provinces and the federal government are working together on projects, that health capital gets back on the table for that discussion. I think that that would be—again, regardless of who is in power, it would be a really important thing for our communities, particularly in rural Manitoba, most definitely in the north. So it's just a comment about budgeting and programs and stimulus that I think really needs to be made.

On the issue, again, of Misericordia, we know, as I said, that phase 1 is open, the sleep lab. That was a significant investment. A lot of work has gone on there. It's been very effective in bringing down wait

times. We also know that planning for phase 2 is all but complete, and is under review in the department right now. So rumours are exactly that—rumours. And that there is work going on on that project. And I can assure the member that that is so.

Lastly, on the subject of budgeting and remuneration for health professionals, we need to take into consideration what it costs to pay health professionals. I'm not going to presuppose the outcome of negotiations that are going on between any work force and its employer. There's a lot of very good work going on there now. And, my experience, in talking to health professionals, considering the health system, the investments that we've made over time in salaries and so forth, and the current situation, not just in Manitoba but across the nation, is that we're in this together. And that's certainly the response that I'm getting when I speak to nurses, when I speak to doctors—that we know that we have to work together to come up with the best possible negotiated outcome that will maintain and sustain us going forward. So I'm very encouraged by the work that has happened so far, but I'm not going to prejudice those discussions by making comments about that either way right now.

**Mrs. Driedger:** I think it's ironic when the minister says that we're in this together. I think it's this NDP government that's created a bit of the mess that is now forcing some of this situation: with all of the spending that's going on, the amount of debt that this government has created, the amount of deficits that it's running, the fact that there hasn't been solid planning over time to prepare for situations like this. And I think the government's using the recession, to some degree, you know, as an excuse, now, when, in fact, they mismanaged a lot of their spending over the last number of years. That's created this situation in health care, now, where they have to turn around and say to nurses, we're going to freeze your wages for the next two years.

So I think, you know, only to a degree is the government going to be able to say that, well, we're doing this because of the recession and that we're in this together. The government's created a lot of the problem for itself in this. So, you know, and the minister saying, you know, federally we couldn't have used federal dollars for some of the stimulus spending. Well, this government was also bringing in a, you know, a lot of their own source revenue, more so than was ever seen in the bigger recession in the '90s, and they certainly could have used own source revenue to pay for some of their capital projects. I

mean, they did have money and they have cranked up spending.

It may come as a bit of a shock to the minister that the health-care system still is in trouble. She's sounding in her responses like, you know, they've resolved a lot of problems. And I would beg to differ that there is still significant challenges in there. And I think the government has created a lot of their own problems, too, because of the way they were spending and not, you know, looking for the innovations over the last 10 years. Because what the government has done is pretty much propped up a status quo in health care. And, you know, as long as you pour money into the system without the innovation, you know—and over the past 10 years that wasn't happening—you're not going to see the kind of change that would have maybe prevented some of this, and found, you know, more cash available to do some of the things that they need to do now.

In fact, despite all of the spending, one of the big challenges that seems to be coming up right now is co-ed rooms in hospitals. And I'd like to ask the minister: Is that a policy change? What's happened? Like, I can understand men and women patients sharing rooms in step-down units, in critical care units and ICUs. But on the wards: Can the minister indicate, was that a policy change or when did this start to happen that men and women are being forced to share rooms just on a standard ward?

**Ms. Oswald:** Madam Chair, just to go back to the member's comments about, you know, you've created a mess. I mean, we've had lots of friendly debate, I suppose, through the course of the Health Estimates, and it's not going to come as a big news flash to anybody in this Chamber that the member from Charleswood and I don't, you know, agree on a number of issues.

I don't think rehiring nurses that were lost during the '90s—and paying them—to be a mess. And I don't think that negotiating appropriate remuneration for nurses to have them be competitive nationally, when there is, indeed, a national and international aggressive recruitment for nurses going on, I don't think that that's a mess. I think it's a good idea to have competitive wages.

And I don't think it's a mess to rebuild your medical school after decisions got made to take seats out of medical school, the devastating effects of which the nation still feels today. And I don't think it's a mess to pay those doctors once they graduate

from the medical school seats that you have restored and, indeed, increased.

\* (15:20)

And, during a time of economic challenge, it's my belief—at least, it's been my experience in speaking to physicians and speaking to health professionals, that we are in this together, and that there are times for very aggressive negotiations to contemplate substantial increases for very hard work that's done by our professionals and there are times for more measured approaches to negotiations. And I do believe that, certainly, these are those times, and we want to be able to have discussions with our work force about all the things that we can do to maintain the gains that we have made over time, and not have to go backwards and slash and cut positions to balance a budget. If work can be done to hold the line on wages and have people keep their jobs, I think that's really important and that's the work that's going on now and I think that that's critically important.

On the subject, then, of co-ed rooms, I want to say, first and foremost, I don't like it either and I'm not going to try to pretend that I do. I think, you know, when you look, on average, at people that appear on the wards in our hospital beds, they tend to be older individuals, not always but often, and I know that, when I think about my own mom or loved ones, you know, women of that generation—any generation, I suppose, but I'm thinking specifically of that—but it's just not something that has been done over the course of their lifetime. And so I think that we need to work very hard to be respectful of that fact.

I know that working hard to move people through the hospital system, you know, out of an emergency room, to get them comfortably set into a bed is a very laudable goal, but I do think we need to redouble our efforts to ensure that the issue of gender and sharing a room is revisited.

I'm informed that the practice of using co-ed rooms began in the 1990s. All the city hospitals used to have co-ed rooms, I am informed, but the bottom line is that, you know, whether it started then or happens more now, you know—which is difficult to measure—that doesn't really matter. I think that we need to look, as a system, to do everything that we can to make sure that our patients are comfortable in every way that we can. And if individuals are feeling uncomfortable because there's someone of the opposite gender in a room with them, then we're not

achieving that goal. And so it's why I've asked my deputy to work with the regional health authorities to revisit this issue and find ways, particularly in the context of innovations and lean management, and all those kinds of throughput kinds of examinations that are going on, that they take a close look at this issue because regardless of when it started, in the 1990s or whatever, I think that we can do better and I think we should.

**Mrs. Driedger:** Just for the record, I wanted to say that competitive remuneration for all health-care professionals is something that we totally support. In order to keep our doctors and nurses here and other health professionals here, we certainly have to stay competitive, so I certainly don't disagree with all of that.

I do have some concerns as to what could be happening now with the freezing of salaries over the next couple of years in terms of what kind of a domino effect we're going to have from that, so I think that that does raise some very serious concerns for me. But competitive remuneration, absolutely; I, you know, I'm totally in favour of that because that is what we need to keep our health-care professionals here.

In terms of co-ed rooms, certainly, you know, I worked as a nurse in the '90s and I don't recall a lot of co-ed rooms other than, as I said, you know, step-down units, intensive cares, CCUs, types of environments like that, but on a general ward that wasn't that particularly common.

But what I would ask the minister, then, is what is causing something like this to happen? Is there a bed shortage within our hospital system that is leading to this happening?

**Ms. Oswald:** It certainly is the question that I have asked the deputy to work with the regional health authorities to—particularly Winnipeg—to get to the bottom of, you know, where, if any, you know, do the log jams exist and what can be done about it.

We—I'm sure the member is aware that there have been expansions across our hospitals and in our personal care home situations, and that, at any given time, there could be pressures, in a particular unit, or on a particular ward, and we encourage our regional health authorities to be as flexible as possible in dealing with any ebb or flow that occurs during those times, and—while at the same time doing their best to manage the issues that we talked about earlier, concerning budgets.

So we want to make sure that there is enough room in the appropriate location for individuals that are needing care. And we also know that there is a movement, in a number of areas in health care, to try to provide as much support in community, or even at home, when it is the desire of the individual patient.

We know we have more individuals opting for palliative care at home, for example, and doing what we can to support that through palliative care nursing. Of course, investments that we've made in ensuring that palliative care drugs are covered at home is very important.

So, you know, we do have to continue to have a very close examination of the dynamic entity that is health care, and where we have to expand, and where, if appropriate, we can contract.

The issue of co-ed rooms, again, regardless of the fact that I am learning that it is becoming a trend nationally, when it comes to increasing throughput and making sure that people aren't being backed up in emergency rooms—regardless of what other jurisdictions are doing, I'm going to say, you know, quite plainly on the record for the member, I don't like it. I don't think she likes it either.

And I know that there have got to be ways that it can be dealt with. That you can move people swiftly and safely and, at the same time, respect their personal preferences concerning gender. We, you know, put somebody on the moon. I'm pretty sure that this can be achieved and I'm going to work really hard to do it.

**Mrs. Driedger:** The last discussion we had around the WRHA and the outsourcing of their back office, the minister indicated that there were some changes that were occurring. And I went back through my whole file, and I spent quite a bit of time looking at it, and it raised some concerns for me in terms of the direction that the minister said has now occurred. And I know that the whole outsourcing of payroll, human resources, supply management, had all started in about 2005.

*Mr. Rob Altemeyer, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair*

And I recall Tim Sale indicating, at the time, and he, you know, he made the business case very, very well, that the outsourcing had to occur, otherwise there would be a \$30-million technology bill to centralize all of this. And he said that the government opted to contract out the services to a private firm because they did not have the \$30 million for this technology bill.

\* (15:30)

And so, from there, a lot of work was done in moving this forward. In fact, I think the work went on from 2005 right into 2009. And that means a lot of money, a lot of effort, a lot of work went into getting to the point of moving this forward.

There were, I believe, two due diligence processes that were carried out, and there was a memo after one of the due diligence processes that had been sent to out to all the hospital COOs and CEOs, telling them that things were moving forward, that things were moving along well. And it didn't sound like even, you know, when this minister first was in the Chair, that there were going to be any changes and then, all of a sudden now, after, you know, in the vicinity of four years, there seems to be a change that this outsourcing is no longer going to occur, that it will all stay within house.

Now the reasons for the outsourcing were extremely valid at the time, and even in the RFP that went out, the reason that it was going to outsource all of this was because it was too costly to do it in-house, and that it would not adequately meet the WRHA's current and future business requirements. Those are two very, very significant reasons for the need to outsource. And then all of the ensuing work in those many years was based on those identified needs. And now the minister indicates that there was a sharp left turn taken, and that the outsourcing is no longer going to occur. And I would like to ask the minister what specifically changed, because Tim Sale said the province just could not afford that price tag. So we're talking \$30 million.

So a major decision was made, and now the minister hasn't really provided us with the rationale why, all of a sudden, this changed. So can the minister indicate what changed and where this \$30 million is then going to come from?

**Ms. Oswald:** Yes, so we did have a reasonably extensive conversation about this project while we were in Estimates, and I—the member did indicate she was going to come back to it, which was very gracious of her, thank you.

And I can say again to the member in, you know, in very brief terms, as I did during the Estimates process, that the original announcement was done—you know, although a lot of work had been done, it was done based on some assumptions. And the member is quite right. There were a couple of processes—due diligence processes—that took

place. The first one came back, and it was showing us very clearly that some of the assumptions that were made with that initial announcement were, indeed, not coming true.

It was not appearing to be cost neutral, as it had promised, which is why the second process went on. And I can go back, just to reiterate, some of the steps that took place and the history of the situation that led us to come to review those processes that took place—the due diligence—and to make a decision to change tack.

I—on some level, I felt like the member wanted me to say on the record, I changed my mind from what Tim Sale decided, and I'll say that on the record. I changed my mind from what he originally decided. He had some information at the time, but the due diligence processes had not occurred in the time and the terms that they occurred as the project started to unfold. And once we got more information, the risks, in my view and in the view of those advising me, were just too great.

But, going back, we know, of course, that when RHAs were created, that there were a variety of health organizations that each administered corporate functions—the payroll, the human resources. And as Winnipeg focussed on better co-ordinating and integrating, they decided that they could better co-ordinate the backroom functions, administrative functions among the sites, and it didn't make sense to have all of the separate payroll and HR.

So you're correct. It was in '05—October of '05—that the WRHA issued an RFQ—a request for qualifications—to determine if efficiencies could be achieved by outsourcing these backroom issues. And, again, it's very important to reiterate that this didn't involve any front-line patient care; this was about human resource management, financials, purchase of supplies, other administrative functions. And so this RFQ went out to see what could be achieved. Certainly, it was decided that centralizing these functions would be a major task with millions of dollars in up-front capital costs would have to occur.

In—I believe it was April of '06, the WRHA issued an RFP—request for proposals—and the WRHA did identify EDS as the preferred proponent, and we talked that EDS has since been acquired by HP. Once they were identified, they entered into this due diligence process to ensure that, you know, all of the cost-neutral promises that were purported in the original idea would come to fruition. And I told the

member that, you know, as things—you know, as investigations delved deeper into the project, it was not shown to be coming forward with this cost-neutral element.

Of course, there is still a longer-term need to pursue this centralized approach, the approach that was the original concept: Let's get everybody together in a centralized way using compatible IT. We believe that we needed to go forward with a really important project to replace the system at HSC. We made the decision to pursue a different model than had originally been proposed, a sort of phased-in SAP solution, which is more cautious and, we believe, more fiscally responsible.

I can let the member know—as she asked a similar question—that the first phase of this approach involves replacing the payroll and financial systems at HSC, which also serves the WRHA and the community programs. The—HSC's payroll system was identified as a system that urgently needed replacing. It's going to ensure that all the staff at HSC and WRHA continue to receive their paycheques, including thousands of front-line nurses and doctors at the hospital, the home care staff, community mental health, public health and others. This is going to lay groundwork for the future phases. It's going to build the foundation onto which other financial and payroll systems can be integrated as we're able to make these moves. And, again, while the payroll and financial and other backroom functions aren't being outsourced now, the design and the implementation has largely been outsourced to EDS. So they have been the artisans of what this system can look like.

And so, again, there was an initial proposal. It was reviewed and it was considered to be—once the due diligence was done—too risky, and so this second, you know, more hybrid model has come into play, and we believe it's the more responsible approach.

**Mrs. Driedger:** The minister indicates that the risks were too great. Can she tell us what those risks were that made her change her mind?

\* (15:40)

**Ms. Oswald:** Well, without speaking to the specifics of what came up in the due diligence, I can say, generally, that the original proposal to have elements of the project outsourced in exchange for capital infrastructure of computers and such things, that was proposed to be cost neutral, was not going to be that.

One of the options that was under consideration at the time that the outsourcing option was being considered was that there could be an avoidance of these major up-front capital costs. But the due diligence process found that they—these costs would still, ultimately, be shouldered by the WRHA, and that original aspect of the business case which made the outsourcing an option worth considering was no longer that financially appealing and it wasn't actually going to materialize as originally proposed.

And so this scaled-down hybrid of outsourcing to EDS to come up with the system, essentially, to come up with how the design and the implementation would happen, that carried on. But the other elements of the project did not. It just didn't bear the fruit it promised.

**Mrs. Driedger:** Can the minister tell us what other risks there might have been, because she indicated that there were a number of risks?

**Ms. Oswald:** Well, I'm speaking specifically about a financial risk. A cost-neutral proposal turned into a half-a-billion-dollar price tag over the course of the due diligence, and it wasn't one that we were prepared to continue with at that time.

We know that there have been attempts across the nation, and even in this province, to take work outside the house, if you will, to outsource it. It hasn't always historically worked out that well. And it's our belief that keeping the work in-house will be a better option, be more manageable, provide greater oversight as we go forward.

But certainly when I speak about risk, I'm speaking in very broad terms about the cash.

**Mrs. Driedger:** I understand that the WRHA had looked to see if they could do the project without a private-sector company and they determined that they could not, that they felt that the only way they could accomplish this was to outsource it.

And I have to ask the minister: Did the government, then, make the decision to change course here? Because the WRHA were pretty clear that they looked at this before moving ahead and that they felt they didn't have what it would take to carry this out and that they needed to outsource it.

So they were on that page. Was it the government, then, that came in and told them to change course?

**Ms. Oswald:** There was a lot of work that went on over the—as the member has stated, over the course

of the history of this project, and members of the WRHA were intimately involved in the discussions and how it would unfold and what would be the best course of action.

And admittedly, when the promised outcome was one that was cost neutral, it had a certain appeal, to be sure. But as the due diligence went on—and the WRHA, of course, were participants—really critical participants—in discussing how this would unfold. As the information came forward and that the promise of cost neutrality did not come to fruition, the WRHA were very active participants in discussing what would be the third way, what would the hybrid look like, what would be the benefits of outsourcing design and implementation, you know, to experts, those that have the capacity and the ability and the experience to do that, and what could be done in-house with existing expertise. And that's why the current course of action is taking place.

So the WRHA have been partners, as we go forward, to find the best possible use of our health-care investments and our best possible use of the expertise that we have developed over time in the region.

**Mrs. Driedger:** Can the minister, then, for the record, indicate that the WRHA, then, is totally supportive of this new direction and that there was no coercion at all by the government in changing direction?

**Ms. Oswald:** You'll never find this minister putting on the record that any RHA in the province of Manitoba or, in its form, across our great nation of Canada, is totally happy all the time. I've not seen it happen on any issue at any time. However, I do believe that as you foster consultative and collaborative relationships and you use the best minds that the province has to offer to come up with solutions that don't put precious health dollars at risk, I think that you can come to a consensus on the best way to go forward.

*Madam Chairperson in the Chair*

We know that the former COO of the WRHA explained, back in '07, that the whole intent of this—this was Milton Sussman, by the way—the whole intent of this is so that we don't have to make that kind of overarching investment. We don't have to have those front-end costs, and when the due diligence happened and, in fact, the—all that was promised was not coming true, everybody agreed that we needed to take a second look. We needed to

make sure that we weren't entering into something that would have undue risk and negative outcomes.

So is everybody at the WRHA today absolutely happy? Probably not. But are we working towards consensus and finding the best way to go forward? I truly believe we are. Absolutely.

**Mrs. Driedger:** Can the minister indicate where the 30 million came from, then, for all of the infrastructure that was needed for this project?

**Ms. Oswald:** Yes, if the member is asking me a question about a line in the budget or something like that, I'd have to consult and get the details of what investments occurred and what was expended and from whence it was expended. I don't have that at my fingertips.

**Mrs. Driedger:** Well, it goes back to the very basic reason for why the outsourcing was going to happen and it was an indication by Tim Sale that \$30 million in a technology bill was needed, and the government did not feel they had the money. And so that was the basic reason for outsourcing the project, is that they didn't want to carry this \$30-million price tag for all of this information technology. So now that the government isn't going forward with the outsourcing, who's paying for the \$30-million technology bill?

**Ms. Oswald:** Well, again, there is going to have to be collaborative effort. Just as the case with any health IT investment, it's going to come through government. It's going to be made over the course of a couple of years. I don't even want to say to the member that the price tag in the new hybrid is a \$30 price-\$30, wouldn't that be nice-\$30-million price tag, as it stands. It could be more than that as the new process has evolved, but it will come from government. It will come over the course of a couple of years, and it will be a foundational investment in terms of dealing with upgrading information technology across the health sector as we go forward.

So, you know, the \$30 million may have once upon a time looked like free money, but as the due diligence occurred, it wasn't, and so we needed to take a step back, take a second look at the project and find a way to go forward on much-needed infrastructure and investment in capital for IT, but also to make sure that we were doing it safely.

\* (15:50)

So, again, I'll commit to the member. I can't cite a line in the budget or something where money was expended then to go through processes and do due

diligence versus where investments are coming from now, but if an outsourced entity is not paying and there is information technology upgrades that must occur, and there are, then government is going to have to make that investment, in the most responsible way possible.

**Mrs. Driedger:** Can the minister indicate whether or not that that will be borrowed money, that, in fact, the government will now be in the position of having to borrow money, whether it's 30 million or it could even be more? Is that the—is that now what is going to happen, that the government will have to borrow the money to buy all of this information technology, whereas in the outsourcing, it would've been provided by the company but now, in fact, government has to pick up that as a debt?

**Ms. Oswald:** Well, the member, I think, is missing my point, that the initial proposal was that the outside company would make a major capital investment and that it would be at no cost to the regional health authority. But once due diligence occurred, it wasn't true and that the WRHA was going to have to shoulder a whole bunch of capital investment. They were going to have to shoulder a number of costs associated with training. It just didn't turn out to be true.

So the free equipment proposal that—I mean I'm exaggerating when I say free—but the proposal that there would be a lot of IT infrastructure that would be at no cost once the due diligence process occurred was not turning out to be true. So to suggest that there's a massive opportunity that's been lost here is not borne out in the work that was done, and that that's why there's a second approach that's being taken here.

Specifically on the costing of how information technology will be financed, debt financed or cash flow, or a combination of the two, again, I don't have that at my fingertips, but I can endeavour to get as much information up to date as I can from the member.

**Mrs. Driedger:** Was there a cost penalty to get out of the deal with EDS?

**Ms. Oswald:** I'll check.

**Mrs. Driedger:** In making the decision to not go ahead with the outsourcing, how much of a role did the fact that the union did not like this at all, neither of the two unions that would've been involved, how much pressure did they put on to make the minister change direction on this?

**Ms. Oswald:** I don't know. I can say to the member that I listened to the members of the union that were very cross at the prospect of being wiped out of their jobs. And I don't happen to think that's ever a good thing, that when people have dedicated their lives to service and are told by some analyst that they are irrelevant, I don't think that's very good at all.

But in this situation where we had to do analysis of what the promised land was going to be, versus what the due diligence told us it was going to be, actually—that is to say, no free stuff in the end—it wasn't that difficult a decision to change course. But am I going to sit across from this member and say it didn't matter to me that people felt belittled and undervalued? I probably couldn't say that because it does matter to me. I don't know how one could measure to what degree this influenced me or not but I'm not going to try and sit here and say that I didn't care, because I did.

**Mrs. Driedger:** Can the minister indicate though—I was told, actually, by several people that there would not have been a job loss, that while people were within the WRHA, they would be laid off from the WRHA and then be rehired by EDS. And I thought the commitment—and it was even in the RFP—that all of these jobs, whether it was 400 or 700, would all be absorbed by EDS. Is the minister saying that that is not how it actually ended up playing out?

**Ms. Oswald:** Well, once again, as I said to the member, that the original analysis—and I want to be clear here. It's not that there was no work done at all. There was an idea and a concept that was explored and developed and considered very closely, as closely as could be without really getting into the nitty-gritty with a company as—you know, and starting to build something real. But as a proposal, there were a number of elements that were brought forward that, to many people, looked very enticing and looked very promising. But once the work actually hit the ground, as it were, and started to develop, the dream just didn't deliver.

And that, I believe, would have been true for employment. It was most certainly true for the cost neutrality that was proposed. And on a number of levels, the deal didn't look as good as it originally did, which is why we changed. I would say that the financial risk and the lack of delivery on the original promise was what turned the tide. But certainly, people that have dedicated their lives to making things better for others, being told that you're not going to have a job anymore, after they were told

that, well, you know, maybe we might be able to keep your job, that has an effect on the overall approach. But, really, the half-a-billion-dollar price tag was a bit daunting for my liking.

**Mrs. Driedger:** I've heard, you know, all of the reasons that the minister put forward this afternoon for why this project did not go forward. Yet it's interesting when I look back at some of the comments made in 2007. I mean Milt Sussman was on record at the time saying that—and this was October of '07—saying that a final deal is expected within the next few months. And that was coming from, you know, Milt Sussman. And then he also indicated to the media that the whole intent of this is so that we don't have to make that kind of investment.

Like it sounded like they were so close to making a decision to go ahead with this in '07. Now, in '07, I also understand that, you know, we were at the time of an election. I understand that Gary Doer was quietly meeting with the union leaders, trying to keep them quiet about this so that it didn't erupt into a public issue, and that the Premier was meeting with the unions to keep them quiet. And so it sounds like, you know, now the minister is saying, well, the—you know, the couple of rounds of due diligence has showed that this wasn't really something that we were going to go forward with. And yet, it sounded like it was so close to actually happening.

So, while the minister is saying that she was concerned about jobs—and I had been, too; you know, I raised concerns as to what would be happening with all these jobs. I was actually reassured that there would be no jobs lost, that all of these people would be rehired. I understood it was a unionized environment, so that that wasn't going to be, or shouldn't have been, an issue. So I'm—you know, part of me is just feeling like there could be more of a hidden agenda behind some of this than what actually the minister is putting forward today, because it sounded like it moved fairly close to, you know, coming to fruition. I just find it totally surprising that you go from 2005 to 2008-09 and spend that many years moving towards something, and then, all of a sudden, poof, it's gone. It makes me wonder if there was a hidden agenda behind all of this.

\* (16:00)

I know that the two union leaders that were very, very involved in this, were very, very unhappy, and very opposed to the whole thing. Peter Olfert was

one of them and the CUPE spokesperson was Dennis Lewycky. And both of them were very much in opposition right from the start.

So I, you know, part of me is wondering, you know, is there more of a hidden agenda here. Did the minister really follow the, you know, the results that were coming out of due diligence or was there actually more to this that she's not talking about today? Was there a strong union influence that prevented the government from allowing the WRHA to move forward with this outsourcing?

**Ms. Oswald:** And, again, at the risk of repeating myself, I will say that there was an original proposal that, admittedly, looked pretty good on some levels. As more work was done, very extensive due diligence, the original proposal did not bear out all that it promised. And so the WRHA and Manitoba Health—in conjunction with EDS, by the way, because they are still involved in the project, doing, you know, design and implementation—found a different direction to go. And it's not more complicated than that. There's no grassy knoll. Nothing. Nothing of that matter.

I mean, on the one hand, the member begins her comments by saying that the union members were silenced, told to keep quiet, and, on the other hand, you know, she names names and talks about people that spoke up and really didn't like it. So, you know, that couldn't have been very silent if even she were aware.

I guess, just on that last subject, I don't know exactly what kind of power the member thinks that I must wield with union leaders, but I can assure her that I know a few of them and know none of them to be quiet—not one. Nary a wallflower among them. And so, if she somehow thinks that there is a way to take these individuals who are passionate and committed to the work to which they dedicated their lives, and that they would somehow be silenced by anyone, she's mistaken. And I would put myself squarely in that group of people that aren't going to keep these individuals quiet when they feel that there's a wrong being done.

So I'll reiterate again to the member that there was an idea. In its original form, it looked not bad. But more work got done; it didn't turn out to be that great. And so the partners worked together to come up with a hybrid of the original plan that was less risky, and that would achieve the replacement of information technology that's so critically needed. And that, in my view, is all there is to it.

**Mrs. Driedger:** Can the minister tell us how much money has been lost with the decision to no longer proceed with this outsourcing?

**Ms. Oswald:** Well, the question is based on the assumption that money has been lost. And, in fact, if a promise was made to have a cost-neutral project that, after some research, was going to cost us a half a billion dollars, it seems to me that we've probably saved half a billion dollars.

But, again, I have committed to the member to provide her with some more details, as appropriate, for where we are in financing this project, and I'll endeavour to do that as best I can for the member.

**Mrs. Driedger:** Just a couple more questions and then I will be finished and the member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard) will ask a few questions to the Minister of Health.

Can the minister tell us why addictions and mental health were separated when the two ministries split apart? Why was the decision made after probably years of working towards addressing both of them together and, you know, looking at where they could find the synergies? It seems like a huge step backwards. What drove the decision to split the two?

**Ms. Oswald:** Yes, I can let the member know that it is a well-known fact that mental health issues and addictions are very often co-occurring in the—in our population. And we know that, in the past under Manitoba Health and Healthy Living, addictions and mental health were managed out of the same branch and, under that former arrangement, pressing needs in mental health could, at times, take staff focus away from addictions and vice versa.

We had been talking about a change for quite some time. It—the structural change is actually designed to strengthen attention on addictions in the system by giving a dedicated focus, but without losing the important learnings that have occurred under the co-occurring disorder initiative, a really important initiative across our departments. So it's not going to change collaboration and co-operation, but we really do believe that we needed to strengthen some attention on addictions, and so we are using this new model.

We are going to be reviewing and evaluating, though. Some people have expressed concerns about this, and I understand that, based on what we know about the co-occurring initiative. It is still strongly in place, but we're going to take advice and, if this shift

in this model does not work as we hope, we're prepared to review it again. But we think that it's going to help, actually.

**Mrs. Driedger:** Can the minister clarify, then, that this was not a political decision that was made, that it was, in her view, something that was made in the best interest of patients?

**Ms. Oswald:** Yes, again, there was a restructuring of departments, and in doing that there were a number of shared staff and shared responsibilities that needed to occur. And we are keenly interested in redoubling our efforts when it comes to addictions, but at the same time being very respectful of and appreciative of the Co-occurring Initiative. So we are making this structural change—largely administrative, too—we're going to make this change, but we are going to do a very careful review. And if the choice that we have made does not bear the fruit that we hope it will, we're open to looking at what model might work best. But, yes, we indeed had those individuals who are seeking addictions treatment at heart as we made the amendment to this structure.

**Mrs. Driedger:** Who—or which minister does the Co-occurring Initiative fall under?

**Ms. Oswald:** Well, the Co-occurring Mental Health and Substance Abuse Disorders Initiative, or CODI, it's jointly sponsored by AFM and the 11 regional health authorities, and government, of course, and it is continuing to be strongly in place. So the initiative will be shared under the member—the Minister for Healthy Living, Youth and Seniors (Mr. Rondeau) and the Minister of Health, myself. We're going to work together on it which, really, I think, is the whole point.

**Mrs. Driedger:** And, then, can the Minister of Health indicate where the staff would come from? Are they split, then, between both those departments, as well?

**Ms. Oswald:** Well, if we're talking about service delivery under this model, you know regional health authority staff would fall under my department. Staff at AFM, you know, of course, is shared with Healthy Living, and staff—if she's referring to staff that are specifically administering programming through this initiative, they're also shared. Yeah.

\* (16:10)

**Mrs. Driedger:** Can the minister tell us if there are any staff that work for AFM or another agency that are actually brought into government and are

working under the auspices of her department or the Department of Healthy Living, but paid for by AFM or by the WRHA, for instance?

**Ms. Oswald:** Like a secondment—is that the issue?

**An Honourable Member:** Yes.

**Ms. Oswald:** I believe there may be one, perhaps two, but I'll confirm for the member.

**Mrs. Driedger:** It sounds a little bit disjointed, the way this is set up, and it doesn't sound like there can be—like the buck doesn't seem to stop with any one particular person or minister. How does—how are problems supposed to be resolved if there isn't a clear accountability mechanism?

**Ms. Oswald:** Well, again, what we've learned through our experts in the co-occurring initiative is the importance of co-operation and collaboration. And we know that issues concerning AFM and addictions fall under the Minister of Healthy Living, Youth and Seniors. Issues concerning services provided through the regional health authorities would largely fall under my purview, but the two departments work closely together—indeed, were recently one—and that work is not going to change.

We know that we want to be doing all that we can to improve services for those dealing with mental health and/or addictions issues. And again, we're going to continue to review this new structure to make sure it's achieving all that we want to achieve, and that's getting the best possible support to people that need help.

**Mrs. Driedger:** It doesn't sound to me like there's very clear lines of accountability in any of this, and it sounds like it is set up in a very complicated way for even people working within the system. Can the minister tell us how many staff in her department are then involved in that initiative, and how many staff from Healthy Living are involved in that initiative? And how do they sort of get together to work together?

**Ms. Oswald:** I don't have a list of staff members in front of me, but I can endeavour to provide the member with information about how this co-operative work goes on between the two departments. Sure, I'll get her that information as best I can.

**Mrs. Driedger:** Well, you know, splitting the—splitting addictions and mental health, I think, has come as a huge surprise to a lot of people out there. And there's some major concerns that have been

raised with me about it. There's certainly concerns raised that it was a political decision and not a decision that was made in the best interest of patients. And, you know, it's something that we'll certainly be watching to find out whether or not there's actually going to be any really benefit to the patients, and then an easy enough way for the staff to all work together to achieve something that is in the best interest of patients.

My final question: Can the minister tell us whether or not we have a shared service organization here, where there is shared purchasing going on in health care, so that we can get the biggest bang for our buck?

**Ms. Oswald:** Yes, we do have a number of co-operative purchasing projects that go on, certainly among regional health authorities. But it is one area—the whole area of procurement—that we are looking at very closely to provide even greater savings with bulk purchasing and planned purchasing. We think that there's an opportunity, not only just in Manitoba, but co-operatively across provinces to do better at this, and so it's a project that we're working on. But, yes, there are some collaboratives, like HealthPRO, that we talked about last year at this time, I think, within the WRHA right now, yes.

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** The minister, I think, is well aware that the—when it comes to the pharmacists, that the regulations which are to be covering pharmacists are still not in place, and I know that the minister had, I believe, a report done through Pricewaterhouse. Can the minister, you know, tell me what's happened with that report?

**Ms. Oswald:** Yes, there has been considerable work that has gone on with the pharmacists, with the MPhA in trying to bring to a close the work that needs to be done on development of regulations, and there was a report done with some suggestions on how to continue to move forward. And our deputy—our then deputy and now deputy continue to be in discussions, particularly with the MPhA, to bring this to a positive conclusion. But in the name of respecting the time, if the member is trying to work me towards a statement that says I think it's taking too long, I'll just give that to him now. It's taking too long.

**Mr. Gerrard:** Yes, I wonder if the minister is in a position to table the report.

**Ms. Oswald:** I don't know the answer to that. I know there are rules about reports for third parties or—and

rules about tabling and sharing that, and so I would have to investigate the appropriateness or, you know, whether I'm allowed or not. So I'll get back to the member.

**Mr. Gerrard:** Is the report providing the basis for moving forward and getting the new regulations in place?

**Ms. Oswald:** In part, but not in total. I think that there are a number of factors that are involved in endeavouring to push this forward. In fact, the—I can confirm for the member that it's not our report to table. It does belong to the MPhA. But I can tell the member that the report was one piece of the puzzle.

There has been ongoing support provided by Manitoba Health staff to assist MPhA in the reg development. There have been mediation exercises that have taken place to try to break through logjams on issues, and so this report would just be another document on which one can reflect to offer suggestions on how to break down barriers and get to the conclusion of the development of the regs. Because I believe, and I don't want to put words in the member's mouth, but I think he also believes that the law that we passed, Bill 41, I think it was a really important project.

Lots of work was done in advance of that to provide even greater access to service, particularly for people in rural Manitoba. And while it's no secret, certainly not to anybody in this room, but I can't believe it would be a secret to any Manitoban left dwelling the prairies, that there are wars going on amongst the pharmacists. And it would be my hope that through mediation exercises, through the collaborative work that has happened—there has been some—through some guidance from this report that we could see our way through to come to the end of the development of those regs with patients in mind, because I think we're all going to be better off when we can come to a landing place on these regs. So I hope it's going to go quickly.

\* (16:20)

**Mr. Gerrard:** The minister indicated that it was the Manitoba pharmacists' report, the MPhA. And so is it correct, then, that the Manitoba pharmacists have received the report and are working with it and—as a way of implementing the regs?

**Ms. Oswald:** It is my understanding that there is a report that has been received by them, and I'll double-check for the member to make sure that it's not a shared responsibility, a shared report. I believe

that it's a report that was done for them specifically but, yes, it is one of the tools that is being used to go forward and get through some of the more contentious matters and, you know, work to build consensus to find regulations that work under the new act, the amended act, for the benefit of all people. It's one of the tools, yes.

**Mr. Gerrard:** So that the—I'm also of the opinion that this regulation should be there as soon as possible because there's some important changes, advances, which we need and—can the minister give a time frame for when that—the regulations might be in place?

**Ms. Oswald:** Not really, to be honest. My preferred answer would've been a year ago, but I do not have comfort at this point that we have rounded that last corner that would enable me to at least speculate, you know, it'll be three months, it'll be one month, it'll be six months. But I will endeavour to see how much closer we are to the final turn so I can tell the member.

**Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East):** Madam Chairperson, I'd just like to ask a few questions of the Minister of Family Services.

I know that the minister in the Estimates process did commit to get some information to me, and I'm wondering if he has anything there that he might share before we get started.

**Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Family Services and Consumer Affairs):** I met with the department to follow up on the matters requested, and they've listed the questions posed by members opposite. And I know Administration and Finance was compiling the information about grants to external agencies. There was one and I believe there's some other requests that are being in the process of receiving answers for.

The member had also asked about questions with regard to actions taken following the tragedy—the death of Gage Guimond. And I believe the line of questioning was around the role of the Children's Advocate, and if the member wants to pursue that—but I understand that the list of external agencies' information can be provided in the next couple of weeks, something like that, that that is in hand.

**Mrs. Mitchelson:** Madam Chairperson, I'm just trying to refresh my memory, and I probably should go back through my comments, but I know we had, at one point in time, talked about the organizational chart in the department. And I don't know if the

minister can recall or not—did I ask specifically how far down into the department I wanted to go, or was that a question that was outstanding from me so that the minister could get the appropriate information? I just wonder if you could clarify for me whether he has anything more there as far as the organization chart goes.

**Mr. Mackintosh:** There was a question about the list of staff in the minister's office and the deputy's office and that's being concluded now. That's straightforward.

There was a question around *[interjection]*—oh, the per diems—I think we provided that already on April 22nd—and around funeral arrangements and EIA. Security deposits have been answered. List of grants, external agencies—yes, that is being compiled.

Questions around ads, and it says admin and finances preparing a response.

Yeah, now I recall and I'll look for it. The member was asking questions around org charts and, as I recall, I think I had said on the record that we could certainly provide those for the more senior positions in the department and that compiling that for the whole department would be a task that may take quite a bit of effort. And I'm subject to be corrected on that one, but I thought the member advised that she would consider that further as a result of that concern. But perhaps she can clarify that or get back to me at a later time.

But that, certainly, it would be quite a fundamental, massive undertaking to put an organizational chart together, because I believe she had asked for the entire department—that was my recollection. So I think that was an outstanding issue.

**Mrs. Mitchelson:** That is an outstanding issue, and I guess I would like a bit more information than just, you know, the higher level organizational chart. I would like to know—and I know that there has been a significant change this year with Housing moving out of the Department of Family Services and Housing and Consumer Affairs moving in. And I'm not as interested in the Consumer Affairs side.

Although I'm sure if—maybe the minister could just explain to me: Are there joint responsibilities at the senior level for those, or is Consumer and Corporate Affairs a separate entity unto itself? How does that structure work?

**Mr. Mackintosh:** They're still developing synergies in terms of their relationship with the new division

and the rest of the department, but I can advise that the Consumer and Corporate Affairs division leadership is now part of the executive management meetings and grouping within the department so that they're full-fledged members of the department; they're not any satellite operation to any extent at all. And, of course, the deputy has oversight of that division.

Administration and Finance, as well, is affected, but what we've been able to develop is, for example, we are—we've concluded a new, multiyear consumer protection strategy and as a result of the need to do the necessary research and policy development and consultations, we have used the existing synergies within the department and the very bright and capable policy development capacity working across the divisions.

In other words, some individuals who may have been doing some policy work in a particular area have been grouped to provide the support necessary to develop the consumer protection strategy, and I think that's been good for everybody. That's the kind of effort that is needed in order to guard against the need to start hiring or putting in place new positions because there is a great capacity already existing within the research and policy parts of the department.

So those are examples of some of the crossover efforts and how the new division has come to fit in and how we've been able to provide support to the new division. And I expect that the policy development work will continue because the multiyear strategy will necessarily require ongoing policy development and some very significant consultations with different sectors, for example, over the coming years.

**Mrs. Mitchelson:** I wonder if I might just get a commitment from the minister—if I'm looking to try to understand and figure, sort of, where certain pieces fit in, whether I might call his office and schedule a meeting with him and some of his senior departmental staff so that we could just go through that without having to go through the whole FIPPA process trying to get information; whether he could make that commitment to me that we could sit down and have the discussion so that we have an understanding.

I have to understand that, you know, we've had a couple of changes in his department. With Housing moving and Consumers Affairs—Housing moving out and Consumer Affairs moving in, there's

understandably some questions around how it all works and, you know, I would just, well, I guess I'll just ask him if there is a commitment for us to sit down and have that discussion so that I have a better understanding of how the pieces fit today.

\* (16:30)

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Yeah, we could certainly arrange to have departmental officials there to go through any of those changes and, like, I know there's, for example, you know, intake position that was predominantly dealing with housing issues and so that position is now working over in Housing so that there doesn't have to be any new hirings. Again, it's just a matter of making sure that people—or the positions are flexible to meet the changing setup of the department. But we can certainly, at the member's request and at a time that's mutually convenient, set up that kind of a meeting. We've done that before and sometimes it can be more efficient for both sides of the Chamber when we can get together like that rather than go through the FIPPA process.

**Mrs. Mitchelson:** I thank the minister for that and he has in the past, you know, provided opportunity for staff to meet with me and I want to thank him and I think that that works well when we can sit down and discuss issues and get a little more understanding, detail of different programming. And one of the areas that he's done that in for me is the child-care area and I thought—and I certainly have given the minister credit where credit—and his government—credit where credit is due on some of the child-care initiatives that have been undertaken and the new spaces.

The one thing that I was critical about in just the most recent past was the whole safety charter issue and the lack of consultation with the Department of Education, with school divisions, and with child-care facilities when it was learned that they were moving—or he was moving ahead with a pretty heavy hand and so there were child-care facilities that raised issues. I certainly raised issues. And I guess at the outset I want to say to the minister, thank you for reconsidering and sitting back and listening to some of the concerns that were out there and as a result, the proof will be in the pudding, I guess we might say, when actually the whole safety charter is implemented. But it sounds like the minister has listened and is making some exception for the heavy hand that was originally there and is going to ensure that wherever possible the department will pay for

some of the upgrades that are needed which was not a consideration initially and that they will work with the many, many facilities that have shared space to try to ensure that they accommodate them and that they're not in any way jeopardized as a result of the policy that was initially going to be implemented.

So I want to thank him for listening and I also would just like to ask the question on—because I know there had been no discussion with the Department of Education around shared facilities in schools, whether his department has met with the Department of Education and what are the results of those discussions if they have met.

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Just in terms of the charter generally and consultations, the H1N1 crisis unfortunately put a bit of a wrench into the mechanism that had been initially planned for the rollout, but in the end it turned out to actually provide some additional guidance in terms of how the safety charter can be effectively implemented. And that lesson really came in the form of the workshops that were held for H1N1 across the province. There was a tremendous effort, a very intensive effort, and, in fact, we had to bring some people in just because of the urgency of getting on with the plans for the facilities. But, when it comes to child care, I think historically there has been an absence of engaging child-care centres in the development of licensing requirements and leading-edge efforts, and we're trying to get that behind us.

So, with H1N1, the department was able to provide boilerplate H1N1 plans for the facilities, meet face-to-face with the facilities all across the province—and really was a remarkable and historic occurrence to see how that happened in just a few, short months. So the lesson was learned from that one in terms of how we can more expeditiously and in a more fulsome, consultative, collegial way work with child-care centres for the safety charter.

So there was well over 40 workshops planned and put in place all across the province and—but, most notably, was the development of the materials to assist child-care centres and in concluding their safety plans. But the plans themselves were based in no small part on the experience of facilities in Manitoba over the last many years. So, in the documents—and the member can go to them on-line—it's all publicly available. You'll see as well the templates for the safety plans and the codes of conduct.

We've got some very positive feedback as a result of the process that was followed, although we all recognize that the time lines were quite short and if, you know, in a perfect world, you know, H1N1 wouldn't have happened and we may have had some better time lines there, but it all came together. And perhaps just working on that intensively may have paid off in terms of people turning their mind to the safety plans and the codes of conduct.

Yes, we had some very positive feedback, some in writing, which is very unusual in public office to get actual public—or, you know, commendations like that because of the process. But the credit goes to the child-care centres and the facilities generally for the leadership there, and to our office, which did an extraordinary effort. And, again, quickly following the H1N1, it was a huge mobilization of facilities, of which there are over 1,100 in Manitoba.

In terms of the—and I think the member was talking not just about the charter, but the locked-door initiative. The message that has gone to the child-care centres is that the charter should be part of an evolving document, and we should always learn as we go ahead and not have this as a stale, historic piece of paper in terms of either the code or the safety plan. And so that is why there's a staged approach to the closed-door policy, and the first is to have feedback from the facilities in terms of the barriers to putting in place a locked-door policy, because there are barriers. That's why we asked, and we want to be practical.

We have had discussions not just with education, but—well, I know, too, there's been discussions with superintendents and there have been discussions with schools and there have been discussions with other stakeholders, because—in some cases, there are several. Like, there can be community centres; there can be churches, and sometimes—and that I've heard this is that, you know, they've looked at it every which way, and it's very difficult to put in place a locked-door policy in certain places. And so be it, but there may be ways to mitigate that inability to put in place a locked-door policy.

So that's what the initial stage is all about is sort of doing an audit with the facilities about how we can move towards this. I mean, just as an old day-care dad—I shouldn't say old. As a former day-care dad, I look at the fact that most child-care facilities already have locks on their doors, so it raises the obvious question. Well, how about just making sure that, in fact, the locks are used when the

wee ones are inside during regular program hours? And it's just a matter of taking a split-second security step that can reduce a risk across the province.

\* (16:40)

But there has to be practical—and so there'll be further communications with the facilities with that in mind. And certainly there's always been a sensitivity to the costs, particularly this year when things are tight in terms of the operating. And if there are, you know, if it's going to be a significant cost for this initiative then clearly the department has an important role to play. So we'll work through that and we have the next year to get it done right as best we can, recognizing that we're going to have to have some exceptions, but perhaps with those exceptions we can have some mitigation options that work.

So, as I say, we're all learning this together. We're not aware of another jurisdiction that's gone down this path and I think we'll find other examples of how safety can be enhanced in the broad sense of the word as we proceed, at least the basic infrastructure's in place now.

**Mrs. Mitchelson:** Can the minister indicate, because I don't think he indicated in that answer, what discussions his department has had with the Department of Education around a policy, a locked-door policy, in schools and what the results of those discussions are?

**Mr. Mackintosh:** I recall in a briefing where I was advised that there had been discussions, but I can provide those to the member or perhaps I can get some better detail.

**Mrs. Mitchelson:** Thank you, I'd like that detail. And I guess I'm wondering whose responsibility it is to talk to school divisions. Is it the Department of Education's responsibility or is it the child-care office's responsibility to open the dialogue with school divisions around the locked-door policy?

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Well, in many cases, of course there's an ongoing relationship between child-care facilities and school divisions and preparing for a review of whether there can be a locked-door policy for some or all of the, you know, indoor time. Child-care centres will likely talk to their, you know, their principal, their connection in their school, so that has to be worked out, but I don't think it's just the schools either. You know, I'm certainly aware of some child-care facilities that are in community

centres or, you know, there are some in churches and there are some in other kinds of places as well including some commercial premises. And so the main focus here is to have the local child-care facilities advise the child-care office of their immediate situation, their local situation, and then we'll work through what the barriers might be.

We've heard from, you know, different stakeholders about some of the challenges. Sometimes it's just about ensuring the continued ability of the children to use a shared washroom facility in a school for example, and that poses unique challenges. It also depends on the makeup of the child-care facility. In other words, it's not a—there can't be any blanket approaches to this one. If the child-care facility has a certain age group, there may be unique needs. That has to be worked through.

But it's my understanding that many of the child-care facilities across the province already have in place procedures, and some quite elaborate, for visitor access control and we're learning from them as well in terms of how they manage all those issues. I think almost every child-care centre, if not every one that I've ever visited in Winnipeg at least, has visitor control access and I know the newer ones have very sophisticated entry systems. There are some that haven't turned their mind to that one—to that issue. And I visited a couple, for example, in rural Manitoba and, you know, at one of them I was asked, well, why would that be necessary where we've never had a problem? And my answer to that was, well, we want to keep it that way, as long as it can be reasonably implemented. And I've heard it from—it was actually through another one, another facility say, well, why would you do this in rural Manitoba? My answer to that is, well, because every child in Manitoba should enjoy the same management of risk when it comes to safety

So we'll work through those issues, and whether it's at the division level—and in some cases that may be the case—or at the local school level, which is more often the case, we'll look to see what—the what might be in the way of having this policy put into place. But I think we're well on our way now, and we're getting some good feedback now on the value of working through any of the impediments to having this go to work for kids.

**Mrs. Mitchelson:** Madam Chairperson, how much money is in the budget this year for the initiatives for the locked-door policy—any upgrades that may have

to be made? What was allocated within the budget for this initiative?

**Mr. Mackintosh:** There are allocations that will be based on what barriers might be found, and, to systems, we don't expect that very sophisticated and expensive systems will be necessarily required. But, both through the department and Community Places, there have traditionally been funding amounts made available, and this year any allocations for safety will be 'prioritized.' There are, for example, equipment grants, you know, cupboards and so on, other kinds of enhancements that can be supported. So we'll do the compilation, then, of the audits and determine if there are even any sizeable financial demands, and we suspect that they will be manageable.

**Mrs. Mitchelson:** Well, Madam Chair, but it sort of sounds like the minister's flying by the seat of his pants a little bit now in that I didn't hear from that answer that there was any allocation for this, and it looks like they are now going to 'reprioritize.' So maybe a child-care facility that has a good safety process in place now but needed new cupboards may not be able to get the new cupboards, because some other facility may need to upgrade their safety issues. And I hear the minister saying that safety is the No. 1 priority, and I don't disagree with him, but it appears to me that this was not thought out and that there's nothing in the budget.

And now he says they may be able to go to Community Places, or there may be something somewhere within his department. But the lack of answer just indicates to me that there was no thought around the department ever providing additional funding for this, and, you know, I guess my question would be: Is it going to have to come out of some other part of the child-care budget that had been approved, or is he going to go back and ask to increase the deficit of the Province of Manitoba so that the safety requirements will be put in place? Because I believe he's expecting that this will all be up and running by the end of this fiscal year, and he can correct me if I'm wrong.

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Our focus is to have the policy in place. But there may well be exceptions, as I said earlier, and there may be some time lines that have to be managed as well as there are for any licensing needs, whether it's, you know, even the staffing requirements and so on that have to be addressed by way of the licensing process. So we'll just take a—make sure that the consultations and information that come in through the year give us the information

from the centres, particularly those in shared facilities, so that we can then conclude our, for lack of a better word, audit, and we can get on with helping facilities that aren't there yet to get there.

\*(16:50)

So we're going to be flexible both within this year and next year if there has to be special arrangements made that are more complex. So that's what the plan is. The whole—the ability of the department to be flexible in this regard, I think, is built in, but it will depend on the information received from the facilities in the end.

**Mrs. Mitchelson:** I'd just like to go back to the whole issue of the child advocate and the involvement of the child advocate in the Gage Guimond file before Gage Guimond was so tragically moved and died under this minister's watch. And I wonder whether the minister could clarify for me, because we've had conflicting answers in last year's Estimates and this year's Estimates around the role of the child advocate in the review of the death of Gage Guimond.

And it's clear now that the minister knew that the child advocate had opened a file on Gage Guimond prior to his removal from his loving foster family and, yet, he indicated that the child advocate was involved in the review of the Gage Guimond file. I wonder if he could clarify for me what role the child advocate played in the review of Gage Guimond's file.

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Well, after the line of questioning, I checked the records and I can confirm that the Children's Advocate did have a role. I understand that—to clarify, the Children's Advocate had been contacted and, as a result, when the Children's Advocate then looked at her conduct of the review, she thought that for, on a perception basis, it would be best that she withdrew—that she withdraw from that review.

**Mrs. Mitchelson:** So I did ask the minister directly when he became aware that the child advocate was involved in the Gage Guimond file before his death. Has he been able to figure that one out yet?

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Yeah, just on checking the records, it would appear that that would have been in the fall of—that's the fall of '07.

**Mrs. Mitchelson:** And I asked the question of when the contract was awarded to the two external

consultants that reviewed the Gage Guimond file. Can the minister indicate when that was?

**Mr. Mackintosh:** I don't have that yet, but we may have to ask the Children's Advocate for that, for those dates.

**Mrs. Mitchelson:** Well, Madam Chair, why would the minister be asking the Children's Advocate for that information?

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Well, as I said earlier, it's my understanding that the Children's Advocate had begun the discussions and the retention of the external advocates. There were two of them. There was Alice McEwan-Morris, I think, was one of them and Mr. Koster was the other one, and it's my understanding that the Children's Advocate had initially retained them and so that's—well, the may be that the branch has some records as well that can provide the answers, so I'll provide that to the member as soon as I get it.

**Mrs. Mitchelson:** This is becoming even more confusing. So it was the child advocate, then, that had retained the external consultants to review the Gage Guimond file? Am I understanding the minister correctly?

**Mr. Mackintosh:** I'll just go through what I understand was the scenario was that the Children's Advocate had launched the—sort of co-ordinated, if you will, that review. She did not do the review directly but contracted with the two individuals that I named to look, to do a case management review. And then the Children's Advocate withdrew from her co-ordination role because she had received a complaint or had received a call or had some role with regard to the placement of Gage Guimond. And it was her decision that out of an abundance of caution or to guard against any perceived conflict that she wouldn't continue to co-ordinate those contractors.

So that's why the contractors' start date would be known by the Children's Advocate and maybe known by the branch. In either case, we'll get the information as best we can to the member.

**Mrs. Mitchelson:** So the external contractors were contracted by the Children's Advocate and the Children's Advocate paid for those contractors?

**Mr. Mackintosh:** I can look to see how the contract was funded and what mechanism and get back to the member on that.

**Mrs. Mitchelson:** And could the minister then, when he's getting back to me, indicate what date the contractors were contracted with, who contracted them, what the cost of the contract was and what the terms of reference of that contract were?

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Yeah, we can look into that. There was a—I mean there was a relationship—there was an involvement of the branch, the southern authority and the Children's Advocate in getting these external reviews going. So we can provide that information to the member as soon as we can get at it. As I say, there may be information that the Children's Advocate has, but the branch may have independent records, in which case we'll let the member know.

**Mrs. Mitchelson:** So can the minister indicate to me today, in any way did he direct the Children's Advocate to remove herself from the investigation, because his office or he had personally been informed that the Children's Advocate had a role to play before the death of Gage Guimond? Did he direct the way the review was handled?

**Mr. Mackintosh:** I don't have a role directing the Children's Advocate to do anything. She's—that office is resolutely independent and so that would be a decision for the Children's Advocate and the Children's Advocate alone.

**Mrs. Mitchelson:** Did the minister direct that the southern authority would be the lead on the review? Was there any direction from his office to ask—that asked any direction or did he ask or his department ask the southern authority to take the lead?

**Mr. Mackintosh:** I believe the southern authority took a leadership role from the beginning and had—that had a dialogue with the—or had a relationship with the Children's Advocate to launch independent review into the circumstances surrounding the death. But the advocate, under the act or the authority, of course, under the act now has a responsibility that can be exercised, as does the branch. But it is my understanding that the authority launched their role which, as I say, is accommodated within the authority's legislation.

**Madam Chairperson:** The hour being 5 p.m., committee rise. Call in the Speaker.

#### IN SESSION

**Mr. Speaker:** The hour being 5 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow morning.

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA**

**Monday, May 10, 2010**

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