



Third Session - Thirty-Fifth Legislature
of the
Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS
(HANSARD)**

39-40 Elizabeth II

*Published under the
authority of
The Honourable Denis C. Rocan
Speaker*



VOL. XLI No. 49A - 1:30 p.m., TUESDAY, APRIL 21, 1992



MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Fifth Legislature

Members, Constituencies and Political Affiliation

NAME	CONSTITUENCY	PARTY
ALCOCK, Reg	Osborne	Liberal
ASHTON, Steve	Thompson	NDP
BARRETT, Becky	Wellington	NDP
CARSTAIRS, Sharon	River Heights	Liberal
CERILLI, Marianne	Radisson	NDP
CHEEMA, Gulzar	The Maples	Liberal
CHOMIAK, Dave	Kildonan	NDP
CONNERY, Edward	Portage la Prairie	PC
CUMMINGS, Glen, Hon.	Ste. Rose	PC
DACQUAY, Louise	Seine River	PC
DERKACH, Leonard, Hon.	Roblin-Russell	PC
DEWAR, Gregory	Selkirk	NDP
DOER, Gary	Concordia	NDP
DOWNEY, James, Hon.	Arthur-Virden	PC
DRIEDGER, Albert, Hon.	Steinbach	PC
DUCHARME, Gerry, Hon.	Riel	PC
EDWARDS, Paul	St. James	Liberal
ENNS, Harry, Hon.	Lakeside	PC
ERNST, Jim, Hon.	Charleswood	PC
EVANS, Clif	Interlake	NDP
EVANS, Leonard S.	Brandon East	NDP
FILMON, Gary, Hon.	Tuxedo	PC
FINDLAY, Glen, Hon.	Springfield	PC
FRIESEN, Jean	Wolseley	NDP
GAUDRY, Neil	St. Boniface	Liberal
GILLESHAMMER, Harold, Hon.	Minnedosa	PC
HARPER, Elijah	Rupertsland	NDP
HELWER, Edward R.	Gimli	PC
HICKES, George	Point Douglas	NDP
LAMOUREUX, Kevin	Inkster	Liberal
LATHLIN, Oscar	The Pas	NDP
LAURENDEAU, Marcel	St. Norbert	PC
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	NDP
MANNES, Clayton, Hon.	Morris	PC
MARTINDALE, Doug	Burrows	NDP
McALPINE, Gerry	Sturgeon Creek	PC
McCRAE, James, Hon.	Brandon West	PC
McINTOSH, Linda, Hon.	Assiniboia	PC
MITCHELSON, Bonnie, Hon.	River East	PC
NEUFELD, Harold	Rossmere	PC
ORCHARD, Donald, Hon.	Pembina	PC
PENNER, Jack	Emerson	PC
PLOHMAN, John	Dauphin	NDP
PRAZNIK, Darren, Hon.	Lac du Bonnet	PC
REID, Daryl	Transcona	NDP
REIMER, Jack	Niakwa	PC
RENDER, Shirley	St. Vital	PC
ROCAN, Denis, Hon.	Gladstone	PC
ROSE, Bob	Turtle Mountain	PC
SANTOS, Conrad	Broadway	NDP
STEFANSON, Eric, Hon.	Kirkfield Park	PC
STORIE, Jerry	Flin Fion	NDP
SVEINSON, Ben	La Verendrye	PC
VODREY, Rosemary, Hon.	Fort Garry	PC
WASYLYCIA-LEIS, Judy	St. Johns	NDP
WOWCHUK, Rosann	Swan River	NDP

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, April 21, 1992

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): I beg to present the petition of Hans Brandenburg, Gordon Brown, Marie Deniele and others requesting the government consider restoring the former full funding of \$700,000 to fight Dutch elm disease.

Ms. Marianne Cerilli (Radisson): I beg to present the petition of Julie Benjamin, Charity Molyneaux, Karen Carrothers and others requesting the Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae) call upon the Parliament of Canada to amend the Criminal Code to prevent the release of individuals where there is a substantial likelihood of further family violence.

Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona): I beg to present the petition of Gordon Melnyk, Mary Boyco, Linda McCall and others requesting the Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae) call upon the Parliament of Canada to amend the Criminal Code to prevent the release of individuals where there is a substantial likelihood of further family violence.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Mrs. Louise Dacquay (Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Municipal Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the Fourth Report of the Standing Committee on Municipal Affairs.

Mr. Clerk (William Remnant): Your Standing Committee on Municipal Affairs presents the following as its Fourth Report.

Your committee met on Thursday, April 16, 1992, at 10 a.m. in Room 255 of the Legislative Building to consider the March 31, 1991, Annual Report of and matters pertaining to The Forks Renewal Corporation.

Mr. G. Campbell MacLean, Chairperson of the Board, Mr. Nick Diakiw, President, Mr. Del Crewson, Auditor, Ms. Marilyn Edmunds, Communications Manager and Mr. Sid Kroker, Site Archaeologist, provided such information as was requested by

members of the committee with respect to the Annual Report and business of The Forks Renewal Corporation.

Your committee reports that it has considered the March 31, 1991, Annual Report of and matters pertaining to The Forks Renewal Corporation.

All of which is respectfully submitted.

Mrs. Dacquay: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable member for Sturgeon Creek (Mr. McAlpine), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

* * *

Mr. Bob Rose (Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Economic Development): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the Second Report of the Committee on Economic Development.

Mr. Clerk: Your Standing Committee on Economic Development presents the following as their Second Report.

Your committee met on Thursday, February 27, 1992, at 10 a.m. in Room 255 and on Thursday, April 16, 1992, at 10 a.m. in Room 254 of the Legislative Building to consider the Annual Reports of Channel Area Loggers Ltd. for the fiscal periods ending March 31, 1990 and 1991, and the Annual Reports of Moose Lake Loggers Ltd. for the fiscal periods ending March 31, 1990 and 1991.

Mr. David Tomasson, Deputy Minister of Northern Affairs, Mr. Gordon Trithart, Secretary, Mr. Percy Williams, Manager of the Economic Development Branch and Ms. Brenda Kustra, Assistant Deputy Minister of Northern Development Co-ordination provided such information as was requested with respect to the Annual Reports and the business of Channel Area Loggers Ltd. and the Annual Reports and the business of Moose Lake Loggers Ltd.

Your committee has considered the Annual Reports of Channel Area Loggers Ltd. for the fiscal periods ending March 31, 1990 and 1991, and the Annual Reports of Moose Lake Loggers Ltd. for the fiscal periods ending March 31, 1990 and 1991, and has adopted the same as presented.

All of which is respectfully submitted.

Mr. Rose: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable member for St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. James Downey (Minister of Energy and Mines): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table the Manitoba Mineral Resources Ltd. Annual Report of 1991.

* (1335)

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 78—The City of Winnipeg Amendment Act (3)

Hon. Jim Ernst (Minister of Urban Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Government Services (Mr. Ducharme), that Bill 78, The City of Winnipeg Amendment Act (3); Loi no 3 modifiant la Loi sur la Ville de Winnipeg, be introduced and the same be now received and read a first time.

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

Motion agreed to.

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: Prior to Oral Questions, may I direct the attention of honourable members to the loge to my left, where we have with us this afternoon Mr. Ed Mandrake, the former member for Assiniboia.

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

Also with us this afternoon, seated in the public gallery, we have from the Archwood School twenty-two Grade 6 students, and they are under the direction of Stan Kazina. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable member for St. Boniface (Mr. Gaudry).

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

* (1340)

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Federal Government Untendered Contracts

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Premier (Mr. Filmon), a question we raised last week. The aerospace industry is a very vital industry to this province, and it is an industry that all of us share in this Chamber of wanting to maintain and promote and enhance in the decades to come.

Historically, Manitoba has been in a very, very interesting position. We have had merit on our side in this province and in the aerospace industry in competing with other provinces, and Quebec has had politics on their side. Marc Lalonde, I remember years ago, said that Ontario has the auto industry so Quebec must get all the aerospace industry, and that is something that has continued on with the Conservatives with the awarding of contracts in the '80s, Mr. Speaker, that has always placed Manitoba in a very, very competitive position with other provinces—we having merit and the other provinces having politics on their side.

Recently, the federal Conservative government awarded a company \$250 million of taxpayers' money, a grant. It is reported that the same company just this month received a \$1-billion untendered contract from the federal Conservative government dealing with contracts in the aerospace industry. Mr. Speaker, we have been advised, in questions we asked last week, that the government really was not aware of this situation and was advised after the fact.

I would ask the Premier (Mr. Filmon): What action has he taken with the Prime Minister and federal government dealing with the lack of tendering in this very important industry affecting Manitobans?

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism): Mr. Speaker, we certainly concur with the final comment that this is a very important industry to the province of Manitoba and a major part of our economic development initiatives.

My department has been meeting with the aerospace sector over the last few days and are communicating with them in terms of formalizing a common ground on this particular issue. There are many factors. Some of our aerospace companies currently have work related to helicopter overhaul and repair. We are firming up that this work will

remain in place, significant contracts that are of tremendous economic benefit to not only that company but the province of Manitoba. Clearly, when we go forward with a position, we want it to be a co-operative position and one that reflects the concerns of our aerospace industry in totality. So that will be occurring within the next day, Mr. Speaker.

From that, I anticipate that I will be writing the Honourable Marcel Masse, and we will be pursuing the initiative after that. Clearly, we are working with the industry, but there are many factors. While we agree with the perception and the concern on the untendered aspect of a very significant contract, and that causes us a great deal of concern, we also have to do all of the review that is necessary in terms of the total impact of this decision, and we are doing just that, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, there could be no other question that politics was the predominant factor that led to this decision to have untendered contracts for \$1 billion.

We have gone from a rigged tendering process with the CF-18 with the federal Conservative government and a federal Conservative Prime Minister from the province of Quebec—we have gone from a rigged tendering process to a no-tendering process in this country.

Therefore, my question to the Premier (Mr. Filmon) is: Will he raise this issue with the Prime Minister, the highest authority in the country, Mr. Speaker, the person who obviously chairs the federal cabinet? The federal cabinet is the body that chose not to tender this contract. I would ask the Premier in light of his relationship with the Prime Minister, in light of his commitment to Manitobans that he only had to pick up the phone with the Prime Minister on previous occasions—he obviously has not raised it with the Prime Minister.

Will he be raising this issue with the Prime Minister in terms of this very important industry to Manitobans and the lack of any tendering process in the award of this \$1-billion contract?

Mr. Stefanson: Mr. Speaker, I have already conveyed our agreement in terms of concern about the untendered aspect of this contract, and I am not going to stand here and defend the actions of the federal government as it relates to the untendered aspect.

As I have pointed out to the Leader of the Opposition, clearly there are many aspects to what has happened here. This is a very important sector within the economy of Manitoba. Companies are currently doing work for the federal government as it relates to helicopter overhaul, and clearly when we go forward with a position on behalf of this government, on behalf of Manitobans, we want it to be one that reflects the concerns of the industry in totality, and we are doing that homework before we come forward with a position, Mr. Speaker.

Federal Government Untendered Contracts

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): I know the industry is very sensitive and the local industry is very sensitive to this issue. I understand their concern about the diplomacy that they have to deal with in terms of this issue because of the absolute dependence they have on the federal government, but surely the government leadership in this province knows that merit is always in the best interests of Manitobans. Surely, we know in this Chamber that politics will destroy the aerospace industry in this province, and preferential treatment will unfortunately always go to Quebec.

I would ask the Premier: Will he be raising the issue of merit in a procurement policy and tendering process, and will he be calling on the Prime Minister to stop either rigging the tendering process or not having any tendering process? We must have merit. It is the only way Manitoba can survive. Will the Premier be calling on the Prime Minister to do that?

* (1345)

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, our position will be consistent. It will be as it has always been, and that is that we will deal with contracts with respect to tendering major contracts and on merit. That is what we have always believed in. That is what we said during the time that the federal government awarded the contract on the CF-18.

I might tell you that we have always been consistent in that respect in urging the federal government and urging governments to use merit and to use price as the basis for awarding contracts, unlike the New Democratic administration of which that member was a part, that during the Limestone tendering process, in a number of cases, gave awards to bidders who were not the lowest and in other cases negotiated contracts with individual

companies rather than going to a tender process, large contracts worth hundreds of millions of dollars nontendered by the New Democratic administration.

So, Mr. Speaker, that member speaks out of both sides of his mouth. We will be consistent, and we will say, tenders to be awarded on merit and on low price.

Education System Dropout Rate

Mr. Dave Chomlak (Kildonan): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Education.

Today we celebrated an outstanding example, an inspiration to women in the province in the person of Roberta Bondar. Unfortunately, dropouts from a high school system cannot aspire to those lofty heights. It is unfortunate that in this province, we have no data and no analysis on dropouts, and we therefore cannot design programs that deal with high-risk groups like women and aboriginal people.

Can the minister provide this House with any information she has on dropouts in the province of Manitoba and the programs designed to deal with them?

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, the issue of dropouts is of great concern. We are attempting to address the issues relating to dropouts, one, through the development of our new Student Support branch which will be working very closely across this province with those students who are at risk. We also attempt to deal with those individuals who are in danger of dropping out or who have dropped out through our literacy programs.

Mr. Chomlak: Mr. Speaker, is the minister aware that a Stats Canada study recently released has found that Manitoba men have a dropout rate which is the seventh worst in the country and, far worse, that women in the province of Manitoba are nine out of 10 for the dropout rates in Canada?

What programs are going to be designed to deal with these people? Is the minister aware of that fact?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Speaker, I think it is very important for the member, perhaps during the Estimates process, to be more fully informed about our new program, the Student Support branch, which will be looking very carefully at the issues which unfortunately put some students at risk, both men and women, and also what we as a

department, individual school divisions, families and communities can do to assist in the great concern of dropouts.

Mr. Chomlak: Mr. Speaker, my final supplementary to the same minister: Is the minister aware that nine out of 10 is not a very good standard for this province, and is she aware that of these women who drop out, the unemployment rate is 35 percent? What is going to be done to address the needs of these people?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Speaker, I would be very concerned if the numbers are in fact nine out of 10. I would like to have the opportunity to discuss the basis of that study with the honourable member, but let me tell him again, that for those young people in the K to 12 area, we are looking at our new Student Support branch to assist young people. We are also looking at the post-secondary level to assist both men and women and at-risk people to be part of our training programs, our college programs and our university programs.

* (1350)

Restraining Order Enforcement Child Care Centres

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, in recent days, there have been very serious concerns raised with respect to the Central Park Child Care centre.

The minister has indicated through his department officials that they are investigating the situation, but what he has not made clear, and what is still not clear is, is there a policy in the province of Manitoba with respect to child care centres and their enforcement of restraining orders? Could the minister tell us today just what that policy is?

Hon. Harold Gillehammer (Minister of Family Services): Mr. Speaker, the directorate for child care has been in touch with the Central Park Child Care Inc. on a variety of issues. There is a new board in place and a director at the centre, and both the director and the board have raised issues with the child care directorate. They have responded to all of those issues.

I think one of the issues that will help them get through this period is our Board Development Guide that I tabled here during the Estimates process last week. We are working with the board and with staff there to work their way through some difficulties.

This is only one of a number of issues that has been brought to the directorate's attention.

Mrs. Carstairs: Mr. Speaker, this is not the only child care centre in the province that is going to have to deal with a very difficult issue, and that is the issue of what happens in a child care centre according to policy when a mother and/or a father informs the child care centre that there is a restraining order against an individual who is to have no access to that child.

Will the minister tell the House today, what is the province-wide policy in all child care centres with respect to restraining orders?

Mr. Gilleshammer: Mr. Speaker, the department has a policy on that and, in turn, each daycare centre develops a policy on that.

The child daycare staff met with the director and a board member to discuss this concern. The director accepted that the centre did not have a clear policy in place regarding restraining orders, but that it would seek advice and ensure that an effective policy was adopted.

What I am telling the member is that every daycare centre develops their own policies at the board level. Our policy is that if there are orders placed by the courts, that they should be respected and obeyed.

Restraining Order Enforcement Departmental Co-ordination

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, as the Minister of Justice knows, I have raised with him on a number of occasions a similar issue with respect to schools and, again, there is not a clear policy as to what is the effect on a school with respect to should a parent be given access on the school grounds or within the school building to a child who quite frankly has been ordered by the court not to have contact with that particular parent.

Can the minister tell the House today what action has been taken by his department to inform all the other departments as to the enforceability of a restraining order in every aspect of their department—schools, child care centres or any other organization of government which would have access to individuals against such a restraining order?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Mr. Speaker, restraining

orders are legal instruments, and the meaning of a breach of a restraining order is something that is interpreted and decided in courts of law, so in terms of policy on the part of the Justice department, our policy follows the law as it develops.

We have seen weaknesses in restraining orders as they deal with women in difficult circumstances, as well as children in difficult circumstances, and through the Pedlar review and its implementation, we hope to achieve improvements in dealing with restraining orders, in keeping people informed of what those restraining orders are, when accused persons are in breach and when there are changes to those restraining orders.

Improvements are happening through the work of the government's working group, as well as the community advisory group.

* (1355)

Agricultural Land Taxation Right of Appeal

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the acting Minister of Rural Development.

We have serious concerns with this government's delays in reassessment, changes to portioning and the confusion as to whether or not people have the right to appeal.

We are also concerned with this government's deliberate and secretive attempt to get more money back from farmers. The Minister of Rural Development (Mr. Derkach) said, and I quote: Bill 20 does not remove the right of appeal if there are extraordinary circumstances which impact on the value of his or her land. However, a recent court ruling confirmed that only homeowners have the right to appeal.

I want to ask the acting minister: What remedial action is this government taking to assure that their right of appeal is available on farm land as well as to homeowners?

Hon. James Downey (Acting Minister of Rural Development): Mr. Speaker, I am not sure. I will take the question as notice, but I do believe that the changes to the act that she refers to were supported by her party.

Reassessments

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): My question then is to the Premier (Mr. Filmon).

Why is the government perpetuating the hardship on farmers by delaying the reassessment, when in 1989 they made a commitment never again to delay the frequency of assessment? Is this the government's agenda, to play with assessment for their own political agenda?

Hon. James Downey (Acting Minister of Rural Development): No, Mr. Speaker.

Education Support Levy

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Will this government, Mr. Speaker, quit misleading this House, as they did on Friday when I was accused of putting false information on the record, and will they admit that because of changes to portioning and delays in reassessment, farmers are being forced to pick up a much larger share of educational costs, as is illustrated in this example from municipalities?

Hon. James Downey (Acting Minister of Rural Development): The record is, Mr. Speaker, that this government removed the provincial education taxes off of the farm community. That is what this government has done. As for the rest of the information, I will take it as notice.

Manitoba Liquor Control Commission Sales Techniques

Mr. Jerry Storie (Flin Flon): Mr. Speaker, almost two years ago, when this government introduced its drunk driving legislation, our party was pleased to support that legislation. Last week, when the Minister responsible for the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation (Mr. Cummings) announced the Designated Driver program, we were very supportive.

This leads me to a question for the Minister responsible for the Manitoba Liquor Commission. Mr. Speaker, recently we have learned that the Manitoba Liquor Commission is now instructing its sales staff to promote the sale of more alcohol—larger bottles, larger containers of alcohol and higher-priced alcohol over less expensive alcohol.

I am wondering first of all whether the minister can tell us, did she authorize this change in policy, and does she condone such a change in policy?

Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister charged with the administration of The Liquor Control Act): I should indicate at the outset that I do not encourage,

nor does the Liquor Control Commission encourage excessive drinking, nor do they encourage pushing alcoholic beverages on unwilling consumers. I should also indicate that the member's reference to the manual is referring to a course that has been set up in response to a customer survey wherein customers indicated they wished to have more service on the floor of the Liquor Commission.

It is a 125-page course. I have not seen it. It is an administrative decision, and I understand that this course has been in place for about a year. We have had numerous thank you's from consumers for getting better service on the floor and no complaints about high-pressure sales techniques being imposed upon consumers.

Mr. Storie: We have heard from Liquor Commission staff who indicate that they are being asked to sell more at higher prices, Mr. Speaker, and I am asking the minister to explain to Manitobans whom this benefits.

Mrs. McIntosh: I reiterate that I have been assured as recently as this morning by the president of the MLCC that the MLCC has no intention of pushing alcoholic beverages on unwilling consumers.

I should also indicate that as part of the course which is designed to respond to consumers' requests to have informed sales staff on the store floor willing to assist with questions such as what wine would go well with salmon, for example, that we have had good response to that initiative, the goal being to retain liquor customers here in Manitoba, rather than seeing them go down to North Dakota and do their cross-border shopping in other jurisdictions.

Mr. Storie: The minister does not know what was a part of her own course.

Mr. Speaker: Question, please.

* (1400)

Mr. Storie: Mr. Speaker, my question is: Will the minister, given her lukewarm response to this issue, now instruct members of the Manitoba Liquor Commission to delete references to hiding less expensive booze and pointing out more expensive booze in the interests of protecting the young adults 18 years of age and older who are going in and being asked to buy more expensive and bigger quantities of booze, risking their own lives and lots of other peoples' in the province of Manitoba?

Mrs. McIntosh: Mr. Speaker, I reiterate, this is a 125-page course designed to enhance customer

service at the request of customers, as information gained through a survey. If there are one or two pages in that course that refer to selling techniques that are inappropriate with the goals of the commission, they will not be used.

I have the assurance of the president of the Liquor Control Commission, as of this morning, that no high-pressure techniques will be used to force liquor consumption on unwilling consumers.

Hazardous Waste Pesticide Container Classification

Mr. Neil Gaudry (St. Boniface): Mr. Speaker, a 1989 study of pesticide containers left in landfills show that metal containers retain 7.5 times more pesticide residue than plastic containers. The report said if there was a proper campaign of rinsing the containers, they could be considered nonhazardous.

The Environment minister said that a recent report to get farmers to rinse the containers, through education efforts by ACRE, has likely reduced the contamination level of the containers.

Mr. Speaker, can the Minister of Environment table any studies done by his department which indicate that metal containers are being rinsed and that there are no hazardous chemicals in the metal containers?

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment): Mr. Speaker, the new Liberal agriculture critic raises questions that are based not so much on fact as they are on the discussion of the unknown.

I believe that he is referring to the report in the paper that says somehow the Department of Environment is not following its own regulations in the allowing of certain shipments of pesticides. I can tell you, that is not the case. There has been no changing of regulations or rules, and any movement of hazardous material that might occur, or nonhazardous material as the case may be, is being properly mandated.

Mr. Gaudry: Mr. Speaker, these metal containers have been considered hazardous, as the government decided a special program was needed to collect them.

Can the minister tell the House why he reclassified the metal containers as nonhazardous waste when he told the House on April 6 that he would not reclassify the containers to ship them to Alberta?

Mr. Cummings: Mr. Speaker, my concern is that there is a misunderstanding about the different materials that are involved.

First of all, the report that the member is referring to is a government report. It was a survey that was done by the Manitoba Hazardous Waste Corporation about four or four and a half years ago. In that report, if you read far enough through it, it very clearly states that if these materials are drained or rinsed, they probably should have no problem being classified as nonhazardous waste.

As a matter of fact, in dealing with the plastic material, which will probably be shipped to a southern location for incineration, the material is being classified as hazardous even though a considerable number of the tests indicate that it is nonhazardous. It is in fact borderline, Mr. Speaker, and it is being classified as hazardous.

In dealing with the metal containers, we are dealing with them in exactly the same manner as Saskatchewan and Alberta. We are dealing with them carefully and with an abundance of caution. I believe that the member does not do a service to the agricultural community or to the handling of hazardous waste in this province in raising the material in that manner.

Mr. Gaudry: Mr. Speaker, can the minister tell the House why there is a need for an elaborate collection system, and why he is making the costly decision to ship these containers to Alberta if he has now determined they are not hazardous?

Mr. Cummings: Mr. Speaker, that is exactly what my concern is, when the broad issues are not being looked at. Eighty percent of the material is packaged in plastic. He is talking about the 20 percent that is being collected at the same time as the other material is.

Manitoba Heritage Federation Meeting Requests

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): Mr. Speaker, last week I was able to attend the emergency meeting of the Heritage Federation and heard the serious concerns raised there. Many MLAs have also received concerned calls from their constituents about the abrupt and arbitrary cancellation of the federation's programs. This agency had no reason to believe that they were not fulfilling their mandate, and there have been no new policy directions from the minister.

I want to ask the Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship why for six weeks she refused to meet with the federation. Why did her deputy minister cancel six appointments he made with the federation before March?

Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship): Mr. Speaker, the decision in fact to change the method of distributing money to the heritage community was a budget decision. The announcement was made on budget day to the Manitoba Heritage Federation, and we lived up to the agreement that was in place that gave them 90 days notice that the agreement would be cancelled on that date.

Peer Review

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the minister why she also refused to take into consideration the results of the program and client review that the federation had recently concluded in December. If she had no intention of looking at it, why did she encourage them to conduct such a province-wide review—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The question has been put.

Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship): Mr. Speaker, in fact, the Heritage Federation, as an independent umbrella group, had the mandate to conduct the kinds of activities that they did conduct—[interjection] Well, they say no policy direction. In fact, if we were setting policy for the Heritage Federation, we would be accused of political interference.

The fact of the matter is, we will be able to deliver funds to the heritage community at substantially less administrative cost, still using the volunteer component within the community, and that will mean that the heritage community will be better served, Mr. Speaker.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Speaker, what specific steps has the minister taken to ensure that the peer review, not just volunteer review but peer review, that the federation had in place will take place and not the political patronage that the community really fears?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Speaker, the key issues here are delivering funds to the heritage community in the most efficient and effective manner. We will accomplish that with a peer process that will be developed in consultation with the heritage community.

Northern Health Care System Transportation Fee

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): Mr. Speaker, last week the Manitoba Association of Urban Municipalities met in Winnipeg and passed a comprehensive series of resolutions dealing with issues ranging from the \$50 user fee for northerners to RCMP policing costs.

My question is to the acting minister of municipal affairs. I would like to ask the acting minister whether he will be recommending to the government that they listen to MAUM which is on record as opposing the \$50-user fee. Will he now be recommending that the government remove this onerous fee on northerners?

Hon. James Downey (Minister of Northern Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I can tell you that this government always pays attention to the municipal bodies that have an annual meeting, if not more often. Their recommendations are considered and those that the government feels we can move on, we move on. Those that we are not able to, we justify as to why we are not able to.

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Speaker, if the minister is indeed listening, will he now listen to the concerns of municipalities reflecting the fact that some northerners, as in the case of one constituent of mine, have had to pay 10 times for that fee, and there are individuals now having to go to the social assistance department just to be able to achieve medical treatment?

Will that minister now listen to MAUM, listen to northerners and recommend the removal of that onerous \$50 fee?

Mr. Downey: Mr. Speaker, I can assure the member that where it is an essential medical treatment—he has heard the policy of this government, of this minister—it is covered. There is no fee. I am not sure he is raising a specific situation which I would recommend he bring to the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard), but where it is essential, it has been covered by this government and directed by a doctor.

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Speaker, I am referring to an individual who has had to come to Winnipeg to avoid going on dialysis and has to pay the fee. I will provide the information.

* (1410)

RCMP Services Municipal Costs

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): My final question to the same minister is: Will the government also listen to MAUM, and in particular to the city of Thompson, in regard to RCMP policing costs which are going to increase by 38 percent in the case of Thompson, \$750,000?

Will the minister be working with the Attorney General and other ministers in the government to make sure that the city of Thompson does not get hit with that massive increase in policing costs?

Hon. James Downey (Minister of Northern Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I can assure the member for Thompson that it would be a lot easier to provide services if we had not have been devastated by the tremendous debt left by the New Democratic Party, the expenditures of \$27 million in Saudi Arabia and the bridge to nowhere. It would be far easier to provide services.

Dealing with the specific issue, Mr. Speaker, last year under our government, the city of Thompson received for the first time ever support in the policing of their city, some \$150,000 that they had never received under the New Democratic Party.

RCMP Services Falcon Beach Detachment

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, in 1987, the Deputy Premier who was then sitting in opposition gave a very impassioned plea on behalf of rural communities with respect to their RCMP police. In those times, the RCMP were being cut from communities like Winnipeg Beach, Reston and Deloraine. Today, we hear that RCMP are going to be moved from Falcon Beach.

Can the Minister of Justice tell the House today if they are going to take the same impassioned attitude about preserving RCMP in government that they took in opposition?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Absolutely, Mr. Speaker. In 1988 when we took office, we were looking at a budget placed before this House by the previous NDP administration cutting the number of RCMP positions by 23 in this province. We moved in our very first budget to restore those 23 positions cut by the previous government.

Mrs. Carstairs: Mr. Speaker, we learned what they did in the past. We would like to know now what they are going to do in the present.

Can the Minister of Justice tell the House today if they are going to overrule the RCMP and maintain the RCMP detachment at Falcon Beach?

Mr. McCrae: When we learned of the plans of the RCMP to realign the highway patrol function throughout this province dealing with the 597 members that they have under the provincial contract, which is up 23 from what it was before the NDP cut it, Mr. Speaker, I met with representatives of the RCMP and received assurances that service is what they need to provide on our highways in the province of Manitoba.

If the honourable member can bring to my attention any incident or any evidence that substantiates that somehow there has been a reduction in service, I would like to know that, because I have been given assurances otherwise.

Mrs. Carstairs: We are not talking about service, because that was the argument in 1987. We are talking about whether a detachment will be kept alive and well in Falcon Beach.

Will the minister give me a yes or no answer?

Mr. McCrae: The honourable member has singled out one particular area. There are changes in many areas throughout the province, Mr. Speaker, so that the RCMP, with the 597 members they have, can deliver service.

Now, the honourable member does not want to talk about service. Well, Mr. Speaker, these are difficult times. In spite of that, we have been able to keep up our complement of 597 members of the RCMP.

If it were not for the signing of the new RCMP contract, the city of Thompson, for example, would be looking at a 95 percent rate, instead of the 90 percent rate which we bargained hard to achieve for the city of Thompson.

Social Assistance Off-Reserve Status Indians

Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East): I have a question for the Minister of Family Services.

As of April 1 of this year, Ottawa will no longer pay welfare for off-reserve Status Indians. The mayor of Brandon, Mr. Borotsik, said he was very, very disappointed in his meeting with the minister whom he described as being very evasive and gave no

answers. There was a public statement to that effect, Mr. Speaker.

I wonder if the minister could tell this House and the people of Manitoba exactly what is the position of the government of Manitoba on this particular important matter.

Hon. Harold Gillehammer (Minister of Family Services): This is an issue that I brought to the House over a year ago, that the federal government was renegeing on its responsibilities for Status Indians living off reserve. As I recall, we had the support of both opposition parties at that time.

We have been dealing with the federal minister responsible, Minister Siddon, on this. While they indicated at that time that they were going to discontinue funding last March, they did continue funding for a portion of the year. Then they again continued funding for the complete year.

We are still in discussions with the federal government. We do not accept this. We do not accept the fact that they have withdrawn this service. We think it is their responsibility, and we are going to insist that they live up to it.

Mr. Leonard Evans: Mr. Speaker, the minister says—if I could hear him—he will not accept it, but what if—[interjection] I will reword this.

Mr. Speaker, I want to ask this minister: Is he as a minister telling us that eventually it may come to the point that the Province of Manitoba is going to offload this onto the City of Brandon and other municipalities, and is he prepared to face the court challenge, as the mayor has threatened publicly to take this minister and this government to court.

Mr. Gillehammer: Mr. Speaker, the member is putting forth hypothetical questions. Our position on this has not changed. That is a federal responsibility. We are continuing our dialogue with the federal government to insist that they live up to that responsibility.

We have talked to officials at the municipal level who support us in this and who have assured us that they will give us support as we continue these discussions with the federal government.

Mr. Leonard Evans: Would it be the intention of this minister to offload onto the municipalities of this province? Mr. Speaker, this is not hypothetical because the federal government has already made its position known. It is not a hypothetical question.

Mr. Gillehammer: Mr. Speaker, I would indicate that the federal government made their position

known to us over a year ago, and we did not accept that position. They have continued to flow money through the remainder of the year.

We again do not accept that position, and we believe by the resolutions and the discussions that we have had with the municipal officials that they support us on this initiative. We are going to continue our lobby and our discussions with the federal government and insist that they live up to their responsibilities.

Education System Dropout Rate

Mr. Dave Chomlak (Kildonan): Mr. Speaker, my question is again to the Minister of Education. We on this side of the House are very concerned that the minister is not aware of the StatsCan study pointing out dropout rates in the province of Manitoba.

Is the minister aware or not aware of this study which details the male-female rates as well as the reasons for dropouts of students?

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased in my capacity as minister that I do have the opportunity to look at a number of studies relating to a number of issues in education.

Mr. Chomlak: Can the minister indicate whether or not her department has specific studies outlining the dropout rates in the province of Manitoba and the reasons why those students drop out?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Speaker, I will be very happy to speak in Estimates regarding some of the particular statistics that my department has and some of the difficulty, as well, in gathering those statistics.

I think that one of the important points to be made today is our department's planning in terms of dealing with those young people who may be dropping out and to deal with them through our Student Support branch and our family literacy programs.

We are very concerned about dealing in fact with those young people.

School Year Length

Mr. Dave Chomlak (Kildonan): Can the minister indicate whether or not the trial balloon run up by her deputy minister regarding a 12-month school year is part of an attempt to deal with dropout rates in the province of Manitoba?

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, we in the department have in fact a committee right now which is examining the school calendar. It is examining the school calendar primarily for start dates and end points. One of a number of issues which has arisen for their discussion and for their gathering of information has been the length of the school year.

Mr. Speaker: Time for Oral Questions has expired.

* (1420)

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Hon. Clayton Manness (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae), that Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair and the House resolve itself into a committee to consider of the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty.

Motion agreed to, and the House resolved itself into a committee to consider of the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty with the honourable member for St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau) in the Chair for the Department of Health; and the honourable member for Seine River (Mrs. Daquay) in the Chair for the Department of Family Services.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY (Concurrent Sections)

HEALTH

Mr. Deputy Chairperson (Marcel Laurendeau): Will the Committee of Supply please come to order. This afternoon this section of the Committee of Supply, meeting in Room 255, will resume consideration of the Estimates of the Department of Health.

When the committee last sat, it had been considering item 1.(c) Evaluation and Audit Secretariat: (1) Salaries, on page 82. Shall the item pass?

Mr. Gulzar Cheema (The Maples): Mr. Deputy Chairperson, first of all, I was very pleased to see the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) on CBC, The National. I think it was a good thing to see that finally recognition is coming across this nation that in Manitoba the process is taking place. I think that was the testimony to the whole thing, as I could see.

The minister made a very bold statement that he is going to make the process very apolitical. I think it is very positive because the same thing has been

said outside and inside the House, and I think that says a lot about the process, but we will see how it goes in the long run. I did not want to miss the opportunity to say a few words on that respect.

I think they have chosen the minister because of his senior portfolio for the last four years—he is most senior minister now who has kept the portfolio—and also the kind of approach that has been taken in Manitoba. I think we should take some credit also in the opposition parties as well because the process has been made possible to the extent that the minister could say on national TV that the health care has to be apolitical, and that was very good.

* (1430)

I will go to the questions now.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, under Executive Support, I was raising the issue of medical manpower and the commission's report out of Banff. One of the areas under this heading is to represent Manitoba on federal committees and on national health information.

Can the Minister of Health tell us: What are the other specific areas other than the physician manpower that was discussed at Banff meeting? Can he share with us the communique and also if we could get a copy of his personal speech?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Deputy Chairperson, let me give my honourable friend just a little background on the Banff meeting.

We have our formal meeting, generally in the fall, of provincial, territorial, federal Ministers of Health, at which we have a number of issues on the agenda. The former Minister of Health in British Columbia, the Honourable John Jansen, made a suggestion—and I have to go back on memory as to whether it was two years ago; I think it was about two years ago at our annual meeting—that we consider having an informal meeting of just ministers and their deputies, the rationale behind it being that we could take and discuss, in a very focused way, some of the pressing issues that are before all provincial-territorial jurisdictions.

Second agenda, and probably equally as important a one, as my honourable friend well knows, the province of Quebec has been not attending any formal federal-provincial-territorial ministers' meeting at any level. Quite frankly, the Ministers of Health across Canada believe that is quite a considerable loss to the debate around health care and medicare in Canada because the

Quebec government has done some very-avant-garde is maybe not the correct terminology, but some very bold studies and taken on some pretty bold initiatives. Not having them formally at the table is a loss to the Canadian health care system.

So the Honourable John Jansen made the suggestion that we meet as ministers-deputy ministers only and that it not have formal conference designation. We did not have, at the first such meeting planned at Victoria, any formal translation. We only had provincial-territorial ministers. I say to my honourable friend that Quebec attended and were a very valuable contributor to the process. We had hoped that that would carry on.

That January meeting, the Alberta minister, the Honourable Nancy Betkowski, hosted the meeting. That is the one my honourable friend refers to. It was to be an informal meeting of ministers and deputy ministers and in fact was that with one exception; (a) the federal minister, to his credit, wanted to attend because he has opened up the consultation process with the provincial and territorial Ministers of Health. But by his attendance, we went to a more formal conference with translation, et cetera, and lost the opportunity to have Quebec formally represented at our meeting. So what was a gain in having the federal minister there was a loss in not having the Quebec minister there.

The reason the federal minister wanted to be there was to present to provincial, territorial ministers the issue of GATT and the potential changes to the drug patent legislation, an issue that he wanted to get a sense of where the provinces were coming from. So that was the issue that the federal minister brought to that conference.

The issue that we went out there to really deal with, of course, was the Barer-Stoddart report on physician manpower. That is the one in which, I believe, there was a communique issued surrounding the adoption of the Barer-Stoddart report.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, because it was not a formal meeting, I did not have any speaking notes that I can share with my honourable friend, but I can deal in depth with both issues that were dealt with, the patent legislation from the perspective I took and from where I think the provincial, territorial ministries were coming from on the issue.

Secondly, certainly I can spend more time on the issue of physician manpower if my honourable friend wants to pursue the questions.

Before I close, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I have to thank my honourable friend for his remarks about national review. On Thursday afternoon, after I left the Estimates here, the invitation was extended to appear on the panel. They are undertaking quite a significant amount of time at CBC, The National on the health care system. Now, I interrupted Easter Sunday to come into Winnipeg to be part of that panel discussion because I think the issue is critically important.

My honourable friend's observation is right in that he is saying that this is not an issue that is owned by any particular political party, because all three current political parties provincially are wrestling with and taking varying and differing and common courses of action to try to come to grips with our medicare spending.

What is receiving sort of now the national focus, I guess—let me use an analogy. When we talk matters of economy, the economy is not a matter for discussion. Difficulties in the prairie provinces, which we have experienced for five years because of softened oil and metal prices and agricultural prices, our economy being slowed down, was not a national issue because it was out there in sort of the external fringes of our country, so it was not a national issue. CBC nationally did not have sort of the issue around the economy. It only became an issue when Toronto was all of a sudden hurt with a downturn in the economy, unemployment, et cetera. Then it became a national issue, something that as provincial governments we have been dealing with in both the Maritime and Atlantic regions and the western provinces for a number of years.

Similarly, I think it is fair to say that in health care. Health care reform is, as some would put it, a neoconservative agenda, very driven by political parties. Of course, these commentators and observers from time to time will attempt to attach a particularly vexatious neoconservative agenda naturally to Progressive Conservative provincial governments.

* (1440)

What is having the same sort of transformation turning medicare and the need for reform into a national issue is similar to the economy when it downturned in Toronto, it had become a national issue. Now, when New Democratic governments,

provincially, are having to deal with the issue of health care expenditures and to work on a reform agenda, all of a sudden health care is a national issue.

That is why I welcome the opportunity to be there to point out, look, this is very much a national issue. This is very much apolitical, and this very much requires the kind of co-operation around the issue that my honourable friend the member for The Maples (Mr. Cheema) has been contributing to this debate for the last 18 months—as I have said before, not without potential political risk, in the short run.

I mean, it is easy for he and I to take selected phrases that each of us have put on the record and say, aha, here is the Liberal agenda, here is the Conservative agenda, and proceed to narrowly try to take partisan advantage of the issue, but I think we have a tacit agreement. I am not going to do that to him, and he is not going to do that to me, unless there is some issue that fundamentally after debate we cannot agree with, then we are going to agree to disagree. That is fair. That is the process that is in here. We will not agree on all issues, but the leadership role my honourable friend has taken as a critic is the kind of leadership role that we do need nationally. I mean, it is just as simple as that.

If we do not have the opportunity for real and informed debate around the issue of health care, its reform, then this system will not exist in the completeness and the ability to deliver care that it does today. So I thank my honourable friend for his observations, but more importantly, I make no bones about it. I thank him for the contributions he is trying to make.

Mr. Cheema: I think the issue—we have spent almost more than 248 or so hours for the last five years, five Estimates processes, and we have discussed all the issues which are affecting Manitobans and from day-to-day health care policies, but in a way we also fail to realize long-term policy. Finally when the thing struck us, we thought probably we did not do right, so we had to make a choice. I think the choice was to either be critical of the minister all of the time or give him a full chance, give him time to explain, put yourself into his shoes and think that within 37 days, if you become the government, what would you do differently? I think that turned around everything.

People are realizing now, and even with the recent report on the CT scan, the report came out and I just wanted to give that example because I

think it is very important because the media is also playing a very important role in all. I think they are playing a very objective role. They always played an objective role, but I think they are also developing a view that health care has to be dealt from a human point rather than from a political point of issue. That is why when the CT scan report came the other day, when the minister read it inside the House and I, along with the member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylycia-Leis), made some remarks. We said that we were not technically—we could not make a judgment within five minutes, but still the process was right.

The way the message came across, there is some concern where people are trying to understand that something has to change for the long run. If there is going to be short pain that has to be explained and people will accept that. I think that was very, very positive.

Still some explanation needs to be done. We said that each one of us has to do our own writing to our own people, but when three parties are doing the same things it is easier to do that, because you are not going to worry about whether somebody is going to stab at your back or send a brochure next week saying a so-and-so member was doing such-and-such things. I think that was very positive.

The lesson I think other provinces are going to learn from Manitoba is the approach that the health care reform has to be taking place as we have said. You have to get all the information possible. You have a lot of committees, a lot of reports. Now put everything together, and we will ask the minister to go to the public. Take everybody aside, the health care professionals, all the industrial groups. That question was asked of me, that was yesterday, one interview with one of the reporters. They asked me, do you trust Don Orchard? Why do you trust him in the health care forum?

I said that the issue is not Mr. Orchard, the issue is not their philosophy. The issue is the human approach and the goal, and the goal is very noble, and we are not going to shoot down the process. We want to give him a full chance. He has the experience, he has the ability. He understands the system, and we are not going to let any personality issue of any party come in between, and I think he will be successful. They were taken aback that it was coming from, especially, me; I had some difficulties. I told them that we all learn. We all have

our deficiencies, but we can always improve. So I think the CBC, The Journal, was very wise to pick him on the first day of the issue. They are going to have a lot of series done.

I was particularly interested because, other than political interest, I have my personal and the other interests in how we can improve the system. The similar pattern is going to be followed in Ontario. Also, they want to set up the Urban Hospital Council. They want to start up the same process.

What happened two weeks ago in Oregon, that was a phenomenon. I mean, the people, the Legislature in that state went to the people. They cut everybody in the middle, and that is why they have the proposal in front of the Legislative Assembly there. The proposals may not be perfect, but nobody is crying foul now because every single person on the street participated in a nonpolitical way. The way the meetings were held where the consultation was done, it was not done that you go into one riding and the same group is going to speak in each and every riding about the same issue. So it was done in a very meaningful way.

They have developed policy in terms of what is the No. 1 priority, what is the No. 2 priority, what is the No. 3 priority, and each and every year, depending upon the budget response, they are going to deliver those health care services, and then nobody can cry. I think that is probably ultimately that approach, and that is why we said to the minister, the public education is going to be the most important asset for him to be successful.

I will just go back to my question now in terms of the report from Banff. There was only one issue which was publicized, but there were other issues which were also discussed in the Banff meeting. Can the minister tell us, other than the drug patent legislation which the federal government has brought forward—I have a good number of questions on that, and also on the American manpower, but other than these two issues, what were the other issues that came out of that report because I think there were a lot of recommendations from that report? I do not have the name. Is it Barer-Stoddart report? [interjection] Yes.

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I am going to have staff get copies of the communique that came out of the Banff meeting. It dealt almost solely and exclusively with adoption of the Barer-Stoddart report and the kind of action plan that we were going to implement nationally as provincial, territorial

Ministers of Health. So I will provide my honourable friend with that, and from that, he might want to ask for further details. We will try to get that within the next five minutes if we could.

You know, my honourable friend makes mention of what is happening with the Oregon Legislature. Do you know that the first time that issue came to my attention was, now as I think back on it, three years ago? That is how long, sort of, the public discussion process has been going on in Oregon around their initiatives to try and deal with their own health care challenge in the state of Oregon. It is after three years from the first proposal that was before the State Legislature and then moved to Washington for some kind of a sense of its compliance with Medicaid, medicare.

In Washington they are now to this kind of open public forum. It is a long process; it does not happen overnight. Sometimes I envy the Americans, their political system, because if you watch Congress, for instance—and I think the state Legislatures are basically the same—you will have a lack of political party affiliation and adherence to party line.

I mean, they are very much able to cross political party lines on any given issue and vote according to where they personally or their electorate wishes them to be on any given issue. That is a bit of an advantage that they have. It might be one of the few ones they have in the U.S. Congressional system versus our parliamentary one.

But if my honourable friend wanted to pose some other questions, we will have that statement communique from the Banff ministers' meeting very shortly.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, one of the costs in the health care is the cost for Pharmacare and under the drug pharmacy program we have in Manitoba. We spend about \$58 million or \$57 million, and many constituents—when I say many, their number is quite large—have a concern of why we continue to pay a huge amount of money for prescription drugs and, in some cases, we are bound for 10 or 15 years. You know many individuals feel that it is unfair to give a specific company such a long protection.

* (1450)

Even though they have done the research and they have done everything possible to bring that product, is the research worth that much that you have to keep on paying for that long? That part of

the \$58 million, and other millions of dollars, are spent from the patients' pockets also. So they are concerned.

I want to know then whether the minister has formally communicated with the Minister of Health at the federal level and expressed their concern that this 10- or 15-year protection is too long.

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, exactly the issue my honourable friend brings up was the one that was discussed at some length in Banff with Mr. Bouchard.

I tell my friend, without equivocation, that I have very strong feelings that our current system, unique in the world as it is, is an appropriate system to protect intellectual property, as required under world patent laws, but it also offers to Canada a unique opportunity. I may take a few minutes to explain this so that my honourable friend knows where I am coming from.

Canada is not a home to any of the multinational original manufacturers or patent medicine, proprietary medicine, manufacturers. I am not trying to be negative on Canada, but with 25-million people and without basic infrastructure, I think that we will probably not have a Canadian-made name-brand manufacturer under the world patent protection laws. We may well have, if we left in place the changes to the patent medicine laws that come in, an extension of proprietary right, in the 1986 legislation, I guess, Bill C-22 at any rate. I do not believe, from a national policy standpoint, that we need to change that current provision of patent protection.

In that regard, I have stated my disagreement, and this government's disagreement, with those changes in the patent law that the federal government is attaching to the GATT negotiations. I do that because I think our current system is working.

It is not as if anyone who, after seven years, commences the manufacture of a formulary drug, a generic drug, without compensation towards the original patent holder. There are always proprietary rights which are paid to the patent holder. So it is not as if we have got an imagery of people operating in a garage in the back lot of their homes mixing up these drugs in a bathtub. That is the sort of impression that is left of the generic manufacturers, that they are really not very sophisticated.

Well, I want to tell you, I took the opportunity—and I think that this company is typical of Canadian generic manufacturers—I took the opportunity to spend some time with the APOTEX people in their Toronto facility. I am no scholar or knowledgeable person of scientific process, but I have some sense of understanding. That is a very, very, very sophisticated, state of the art, high intellectual property industry that APOTEX operates as a generic manufacturer.

So I believe that we are not hurting the international market on pharmaceutical products by having our patent laws unique in Canada. I believe that we are offering to the APOTEXes, the Novas, the Novopharms, and other generic manufacturers, an opportunity to quite possibly create an original research company in pharmaceutical properties through the building blocks of the generic manufacturing process. My concern with the change in the patent laws is that we may well curtail that and only be a country which has an open investment policy to the current existing group of multinational pharmaceutical manufacturers. My objection to that is parochial. I will admit it that I am very parochial about this because I know that if we have a changed patent law and an extended patent protection and that our multinational original drug manufacturers make investment commitments in Canada, I will tell you straight out where the majority of them will be. They will be in Montreal and in southern Ontario.

Again, national policy will be policy that is good for the golden triangle. The Prairies, B.C., the Maritimes and Atlantic Canada will be forgotten, and I cannot view that as national policy. I made that point very directly and, I hope, very succinctly to the federal minister in Banff, because we have a significant investment coming to Manitoba in Apotex, some \$50-plus million. They are committed to that.

There were some questions around the change in patent laws as to what it might do, but it will have no effect on this investment. Why should we not be able to use the research community we have, the excellent university medical programs, the research that many of our private foundations and government itself support? Why should we not be able to harness our talent in the intellectual field that we have in Manitoba to advance that type of industry in Manitoba?

I do not see an advantage to Manitoba in the change of this patent law. I have made that case, and the government continues to make that case. I do not know whether we are going to be successful, quite frankly, because there are other agendas that I do not have either the knowledge or maybe even the ability to understand when it comes to the GATT negotiations as a package. Maybe there are achievables. Like, any time you are at a negotiating table, a little give here maybe means a take there. I know that the GATT trade talks—when I put on my other hat, my private hat as an agricultural producer, as a farmer in the province of Manitoba, I know we need some resolution at GATT before our industry dies in western Canada. I mean, it is just that clear and simple.

So I do not understand the drive and the complexities at GATT and how the extension of the patent laws fits, but I tell my honourable friend that I made a case, in more detail but along the lines that I have shared with them this afternoon, in Banff, with the federal minister, around the proposed changes to our patent act.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, it is really unfair and unfortunate that millions of dollars are going out of each and every province and only a specific population of the country is benefiting from some of the research money these companies are spending. It is not one product that they have to sell in Ontario or in Montreal; they are taking per capita the same amount of money from our provinces also. So our taxpayer money is going somewhere else. That is the question; many people are raising it. They know more about the drug prices and how much they can buy a generic drug for and how much money can be saved. That is a very serious question.

I do not know whether the minister has the numbers there, how much money they are spending on research and development out of the fund these patent companies are supposed to pay to the federal government in return for this law which has given them a 10- or 15-year protection. I think the government of Manitoba should have a say because ultimately it is our tax dollar they are taking away. If they are not creating jobs in return and not developing what we have in Manitoba, giving our researchers and specifically our medical school—this is the second medical school in North America with the highest quality of research and post-graduate education. That was done by an

independent study. That was last year when the study came out. The province which has given the Rh program—millions and millions of children in the world they have saved. They have done a lot of good research.

* (1500)

Those people, if given the right opportunity, will be able to develop a lot of good things for our province. So I think that is a very unfair practice, but we understand that one province really cannot do much, but at least, I think, as long as people would know that the government is speaking on their behalf, because they do not know that. They think that the government is sitting back and taking it and that may or may not be true, but that is what the public perception is. Because not only when they go to a doctor is the doctor's fee free—I should not say "free," it is the taxpayers' money paid—but the money they spend on Pharmacare, that is a large amount of money and if even after they send their receipts back to the government, then after 80 percent deductions, there is still a lot of money going out from their pockets.

If they do not have private insurance, it is costing a patient, who is a diabetic or a patient with osteoarthritis, or a patient with a chronic disease, a lot of money, and some patients are spending \$80 or \$90 per month, probably more than that. So it is very painful for them to see that their tax dollars, somebody else sitting either in New York or somebody in Europe taking the money away, or in Toronto or Montreal taking the advantage of our people for so long. It is very, very unfortunate.

So we are very glad that the minister has a good understanding of the issue and he has raised the issue, but the public should be communicated with and they should be told that this is a serious problem. Because this is something going directly from their pocket on a day-to-day basis. It is not the general tax revenue, it is their own money also involved from their savings, especially the seniors and people with a chronic illness and chronic debilitating diseases.

So we were not very pleased when we saw the drug patent legislation was extended and the notion is that the larger company, the multinational companies had done a good job for the federal government in 1988 and '84 elections, and what the donations are, what other things were given to the federal party, I do not have the number, but there is something wrong there definitely.

I mean these issues do not affect us in the delivery of services, but they do affect the pockets of Manitobans. The average Manitoban is very much in pain where they have to pay more than what they should be. So I just want to express to the minister that this is a concern to us.

Mr. Orchard: Well, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, it is a concern to us. I cannot answer my honourable friend's questions about what sort of conditions might be around a further extension beyond C-22 on patent protection in Canada, because at least as I sit here I am not aware of any details we have received.

Let me tell my honourable friend though that—again, this is a difficult sort of a number to come around, because I have to rely on information that is given to me, but apparently with Bill C-22, the Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Association of Canada, the member companies, they make the case, and I have never seen anything but confirmation of the statement they have made, that they have exceeded their commitment in terms of research in Canada, No. 1. They had a certain percentage commitment that they were going to increase by annually with the passage of Bill C-22. I believe they have achieved that.

The question then becomes in terms of the distribution of those dollars. I have made the case directly to PMAC. Back, well, I guess about three years ago, that in making their decisions, they must consider provinces outside of the golden triangle. If they limit their research, they make exactly—like, I made the case my honourable friend has made—that if they are going to have credibility in terms of asking legislators and, hence, the taxpayers to pay more money, then they have to demonstrate that, okay—if this is a needed legislative change in order to assure that we have pharmaceuticals available to us in Canada that can help alleviate costs by maintaining people on an out-patient basis, any number of basically miraculous cures that can come from pharmaceuticals.

If we are to be expected, as Canadians across the length and breadth of the country, to invest our dollars, either tax or direct in the purchase of those, hence, the development of them, then all Canadians must feel as if they are part of the research and the investment made by the pharmaceutical companies.

They, in return, many of the companies—we have met with them in Manitoba, we have ongoing

discussions with them—make the case that they have increased and exceeded again in Manitoba's perspective their commitment to research.

On some areas we agree to disagree because some of the research was an enhancement to ongoing research at the time C-22 was passed. We are still actively pursuing a number of those companies in terms of coming to Manitoba with the kind of multimillion-dollar investments that have recently been announced in Mississauga by the Glaxo Corporation, et cetera.

We believe we have the investment environment, and certainly we have the brain power in Manitoba, our research community, university, medical school, et cetera. We do not believe in any way, shape or form that we should take a back seat to a Mississauga or an Ottawa or a Montreal in terms of offering multinationals the opportunity for major brick and mortar investment.

Apotex, as an investing company, is probably as good a business analyst as you are going to run into, and they chose the benefits of Manitoba from a number of standpoints, all of which I have mentioned, but emphasis on the intellectual capacity of our research community and certainly the policy that government has of trying to encourage that kind of major investment and employment in Manitoba because, if they make a profit by being in Manitoba, we all profit by being here, so we have welcomed them.

I will close. Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I want to distribute the communique that came out of Banff. Do you know what? I am just looking at this. This is the press release communique. This is part of it, but I believe there is a second attachment, which outlines six or seven points, that was also attached. Here, I think this is it. Yes, and I have these as well, very good.

There are the two, the strategic directions for Canadian management physicians, basically these are the agreed-upon points emanating from the Barer-Stoddart report. For instance, in September 1991 we accepted the Barer-Stoddart report. We instructed our deputies to have the ability to report by the end of December. Our January 28 meeting was when they reported with the action plan that was agreed to by the Ministers of Health.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, can the minister tell us now the issue in terms of the reduction of the medical students training in Manitoba by 10 percent? That is what the

recommendation was for next year. Now, on what basis was that decision made in terms of Manitoba? Have they taken into consideration the number of medical schools across this nation per capita, the number of graduates, and where does Manitoba fall in that ratio?

Mr. Orchard: Yes, we did. Manitoba—and I am going to have to go by memory here—and I believe Alberta and Ontario were asked to be part of the reduction. To my memory B.C. was not a part, and I think Saskatchewan was not asked either, because they graduate for roughly the same population that we serve provincially. I think Saskatchewan is down below what we would be should we achieve the recommendations. Let me just see if I have it here.

Yes, B.C. has a current undergraduate enrollment of 121 and is not being asked to reduce any. Alberta, which has an undergraduate enrollment of 170, is being asked to reduce by 20, and that will still have them graduating more physicians in Alberta per capita than B.C. and Manitoba for that matter.

Saskatchewan currently has an undergraduate enrollment of 61, and they are not asked to reduce their numbers. Manitoba is currently at 71, and we are being asked to reduce by eight. [interjection] Seven? We are currently at 79? [interjection] Okay, fair enough. Then is Alberta currently at 190? Look, I have got that slightly wrong.

* (1510)

B.C. is currently at 121, it will remain there. Alberta is at 190—yes, I am looking at the wrong chart—they are at 190 and are being asked to go down to 170. Saskatchewan remains constant at 61. We are at 79 and are being asked to go down to 71. Ontario was at 611, being asked to reduce to 540, a reduction of 71. Quebec is currently at 553, is being asked to reduce by 58, going down to 495. The Maritimes, Atlantic Canada, are remaining constant at 140 with no impact on them.

So there are four provinces that in terms of their physician graduation numbers they place first. Quebec graduates the most, and secondly is Alberta and third is Manitoba with the restructuring.

Mr. Cheema: How was the decision reached? Because the Canadian medical school, the association of Canadian medical schools has come against the proposal. The Canadian Medical Association has come against the proposal, and

they are saying that this approach was done in a very hurried fashion to make sure that public attention is diverted from the real issues and go after the physicians. They say that if they will proceed with the 10 percent reduction number by year 2000 we could have a shortage, and then it will take us five years more to reach that level.

So can the minister tell us whether he had some other information than the organization and the medical schools who have raised very serious objection to this, and I also meant in Banff?

Mr. Orchard: Well, yes, first of all, let us go back on this issue and let us go right back to the Hall report. Now, I do not have my numbers perfectly in front of me, but if I am out, I know I have got my expert here who will correct me. The Hall report from 1964, thereabouts, indicated that Canadian medical schools should have a graduating capacity which would accommodate a growth in population which would have the current Canadian population at approximately 36 million. We have been graduating physicians on that target with few exceptions. We have made some reductions in Manitoba over the past, in '86 there was a reduction of five of six slots I think, but if I err on the number it is not deliberate, it is just simply not having the information directly at hand.

But, basically, if you want to look at the national scene, we are graduating physicians as if we had a population of 36 million and we are at somewhere in the neighbourhood of 25 million. Now, for a decade, the Conference of Ministers of Health—I remember when Bud Sherman was there, I mean they wrestled with the issue. We have had a standing committee on manpower resources—I do not know the exact name of it, but physician human resources for over a decade. Not that I want to discredit the efforts of the committee, but as happens sometimes with committees that developed a life of its own, and the end product was not fast coming to give us some direction as ministers.

With, I think it is fair to say, some frustration on the inability to take national action, the Conference of Ministers adopted a recommendation from their deputies that we engage Barer and Stoddart to do a report which they completed in 1991. We accepted in the fall of 1991 at the ministers' conference I hosted in Winnipeg, and from that we developed our action plan. Yes, we have taken quick action in terms of bringing about the

recommendation because we have been dancing on the head of a pin for 10 years in terms of dealing with physician supply issues.

I am constantly under pressure as the Manitoba Minister of Health, as is Saskatchewan, in terms of our waiver of examination for foreign-trained medical graduates. I have to sign those or else I am without a physician in many communities in rural and northern Manitoba.

The B.C.'s, Ontario's, make the case—stopped doing it because we end up inheriting a number of those doctors after they have received their citizenship papers, and they have put in their two years. I agree that is a problem from them in some cases. I have also challenged our university in Manitoba to develop the made-in-Manitoba solution. I have to say that we are not there yet, but we are significantly advanced compared to what we were four years ago with the Dauphin residency program for family practitioners and initiatives to try and graduate physicians who will practise in rural and northern Manitoba.

The downsizing effort at the same time is a national effort. It is not picking on our school of medicine and singling it out. The colleges of medicine and their association, yes, they do not agree with this. They would not agree with it, I would suspect with all due respect, if it was announced five years ago with an implementation plan to start next fall. They would still have the same kind of objections. But the reality is that we have one of the lowest physician-to-patient ratios, or patient-to-physician ratios, I guess it is, in the world. It is going lower and lower every single year, and we have got a maldistribution problem.

The Barer-Stoddart report, although it received its national attention from the standpoint of the reductions as I have gone through on the medical school enrollment, made one tremendous amount of other very good recommendations that the Ministers of Health acceded to and are trying to work towards. Some of them we discussed last week with protocols. We are trying to develop some national protocols around some of our high-tech procedures. We are trying to establish some sense around the method of compensation to physicians because clearly the fee-for-service method of today may well be inappropriate in a lot of circumstances. That is a very complex issue to start to come around because you are going to meet with resistance like you would not believe, because you are talking

directly a potential impact on the income of a very valued professional group.

The Barer-Stoddart report give us what I believe—and I said it when I received it in September of last year and we made it public—probably one of the very best agendas for action that any conference of ministers has ever received. Not without controversy, I will fully admit that. I mean, already we are lined up against, if you will, ministers and governments against all the various professional associations representing medicine, but bear in mind that the same sort of dynamics that my honourable friend has said so often around changing the health care system and that that change process does not belong to any political party, neither does it belong to any professional group delivering health care.

We are all part of needed change, and the adjustments are not going to be without impact, personally and professionally, to some degree or another. The alternative of carrying on in the existing method of funding and planning and policy and delivery will not lead to a health care system that is able to serve the needs of Canadians, five years or 10 years out.

We recognize as ministers the difficult task, but I have to say that on this issue, ministers of all political persuasion left that conference knowing that it was the right thing to do and the right time to undertake it. I think left with a certain resolve, we realized we were going to run into some pretty tough slugging but that the goal was just too important to achieve, and the blueprint as presented by Barer and Stoddart too valuable a research tool which dealt with the kind of issues my honourable friend has mentioned, i.e., that the proposal that the training colleges, medical colleges, that there is going to be a shortage at year 2000. We do not see that. I mean we would be very direct. We do not see that and neither did Barer and Stoddart see that.

We think that a substantial amount of background information and research has gone in to make recommendations which are reasonable for our planning process today.

* (1520)

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, that was a very detailed and very informative answer. It is true that in 1966, Mr. Justice Hall, he based his figure on a 36-million population, and that was one of the reasons why the numbers were put in such a way that it would meet the need by now. Also then, there

was no really direct relationship made with the numbers and with the foreign medical graduates also. Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Alberta and other places are good examples of how things have been happening.

That is why, when I raised the issue two years ago, that was what was happening in Manitoba, that people will come and in six months get a license. I am a foreign-trained physician too; that is not the issue here. It is that you have to have a commitment somewhere. If you are not going to have a commitment and just go from year to year some place else and continue to climb the ladder and basically to take taxpayers' money, that is unfair. I think I will talk about that issue at a later stage. But the numbers were based on a 36-million population. I am sure the minister would have a discussion with the college of medicine here to come up with the right numbers.

I would like to point out one thing which I came across. I was doing reading on this whole issue. If you look around the world, whether you look in the Third World or second world or first world, whatever you want to call them—I do not call them any worlds anymore because I think things are changing economically so fast. We are just going to have a single world pretty soon. The economic powers are coming; you will not believe how they are coming up after the cold war. So the issue here is, the basic question was raised: What is the exact number of medical doctors, either physicians or health care providers?

Then the answer is, they are saying: Well, it depends upon the socioeconomic status of a society and what the society can afford, and depending upon the indicators of health status, it changes. The number, whether it was 1:560 or 1:450, is simply immaterial anymore. It just depends upon what we have, for example, in Manitoba or in Canada. That is why I think probably, in the long run, thinking may change eventually because the flow of health care providers and the technology is going to change significantly. We will still have to wait a few years to come.

That was the reason that I wanted to ask the question, so that when people ask us in the medical profession, they should have a clear idea of the other side of the story, that the numbers are going to go seven or eight down depending upon our per capita and we are not punished compared to the rest of the country. That is the No. 1 issue. Second is,

our population base is not growing as fast as we would anticipate. Third, we still have some areas where foreign-trained physicians are still coming. Some of them will end up landing here now because certain regulations are going to change.

So, I think, those things taken into account, if proper explanation is provided to the interested groups, I think a decision can be reached. I just want information. We have no particular position on that because it is so variable. I mean, we cannot tell the 72 students on the waiting list: You were not given a position because the numbers were cut. It is just a matter of decision making and taking a stand and getting a right explanation out. That is the issue here, whether they would know that for 1.13 million people, 70 graduates are enough.

Then the second question would come: What is going to be the impact of the decrease in numbers in postgraduate training, specifically in some of the programs which are already under the microscope and had some difficulty during the last review by the Royal College? That will have the same impact probably across this nation, so I am not sure whether that issue is going to be directly related to the number of graduates we have in Manitoba.

I want to go to the next area of questioning, but if the member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylycia-Leis) wanted to ask questions on the same issue, go ahead. [interjection]

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I just wanted to say the impact on the postgraduate training programs, that is again going to be very variable. It depends upon many factors, so I really cannot make any suggestions and cannot really have many questions on that area because it depends upon a number of factors.

Mr. Orchard: I want to then take this opportunity to bounce a concept off my honourable friend because again there is getting to be a growing—well, maybe I am using the wrong terminology. There are a number of observers who are saying that, for a province of one million people, we cannot be all things in terms of our medical school and offer a number of specialty-subspecialty postgraduate training programs.

There are those who are suggesting that we should utilize the opportunity right now of co-operation, for instance, with Saskatchewan, or Saskatchewan and Alberta, to build on strengths in our respective faculties if you can achieve where our strength is, if you can achieve agreement among

Saskatchewan and Manitoba, or Saskatchewan-Alberta-Manitoba, as to what our faculty strengths are, build on them and really serve the training needs of Saskatchewan and Manitoba and vice versa.

What is bringing this to the discussion point is that currently in Manitoba we offer almost 45 specialist-subspecialist training programs; for roughly the same population as Manitoba, Saskatchewan, we understand, is somewhere in the neighbourhood of 26 or thereabouts.

I think a case can be made that maybe Saskatchewan and Manitoba ought to consider joining forces in terms of our subspecialty-specialty postgraduate training programs because we have as few as one or two students in some of ours. The addition of a student in Manitoba is much more cost effective if that student comes from Saskatchewan, rather than the creation of that specialty in Saskatchewan.

The cost of creating the specialty, of underpinning it with the technology that is often needed, is unaffordable province by province, but affordable if we can find the will to combine forces. But, boy, I will tell you, I broached this as a discussion point, and I have had from people who make a lot of good suggestions to Manitoba the concern that, gee whiz, can we really give up something in Manitoba?

Put in that context, it almost makes you wonder whether you can ever resolve anything through co-operation with other provinces. I tell you, looking at it as detached as I can be, away from the direct connection to the people involved in the training program, the investment of time in creating that program.

If I can detach myself and simply try to put myself in the perspective of trying to make a decision which is effective for the taxpayer, as well as for the student requiring the training, I think there is a great deal of opportunity for co-operation between Manitoba, Saskatoon, and Alberta in terms of Edmonton and Calgary.

I think we can build ourselves substantial centres of excellence in each of the respective cities without compromise, but, in fact, with a great deal of enhanced ability on the Prairies if we were to work co-operatively together. But, you know, I am no Pollyanna, I guess, is what the Minister of Health from Ontario once said when she was facing some of the real decisions. I am not a Pollyanna either, and I recognize that we have difficulty getting us

around the issues in Manitoba when we cross even departmental jurisdictions, let alone approaching physician training and specialty and subspecialty training and trying to do a prairie-province approach.

But I will make a prediction that five years, 10 years from now, it will be happening, and it will be to the extreme benefit of graduate students, the patients they serve, and to Western Canada in general, if we can get our minds around it.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I knowingly avoided that kind of response, because I did not want the medical establishment to make my life miserable in the long run. So I thought that probably the minister should put those things in, the remarks, and say that it is going to happen. The consolidation of some of the training programs has to take place eventually. It is just a matter of time. I was having some difficulty putting those clearly on the record, but I think now I could do it.

I think the next question, which was not properly addressed in the minister's conference, was that everybody was talking about the physician maldistribution, and they were running away from the responsibility because of the legal rights and justifying them with the rights of the independent college bodies to license them. I think those things—and especially I was reading from New Brunswick—going to come of it, the numbers or, say, capping of services, it is all the same thing, trying to solve the issue of maldistribution.

* (1530)

I think that issue has to be addressed, because it is not the numbers in Manitoba, it is the way the physicians are practising medicine. I think, there, the minister has to take a leadership role, and we hope sincerely he has that as a major part of his reform package as far as fee schedules are concerned with MMA, and also to explain to the people of Manitoba how they are going to do it.

I mean you do not want to stick somebody to practising medicine or the profession, but we have to differentiate in the public mind that the fee-for-service is a publicly funded system. It is not a privately funded system.

When you have a fee-for-service publicly funded system, the government should have the same. How they are going to do it, whether they are going to do it region-wise or start a pilot project in one area, something has to come up and I do not have all the suggestions.

Some of them I may have at the back of my mind, but I am going to wait till things really come to the forefront, and how we should be tackling the situation because there has to be changes. There is no way that you can continue to have the number of physicians the way we have it now.

It is not a question of their own salary, which is not a major component, it is everything else. Once you put a physician into a practice and the services are used in terms of lab, X-ray, social services, family services, all those services are used in that respect so one physician may end up costing \$400,000, \$500,000, not in direct costs but in all the indirect costs.

I think, there, the issue is going to come where the government has to clearly tell people that this is what we can afford, these are the numbers or these are the total global budgets you have to give to them. I think those issues are very, very crucial and have to be discussed.

I would rather wait for the Manitoba Health Services Commission to come, and I want to raise very special issues in terms of the policies of providing services by the medical practitioners.

A lot of people are raising questions: do we have any protocols seeing patients, because we do not want to punish physicians when we do not have any special guidelines, because if they are performing according to their knowledge, and if they are not protected by the law, they will continue to provide those services and continue to do those tests.

There has to be specific protocols that those health care providers will be protected. There has to be protocols to refer a patient. There has to be protocols to do all the other lab and other services, because that will curtail the cost within no time. You will see the impact right away.

I want the minister to look into those issues. I am just giving him enough advance notice. I think those are very serious issues and whether that is going to be part of the reform package with the fee schedule because we have to realize it and face it, and we should know it.

The physicians and some of the other health care providers are the gatekeepers of the system. You cannot have reform without having some kind of an arrangement at the major doorway, otherwise it will not function. I think it is going to be very, very difficult to see and a very difficult task to go off to a major establishment. That is why I think the minister should go to the public and say, this is what we have,

and this is what we would like you to do. How do you like to spend your money?

I think then the issue of maldistribution, the issue of physician shortage, everything will fall into place. I am sure once my colleagues in the MMA read all those comments, they will find me quite radical, but I think I have my hat here as a public servant and I have no hesitation of putting those things on the record.

I would like to know from the minister why the issue of physician maldistribution was not discussed in greater length or they did not come up with the right conclusions at the Banff meeting.

Mr. Orchard: I guess I will take the easy way out. We did not have time to get around to that and not every province is so afflicted as, for instance, some of the prairie provinces are, but I guess what we are trying to do is to establish the major national achievable, and where we had agreement across Canada, so that it would not look as if—let me put it to you this way—so that an individual minister could not fall victim to the accusation that this was his or her personal agenda, that this was a national agenda that we were taking on.

Now, on the distribution issue—I mean, I will tell you, I get frustrated with this one because, again, my honourable friends in the legal profession have more say in terms of how medicine is practised than government does. B.C. tried a billing number restriction option which apparently was found to be contravening the Charter of Rights.

I will tell my honourable friend, there is some discussion ongoing right now that that might have been successfully appealed. Now that tosses a little bit of a different light on it, so that there is a crack of light at the end of the tunnel in terms of whether there could be a legal remedy. I do not prefer the legal remedy, because the moment you set up a legal remedy you set up a whole opportunity for more and more court cases, more and more resources spent on legal fees and judicial process, and you do not end up solving the problem any quicker.

What we have tried to do on the distribution aspect of it is investigate a number of initiatives. I am concerned that we have a two-year agreement with a foreign-trained medical graduate. I have asked to find out why, and I have not got an answer back yet, we cannot make that five years. I mean, I do not think that people would object. My honourable friend said that: Why do you not make

it for longer? Well, I am trying to find out what is preventing us, whether it is something to do with the immigration laws, whether it is Charter of Rights, whatever, but if a contract is freely signed by an individual that they are going to practise in a given community for five years, I mean, so be it. We are trying to find out just why it is we are not doing that. Okay?

On the Standing Committee on the Medical Manpower side, we have put some pretty significant new resources into the family physician training program, where it has moved to Seven Oaks and then to Dauphin and then to other satellite communities. I can see a role for maybe one northern hospital and maybe another hospital in southern Manitoba operating the same kind of residency program potentially down the road. It looks as if that program is working.

We expanded the loans to undergraduate students in medicine, made them larger and made more of them, return for service again attached. Maybe we even have to look there at maybe a two-year-for-one-year-support return. I do not know. Again, those scholarships appear to be working. We have tried to focus our capital investment dollars in areas of Manitoba where community co-operation will see the use of that hospital with a full slate of surgical, obstetrical undertakings being available in the area.

There are some very significant successes. I say to my honourable friend, and I have to brag a little bit again, and I am going to do this and automatically the board of the hospital at Carman is going to come at me to cover their deficit when I make these positive comments about them, but they have a good physician group there. They have probably one of the best surgeons in Manitoba, and I do not say that offensively against other surgeons, but he is just very, very good, and the surgical load that they do in Carman for a hospital of 29 beds is phenomenal, really phenomenal.

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

I think when we analyze the cost effectiveness of that facility, we will find it to be one of the most cost effective in the province, so we know that appropriate capital investment outside of the city of Winnipeg will work in terms of recruitment, retention of experts, of good medical manpower and also will be able to bring more services home to rural and

northern Manitoba. So that is a thrust in the capital program.

* (1540)

Other programs involve the relief of physicians. It is no longer, I think, an accepted way of thinking that a single-practice physician be on call seven days a week, 24 hours a day. I mean, you have been through it. You know what it is like—and still do it. It is a very difficult sort of thing to do. In rural Manitoba—I will be very direct—our citizens of rural Manitoba often take advantage of our free system by making calls on single-physician practices at one, two, three in the morning because they think they have a problem, which in fact in retrospect often could have waited till the next morning. Then they wonder why they do not have a steady physician in some of these areas. Well, the person cannot stand the pace. I mean, it is an impossible agenda to be on.

So, where we have tried to come around that issue is to encourage community co-operation, relief on the weekend so that a physician from town A may cover for the physician in town B so that they have weekends off and that sort of thing where there are not sufficient numbers in a given community to warrant that kind of rotation.

The same thing applies to in-services and upgrading. I mean, in single practice and one- or two-physician practices it is almost impossible to do. We are trying to support those efforts through providing relief. The big emphasis has to be community co-operation.

Now New Brunswick—I have to share with my honourable friend something that dismayed me. I got talking to some people over the long weekend. There is a great deal of almost panic among some of our smaller boards in rural Manitoba, and it is now coming full circle with me because when I meet with them in rural Manitoba they ask me, one of the first questions is: Are the boards going to remain in place, or are we going to some regional superstructure? Well, I will tell you, this whole debate has taken almost a paranoia turn with a greater understanding than I have right now, as I said, with the New Brunswick proposal where they are creating regional boards. There is a great deal of concern and consternation and lack of understanding as to whether that is coming in Manitoba, not coming in Manitoba, and it just kind of dismayed me because we have never given any

indication that we are looking at a regional board concept.

We are looking at regional co-operation. We are looking at communities approaching government as one, two, three communities to bring out a given service. Individual communities by themselves may not be able to sustain a full-time caregiver of a given professional discipline. We are encouraging communities to look at joining together to make that resource available between several communities. To some that appears to be a threat to their local autonomy, but a greater threat to the local autonomy is just that.

If they stay absolutely blindered in that only the community they live in counts, the easiest thing government can do is just gradually say, well I am sorry, we cannot provide that, not consider opportunities to share a resource between communities which we can provide, and it will lead to the surest demise of that local autonomy that they will ever see. The wave of the '90s is going to be for communities to get together, understand the system-wide problem that all governments are challenged with, and work towards creative solutions co-operating amongst communities.

I tell you, I come from rural Manitoba and I know doggone well that is one of the hardest things to get rural citizens to do. Too long we have had our hockey teams, our baseball teams, our high school teams very, very diligently competing against the neighbouring towns, so that we do not have a natural propensity for co-operation on issues, but it is coming and it is coming very, very quickly. It will be nothing but good in the long haul as this co-operation matures and starts to present itself in terms of plans like the WISH project in western Manitoba in the Westman region.

I mean, these are opportunities for innovation in care delivery that cross community boundaries. As we are trying to reform the health care system crossing professional and institutional and community boundaries and departmental boundaries, we are asking communities throughout the length and breadth of Manitoba to get around the issue not as their community first and foremost and only for consideration, but rather their community as part of a group of communities that can work towards common goals and thereby get more resource, not less resource, for their citizens in the community.

Mr. Cheema: The minister gave a detailed answer again. I think some of the issues of the steps taken by the Standing Committee on Medical Manpower have been successful to some extent. There is no question about that.

I would ask him again. I request him to look into our proposal. Just make your own proposal. Put a refined idea on that if the department would like to do it, but there is no law restricting a person on a voluntary basis who wants to sign with a community for five years. It has been seen when physicians stay in a community for two or three years, they stay there, because it takes about six months to one year to build up your practice.

We have seen individuals leaving after six months. They get tax incentives. They write their exam, and they go to beautiful British Columbia or Ontario. That has been happening and that is why they are crying that you are not stopping them, but we do not take advantage of them. The situation is you are not forcing anyone. This is by their own voluntary aspect. The community participation can take place because they should go and visit those places.

We do not want them to say I did not know where Thompson was. Ask them to go and visit Thompson, meet the board, meet those individuals. The community should have a say in selecting individuals and then it will solve the problem in the long run, because there are only six to eight communities at any given time that are without a permanent physician, not many of them any more. There used to be about 20, but it has gone down from 20 to 15 and 12, now six to eight is an average.

We see some of the vacancies are coming up every month, but that can be solved. It will take only two years and that will take care of the problem for 10 years to come. There will not be many questions about the physician shortage in Manitoba, because there are not many communities where the numbers are not correct. There is a 1,000 or 1,200 population that can easily support two physicians. They have hospitals out there. Personal care homes are there.

If the cost sharing can take place, if there is some co-operative caring which is going to come eventually, because as the minister said, you cannot just continue to work 24 hours a day. Some people do because they have not decided which profession they want to go to. Just like me, I do not know whether to be a full-time politician or be a full-time medical doctor, so I will decide pretty soon.

I think it is worth exploring. If that idea can be improved upon, so be it, because I do not think there is anything wrong getting those individuals because you have those people here. You are training them anyway. You have four positions for the refuge program. You have two unfunded or three unfunded for each position for internship through clinical clerkship in the program and they will get training and they will go. If you get them to sign those papers and say, well, we are giving you on a condition attached to this.

They should be qualified; they should be competent. They must pass all the exams. Everything should be clear. We are not asking them to get anybody to put a knife on somebody without knowing where they are going. We are simply asking the most qualified people and they are, I mean, that without question. We can be very, very selective the way you want to be selective. It can be done.

So I would like the minister to look into the numbers that the people are here. It will send a good message that the government is really getting involved in the whole issue and the communities in the minister's own riding and other ridings will love it. I mean, they will have no problem for five years, eight years, 10 years.

The selection process is so crucial because you want somebody who is going to pass the exams also. We do not want somebody who is going to go through training for two years and not pass the exam, because the exams they have to pass are at the national level. So that thing must be taken into account and of course the language skills. There are programs for language skills where the physicians are involved.

There are physicians from specific countries. They are from all over the world and they have come here by choice, not by force. We have sent a few letters to the minister. I think some of them have met with the deputy minister or their credential committee, but the report which came through the Minister of Culture's office simply gives guidelines but does not solve the problem. This simply is putting the application process together, but not attacking the issue of how to solve it.

* (1550)

So I would like the minister to look into that issue and try to come up with their own policy which will really fit the need. I think they will send a good

message to the multicultural communities and the new Canadians. It will not cause you any harm.

If you look at the number of physicians practising outside Manitoba, they are practising from all over the world, and they practise from all faiths. They do not have a specific colour or creed or race—that is not the issue.

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, just to pick up on one thing that my honourable friend said. Communities do not sell themselves.

You might recall back three years ago, I guess, the city of Thompson was down I believe to six physicians or five physicians. It was viewed with a great deal of alarm because two of the mainstay physicians, for personal reasons, left on very short notice. I met with the board at Thompson. I happened to be up there very shortly, and I have always been impressed with Thompson in terms—sure, sure it is 450 miles or whatever the exact number is, from Winnipeg, but you want to talk about a community that has outdoor recreation, winter and summer, fishing, hunting, one of the best complexes for sports you will ever see. I mean, that diving pool and swimming pool in Thompson is absolutely phenomenal. Steady employment, pretty wealthy community in relative terms because it is a highly-skilled work force up there with Inco, and I said, look, you folks are not selling your strengths.

Well, everybody likes to be modest. It is the Canadian way. I mean, we do not like to brag about what we have. Their recruitment efforts, they brought some people up. They toured them the town. They literally wined and dined them to show them the advantages of Thompson. Now, I do not know what the current count is, but they were up to 29 physicians at one time, a year and a half ago, and those physicians are doing an excellent job intercepting and providing services to northerners in northern Manitoba and avoiding the use of our facilities in Winnipeg.

The city of Thompson and the citizens of Thompson sold their strengths, and they sold them very successfully. Every community in rural Manitoba has unique opportunities they can offer for lifestyle, amenities that are not available in the city, and we simply do not recognize it and sell it often enough.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, it was not a question, just a comment. I was making reference as an example that the many individuals,

when they come and they say, you know, I did not see the place and I did not know where I was going. So when the community participation is there from the beginning, then they will have no choice.

It is a good participation because people are already here, they are trained and they will do well, and Thompson was just an example, but not in terms of the quality of life. I think all the communities have a good quality of life. I have travelled to a lot of communities, and I really enjoy the hospitality and the warmth and the recognition they give to me personally when they visit the hospitals. I think it is very positive.

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Lels (St. Johns): Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, just on the question of physician supply and the rural situation, as well as the northern concerns, one of the reports that I am sure we referenced before in this committee, the research project done by Elizabeth Sweatman back in October of 1989, which did survey parts of Manitoba in terms of their concerns about recruitment and retention of physicians, clearly documents the frustration of rural communities at—in their words—being held hostage to a small group of human beings who hold enormous power and have such control over this whole area of work.

(Mr. Deputy Chairperson in the Chair)

That report does, I think, raise the whole question that the minister has touched on, of method of payment and organization of medical practice, and that is clearly a significant recommendation in the Barer-Stoddart report. It was an area that Ministers of Health agreed to review and further consider.

I am wondering what the policy of the Province of Manitoba is with respect to reorganization of medical practice, moving towards other methods of payment, or methods of payment other than fee-for-service. How many alternative methods of payment now exist in the province of Manitoba? What percentage of doctors are on salary? How many requests before the minister with respect to group practice for salary positions are there? How many have been approved? How many are outstanding, and what is Manitoba generally doing on its own with respect to this area and what leadership is showing in terms of the federal-provincial context?

Mr. Orchard: Well, basically there are three methods of payment that are utilized in Manitoba, fee-for-service being by far the most common, salaried and then sessional. Sessional is not

necessarily one that is used for permanent or quasi-permanent recruitment to any given area but rather to provide, in the majority, specialist services to northern and rural Manitoba.

Since we have come into office I have often been asked whether the expectation, I guess, may well be there that because we are Progressive Conservatives and free enterprisers that we only adhere to the fee-for-service model of compensation, and we have never had that sole adherence. We have always been open to communities making that decision as to what fits their recruitment patterns. We have some fairly notable areas that are entirely, I think, salaried physician in terms of their medical personnel.

We have some communities which are still operating as a blend of both salaried and fee-for-service, but the majority of communities in rural Manitoba are fee-for-service. We do not have a directive that we follow indicating a community should approach one or the other.

Some communities do not believe that the salaried physicians are necessarily where they want to go, so if that is the case they make we assist them in recruiting fee-for-service.

In terms of the salaried positions we have approved, I would not know how many salaried positions in the last few years, but a number of them in a number of different communities.

At MAUM the other day I ran into an interesting question from one of the communities there wanting to know whether we had a policy change around salaried versus fee-for-service. I indicated briefly and succinctly that we did not have, that either option was open, but there was some miscommunication with that particular community.

They are now in the process of developing their salaried physician proposal. They did have it apparently on hold because they thought it was no longer an accepted method of recruitment, but that is not the case.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: Is there a process in place for addressing this whole issue of organization of medical practice and method of payment. Is it in this branch? Is it tied up entirely in terms of the fee-for-service negotiations with the MMA? Is there a separate group looking at this issue? Is it on the table right now in terms of review as part of health care reform?

* (1600)

Mr. Orchard: I am going to have to ask to see whether we have current membership on the national committee on manpower. I think that we are off it for the time being, but I am not sure of that.

Several processes in place: Work with Standing Committee on Medical Manpower in terms of working with communities pursuing both options.

Work with the MMA in terms of trying to get around the issue of fee schedule reform. That addresses the fee schedule side of it, but it also allows the whole debate on compensation to become one that is not narrowed to the negotiation side. I mean, it approaches it from, I think, a much more open way, and within the ministry we have no specific group that is mandated to work exclusively on that, but in terms of participation with the provincial jurisdiction, the ministry is our former research branch and is doing any work that we are doing.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, is the whole issue of medical practice and remuneration of physicians, a key part of this government's health care reform, so-called health care reform agenda, or where does it fit in terms of all the different areas under review and consideration?

Mr. Orchard: Well, I guess the schedule reform has been an issue that we have put some importance on in advance of the reform process that we are embarking upon because we have had the issue of fee schedule reform as an integral part of contract negotiations with the MMA since fall, or well, late 1988.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: On another area that was addressed over the last hour, the federal-provincial activity, I am wondering if the minister now knows the dates for the upcoming joint meeting of provincial Health and Finance ministers.

(Mr. Jack Reimer, Acting Deputy Chairperson, in the Chair)

Mr. Orchard: No, I do not think we have got final dates around that meeting yet.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: Could the minister indicate what discussions have begun in terms of the agenda, what the focus of the meeting will be, who is taking the lead and what role Manitoba will play in setting the agenda?

Mr. Orchard: Well, I think that the normal role, like my deputy is chairing—no he is not chairing the deputy ministers this year, is he? No, Newfoundland is, Newfoundland chairs.

The normal process of developing agendas for conferences is issues brought up by each province, and prioritized at essentially an officials' conference call. This one, given that we are involving finance ministers, is not going to take the same kind of necessarily agenda development. The agenda is going to be fairly narrow, because as I understand it, in terms of how do we get around the issue of maintaining the health care system in Canada?

I think, if I can be so presumptuous as to indicate the approach I am going to take, I am going to try and bring a reinforced message, that Ministers of Health put out in a communique in September of last year at the meeting I hosted, emphasis on the need for the system to change, the need to underpin that change with as much scientific research and knowledge around policy and process as one can possibly put to it, and an approach of co-operation where we more openly share.

Because we do share a lot right now interprovincially in terms of what we are doing, province by province, to come to grips with the financing and the delivery of health care, but to take the politics out of the process because as I indicated to the panel on Sunday night, the National panel on CBC, the issue now is deemed to be worthy of pursuit by all provinces because some tough decisions happen to be emanating from provinces governed by the New Democrats, particularly Saskatchewan. I think, without question, the rumors, now whether the Saskatchewan government follows up and does reintroduce the premiums in Saskatchewan or not, I am not even wanting to speculate on that because that is a decision that they will make given their own needs and circumstances. But just the fact that they are considering premiums has put medicare on the national debate because New Democrats from opposition for years have pummelled Conservative and Liberal governments for wanting to destroy medicare and health care and wanting to dismantle the system. There has been this accusation of neoconservative agendas by outside observers and reinforced by New Democrats in opposition.

All of a sudden we have got three New Democratic parties governing major provinces, and they are making tougher decisions than we are in Manitoba. Tougher decisions are being made in some of the other provinces, and all of a sudden it is not a philosophical debate, it is not a neoconservative agenda, it is a problem that we had

better get our minds around because all of a sudden New Democrats, particularly New Democrats in Saskatchewan where they accredit the birthplace of Canada's medicare system, are talking some pretty tough medicine.

I am not here to comment positively or negatively on Saskatchewan's circumstance, I am just simply saying that that is the real world. That is the real world of governing today, and I am going to go to the meeting trying to foster a nonpartisan type of co-operation to come around the issue of how we preserve and contain costs within a very, very good health care system and how we do the right things for the right people at the right time.

Those are fundamentals that all of us have ideas around, some of them successful, some of them not successful. I think there is a leadership role that provincial ministers can show in terms of the national debate right now and to prove why Canada deserves to be a nation that continues on as an entire nation.

So I am willing to offer the four years of experience that I have had at varying Health ministers' conferences and events and try to focus on realistic solutions and take the politics out of the discussion.

I am not going there to bash the federal government and bludgeon them and say, you should be providing more money; because if I was asked the question, where would you get the money from, I have to admit that I do not have any answers for the federal government that I could proffer. I am going to make the case to them that as we fundamentally reform the health care system, as we move from institution to community-based care, I think I can make a pretty logical case for some level of bridge funding. Whether that is agreed to by my provincial ministers, my provincial counterparts, I cannot answer that.

I cannot answer how favourably that will be received by the federal government, but I tell you, I think the federal government would be well advised to partner with Manitoba in terms of one area called our mental health reform and show how a properly bridge-funded mental health system moving from institution to community will work: (a) for the consumer who needs the services of the mental health community; (b) will serve the taxpayer exceedingly well.

* (1610)

I clearly see reform of the mental health system to be a win, win. Now, seeing that potential available in the way we can change positively our system of mental health delivery, I see equal and only easier achievable changes in our acute care system to move from institution to community and, again, to achieve those same kind of results for the consumer who is in need of services and the taxpayer. But we are not going to do it in face of all of the pressures and all of the status quo preservers that are out there and all the observers who, I say quite frankly, from time to time mutter and muse and natter about neoconservative agendas are not helping advance the debate one iota because it is a health care debate, not a political debate. So that is the kind of agenda that I am going to try and take to the Finance and Health ministers' conference.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: When the minister says that he will be pursuing the idea or proposal for bridge funding, does that mean that the minister has accepted the end of a role for the federal government in terms of direct financial involvement, and is therefore working to—and I am raising this in all seriousness because it is a new concept.

I hope the minister is not going to assume that there is some hidden agenda here when I ask this question. I think this notion of bridge funding is new, it is somewhat of a departure, and I am wondering what the basis of it is and if it means then that the minister is—that any thought of provincial ministers going forward with an effort to get the federal government reinvolved, if you will, in funding for health care or to assume a new role in national health policy, or to pursue a renegotiated transfer payment system.

I am wondering if the minister would care to elaborate a bit on that approach.

Mr. Orchard: Most of the above and not the latter would be the way I would answer that question.

The issue is that the federal government and again, I simply indicate to my honourable friend the process started under federal Liberals, was continued, and it does not matter whether you say it was worsened or advanced or whatever by the federal Conservatives. I will say to you straight out and without equivocation that if there was an Audrey McLaughlin government it would continue under that government because the federal government, if you want to be blunt about it, is in worse financial shape than most provincial governments. So that it is not a neoconservative agenda in terms of federal

provision of support to the provinces. It is a time of very, very difficult choices.

I am saying to the federal government, let us talk about the speculation around the demise of your contribution to health care, and let us talk about how the system can change with you as a partner at the table assisting the provinces in making the changes that I do not think any provinces are saying will not happen. If I can persuade the federal government to provide some enhanced level of funding to make the system more effective as we think it can be made, with a greater emphasis on community noninstitutional care, then I would welcome that partnership with the federal government, and at the same time, continue with taking their money as they provide it in both tax points and cash transfers to support the existing system.

I guess one might call that not going after them tooth and nail and demanding them to reinstate full funding and to never change the formula. Well, I guess I have to tell my honourable friend I do not see that realistically being in the cards. It was not realistically in the cards in '73-74-75 when the current arrangement was negotiated which gives to the federal government the flexibility to do exactly as they are doing without provincial consent or consultation. You know, I have reminded my honourable friend who three of the Premiers were who negotiated that arrangement. They were New Democrats in B.C., Saskatchewan and Manitoba. If there is anything that stays constant, it is change, and we are in very much a time of change.

I have made the argument to my honourable friend and I want her to simply consider it. If we are going to go to the federal government and maintain some intellectual credibility, would we do so if we simply said to them, stop this offloading of cost, or whatever you want to call it; stop the decrease in the increase of funding to the provinces to support health and higher education and simply reinstate the old funding formula.

Now if we do that, the natural question, if I were sitting in the federal government's shoes, that would be posed at me is, okay, can you tell us that you are spending effectively every dollar you get? You know what, I cannot answer that. No province can answer that. In fact, this is where ministers and Ms. Lankin in Ontario have said 25 to 30 percent is probably inappropriately spent. That may well be a similar figure in Manitoba.

Authors like Rachlis, and I have mentioned this before, have pointed out the ineffectiveness of our health care system and that it needs change. We cannot intellectually make the argument to the federal government that they have to put more money or reinstate all the old funding if we are not willing to make the commitment to them that we are willing to take substantive action in terms of managing the current budgets we get from the federal government.

* (1620)

That is why on September 18, 1991, the Ministers of Health at the meeting I chaired talked about fundamental considerations, principles of the Canadian health system. We reaffirmed as federal and provincial territorial governments our commitment to the preservation of these principles on assurance of adequate funding. We wanted and requested a federal-provincial territorial Minister of Health and Finance meeting to discuss ways to ensure its sustainability in both the health and fiscal context to provide the best and most viable health care system for all Canadians.

The third fundamental consideration that ministers agreed to in Winnipeg was effective management of the health care system. Provision of quality health care to Canadians depends on effective management of the health care system. Because the delivery of health care is a provincial-territorial responsibility, the provinces and territories are committed to provide effective management of the system.

I think we put some considerable thought behind this statement that came out of the Ministers of Health conference in Winnipeg in September of 1991. That is why we called it Towards a Renewed Health Care Partnership, and that is why we did not narrow the issue to the financial consideration only. We acknowledged the substantive role that we needed to provide direction around the reform process.

Then for provincial and territorial considerations, we talked about a national consensus for the development of health goals and objectives, incentives around the achievement of that goal and strategy to provide demonstration projects on alternative delivery systems, similar to what I am saying to my honourable friend now: commitment to quality assurance, total quality management; commitment around the health human resource planning and co-ordination as a lead-in to the

follow-up on Barer-Stoddart, for instance, and an assessment and procurement of equipment, pharmaceuticals and supplies.

I mean, this is an issue my honourable friend mentioned last week about where is the role of technology assessment. Well, we recognized that for a number of months, a number of years, I think it is fair to say, at the minister's level and in fact dealt with that issue last September in terms of talking about centralized assessment of new technologies. That would be a role that we asked the federal government to participate in.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: I appreciate what the minister is saying, and he said it many times before that he is not about to go to the federal government and make a loud noise and publicly criticize the federal government. I understand that, but I am dealing with a different matter here.

The minister is saying he is going to an upcoming meeting on health care with a position specifically, perhaps among other positions, to call for bridge funding. In my view there is a big difference between calling for bridge funding, which assumes and accepts and acknowledges the end of federal funding and therefore the end of a national role in health care and the end of a national system, versus saying, there must be a federal role, we need to have a national system, we want to preserve medicare so how can we accomplish that? Perhaps there are other ways through renegotiation of the transfer payment system, whatever.

I am just trying to get an understanding of which is it in the case of the Province of Manitoba. Is this government going to the upcoming meeting and any others on the assumption, or accepting, the federal removal from this whole policy area and asking for some assistance to make the transition? Or is this government going to this meeting and any other meetings and discussions to say, we must have the federal government involved, there must be a national system, how can we accomplish that?

Mr. Orchard: It is neither. It is both in terms of a fundamental consideration of the assurance of adequate funding. Let me read exactly what it says in here, and this was agreed to by the federal-provincial-territorial ministers: With these principles—those being the principles of the Canada health system—in mind, dialogue including federal-provincial-territorial ministers of Health and Finance will be enhanced in order to assure the future funding of our health care system.

That means a continued request for commitment by the federal government, in any person's language, to ensure its sustainability in both the health and fiscal context and to provide the best and most viable health care system for all Canadians.

In terms of provincial-territorial considerations, point No. 2, Incentives: The provincial-territorial ministers recommend a national strategy to support research into innovative and cost-effective ways of delivering high quality health care services across Canada. This strategy would provide for demonstration projects on alternative delivery systems so that an evaluation could be made of their service value and relative impact on costs. As well, it would support a national health goal strategy, a total quality management strategy, and studies to address cost drivers.

It is both. It is dialogue around the issue of assurance of adequate funding with the federal government at the table as well as incentives to—in my terminology, around my approach on incentives, is bridge funding because I think we are doing some of those very innovative things in Manitoba in terms of proposals which will see our system change from institutional preponderance to more community-based services.

Part and parcel of that is the full intention of this government to have full ability to analyze the effectiveness of that shift and how the individual involved in those changing service-delivery proposals is affected, how this health status is changed for better, for worse or not at all.

That is why we are engaged in discussions with the Winberg group in Dartmouth, because they have a considerable amount of knowledge around implementation of a post-stand during reform analysis process. That is why we are also engaged in discussions with the Centre on Aging at the University of Manitoba to do the same sort of studies in terms of outcome of a changing system. Rather than approaching it narrowly, as my honourable friend would maybe fear, we are approaching it from both ways.

I have not given up on the federal government in terms of their participation in funding. That is assurance of adequate funding.

I am also proposing, as we did as provincial-territorial ministers, participation by the federal government of changed delivery strategies. We think we can do that as well as any province because we have got all of the components in

Manitoba including the Centre for Health Policy to analyze the outcome of any changes.

We think we offer to the federal government the ideal environment to undertake change in the health care system and to understand how that change affects those requiring care, their health status and the taxpayer. You cannot get a better combination than what we can offer in Manitoba.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: I would love to pursue this matter at great length, but knowing how much time we have already spent on Health Estimates and how little time remains, I feel somewhat compelled to move on.

Let me ask one final question on this whole issue of federal-provincial relations. It pertains to the directive coming out of the First Ministers' meeting of March 25, I believe, of this spring, which according to at least the press reports directed Health ministers to initiate work applying some different principles, and those being sustainability, affordability, flexibility, responsiveness and effectiveness of the system. What work has begun in that regard? Can the minister give us a sense of what it means in terms of the original principles of the Canada Health Act?

* (1630)

Mr. Orchard: I think that probably we are into discussions I guess not dissimilar to discussions that were entered into in the early '70s, '73, '74, '75, because that led to a formula change in health care. Now, I cannot give you the dynamics around why those discussions took place, but clearly I do not think anybody is going into this round of discussions, nationally or provincially, with a closed mind.

I mean, we are wanting to be able to meet the dual goal of having both effective and affordable social programs. I do not think anybody has a monopoly on where those discussions might lead, but I can share with you, as I have sort of the direction that I want to see emphasized at it, but I think clearly there is a whole series of discussions around the health care system to try and understand how we can maintain and preserve what Canadians value, and I do not think there will be narrowed limits to that discussion. Quebec, if they were added, would very much be offering some innovative insight.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: Let me just move on, but in so doing indicate that we look forward to hearing details about the upcoming Health and Finance ministers' meeting which I had understood to be in

the middle of June, but would like to certainly be kept informed of developments pertaining to that meeting.

We have been jumping all over the place in this line because so many things fit under Evaluation and Audit Secretariat. One of the concerns we have touched on briefly has been the whole area of nursing education and staff mix. I think this is an area where there are a considerable number of different studies and reviews going on.

I am wondering if the minister could indicate if, first of all, the two studies that I have mentioned in the past that have reviewed the whole issue of nursing education, and specifically the question of licensed practical nursing, if those previous studies, the 1977 study and the 1985 study, provide any basis for the work going on now, or if in effect we are starting from scratch in this whole area.

Mr. Orchard: No doubt those studies will be useful background. I cannot answer directly for, for instance, the Red River Community College investigation into the licensed practical nurse, but I simply indicate to my honourable friend that within the ministry we have a working group with the association and the department.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: I understand as well that one of the working groups under the Urban Hospital Council is also looking at the question of staff mix, and I assume that there is some overlap between these two endeavours.

Mr. Orchard: At the risk of being corrected, I do not believe that is an issue at the Urban Hospital Council.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: Is the minister saying then that the working group on staff mix is pertaining to other staff in our health care system?

Mr. Orchard: I may stand to be corrected, but there was an issue that we were wanting to come to grips with. I do not even think we have established the working group on it, but it was on management levels within the acute care system.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: I am just referring to the minister's press package where he released a paper entitled Staff Mix Review Working Group, established on April 15, '91. I had assumed reading through that that there were some implications of that study in terms of nursing positions as well as other staff. However, the minister can get back to us at some point on that. This branch clearly plays some co-ordinating role in all these studies, and it

also oversees the work of the Ministerial Council on Nursing Education.

Could the minister indicate what that group is doing with respect to the whole question of the future and role of the licensed practical nurse?

Mr. Orchard: That group gave us an interim report on the Health Sciences Centre collaborative program and also St. Boniface's collaborative program. We accepted the Health Sciences Centre recommendation and have not accepted the St. Boniface recommendation. That group is not restructured to deal with the LPN issue.

We have a working group within the ministry and with the association that had certain issues that they were going to try to complete discussions around by the end of last month. I believe they achieved that. I have not, within my time commitment, had an opportunity to be brought up to speed as to the association's position post their meeting and post their work with the ministry.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: What is the current status of the Ministerial Council on Nursing Education?

Mr. Orchard: As I have indicated, they give us an interim report, and they have not met probably for the last several months. Trevor Anderson, who chaired the group, has resigned as chair of the group, and we have been contemplating whom we might ask to chair the working group as it comes around future issues.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: Could the minister tell us why Dr. Anderson resigned as chair?

Mr. Orchard: There was a whole series of reasons, part of which was an interim report which dealt with the two most immediate issues; and, that having been achieved, it was a very substantial time commitment that we asked him to voluntarily do.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: With respect to the council, is the minister indicating that a report has been provided to the government of its work to date and that it is reviewing its future work? The minister—I am just trying to get a clarification—uses the word "restructuring," and I do not know what that means. I am wondering if the minister could give us some clarification of that council, of which, I thought, one of its mandates was clearly to look at licensed practical nursing as well as other areas of nursing. I am just trying to figure out how it fits in with some of the other studies like the one undertaken now by the Association for Licensed Practical Nurses.

* (1640)

Mr. Orchard: The minister's Council on Nursing Education as first structured was to deal with the registered nursing issue. The membership on that group would not be the membership which would deal with the issue, should the council deal with the issue of LPN nursing education.

There would be a different membership that would be required and that was always the intention, not to use the same group of professionals to deal with the LPN nursing issue. I think my honourable friend would understand the reason why the LPN association have observed very candidly to me that there is a preponderance of registered nurses on the current council, and to consider their role in the nursing field and the education required, they believe they should have a preponderance of membership. We do not disagree with that, but we have not restructured the committee because we have had work ongoing within the ministry working directly with the association.

As I said, the schedule that I am on right now with Estimates and a number of other commitments has not allowed me the kind of flexibility that I would like to have because I would have liked to have had a meeting already with the LPN association to discuss events around their membership meeting back about three or four weeks ago.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: I appreciate what the minister is saying in terms of the whole process that was implemented with respect to reviewing the licensed practical nurse issue. I certainly understand their concerns with respect to representation. However, my understanding was that one of their concerns was that the ministerial Council on Nursing Education seldom met and that there was a great deal of confusion around its mandate and purpose, and I am wondering if that has been sorted out.

Notwithstanding the question of the separate study now undertaken with the Association of Licensed Practical Nurses, what is the current work of the council and where does the minister see it going in terms of future advice and direction for him and his department?

Mr. Orchard: Naturally there is going to be the potential for the accusation of not knowing what the purpose of any particular group is, if you so much as dare to ask another group or ask advice from somewhere else around the issue of staffing patterns, et cetera, but I guess I have to indicate to my honourable friend that we have tried to bring

together as much information as possible around the issue of nursing in Manitoba. That is why we, for instance, asked the managers of the system to indicate their current staffing patterns and what they project those patterns to be five years out. That is to try to give us yet another, we hope, good set of information around which the council can use, as they deem appropriate, that the ministry can use, that even facilities can use, MHO, in terms of their discussions.

The ministerial Council on Nursing Education you have to remember was structured by myself. It took longer to get up and running than I had hoped because it is a complex issue. I had, quite frankly, difficulty recruiting a chair because the difficulty of finding a chair who would bring to the table the perception of being neutral and not biased towards a BN, or biased towards an RN, or biased towards an LPN, or biased towards an RPN, or biased towards a nurses' aide, or biased towards doctors, or biased towards none of the above.

We had to try to find someone who could bring a neutral credibility to the issue, and Trevor Anderson did just that and worked successfully through an interim report recommendation.

You have to remember that the reason for trying to come around this issue was about a 10-year-old report that has not been reacted to by this government nor the previous government in terms of MARN's goal, and it is a national goal, that registered nurses have of BN entry to practise by the year 2000 and how that educational goal may well fit in the workplace.

We have the educational goal and its locus agreed to in terms of a collaborative program at the Health Sciences Centre, which accepted its first students last year. In terms of a policy of government, government has not endorsed BN entry to practise. Government has not said BNs are not appropriate, nor have we said that should be the only registered nurse that is available year 2000. I believe from anything I know of the system that it will be staffed by a mix of professional disciplines, as it is now. That will not change.

If a BN is a registered nursing goal, then where do other nursing and caregiving disciplines fit into the spectrum of caregivers that are going to be hired into the acute, long-term and community-based system? That, hopefully, will have some greater clarity with a return of the survey of the current employers of nursing in Manitoba.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: Just a couple more and then I will pass the mike over.

I appreciate the response of the minister in terms of the difficult nature of this whole area and the questions put before government with respect to entry point to the health care system and the competing interests among the nursing profession. However, I had understood that through a body such as the Council on Nursing Education that some of these issues could get sorted out. My sense is from the minister that the same sort of problems exist for government and that there has been little sorting out of these different interests and little progress made with respect to a mechanism for resolving different positions.

I do not know all this situation, but it would seem to me that given the number of studies, and I said this before, the number of reviews in different parts of the department or tied to the department, there would be some confusion and concern that it would make it difficult for a council to become functional on an effective basis in that context.

I would like to know how the minister is addressing my perception of the situation and ask him specifically, since he said the chair had resigned, is the minister saying there has been no change in status in terms of the ministerial Council on Nursing Education except for the fact that the chair has resigned?

Mr. Orchard: I think basically that is true.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: Would the minister consider responding to my perception of some of the issues around this whole policy area, that being the variety of studies, the competing reviews, the different bodies and groups that are looking at the issues, is that—and I have certainly heard this from others—real in terms of the situation? Is there any attempt to address that situation?

Mr. Orchard: I guess it is fair to say that government could always resolve these issues very easily by simply saying, yes, BN entry to practise is a policy of this government. Yes, the LPN will have a forever role in health care. Yes, the RPN will have a forever role in health care. Yes, the two-year diploma registered nurse will have a forever role in health care. The government cannot do that and, yet, the expectation of some is that government is going to lay their hands on and bless a given discipline. I mean, understand the role of government. Government provides overall policy,

and within our institutions we ask, within a budget, that our institutions deliver an appropriate level of care. In doing so, those managers of over a billion dollars of taxpayer money set the trained personnel requirements they need to achieve care delivery.

Now, I think it is a fair observation to make that the Council on Nursing Education focused on nursing education. It did not necessarily reflect accurately or completely the employers' perspective around who is going to deliver the care services in the respective institutions.

This thing came to a head—and I have gone through this time and time again with the LPN, the rumours around St. Boniface and the graduations and the layoffs. My honourable friend was at a press conference in which she pointed out this being a tremendous problem. Well, okay, why is it a problem? What is the dynamics around them? How many LPNs are needed in the system? Where are they working right now? What is their future? Should government make that decision or should the managers of the system be making that decision?

That was an issue that came up at the MNU debate, and when I indicated that managers make the hiring decisions in the hospitals and the long-term care institutions, I think it is fair to say that was met with some consternation by members in the audience and including the person debating the issue immediately to my left—my honourable friend nods her head in agreement with that last statement. But that is no different from what my honourable friend undertook as policy when they were in government, because governments, Ministers of Health do not hire staff in hospitals.

Ministers of Health do not dictate to hospitals: You must hire this person or this professional person. We allow that kind of flexibility under global budgeting to our health care managers. To say any different says that you want the Minister of Health to run each institution. Well, that is an interesting proposition.

* (1650)

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: I have just a quick comment before I do give up the mike once and for all this afternoon.

The minister misses the point I believe in terms of this ongoing debate and dialogue. What we have called for, what nurses have called for, what the Manitoba Association for Licensed Practical Nurses

has called for is a direction from the provincial government. I think that is a justifiable request, that there be some indication from government and from the Minister of Health about how they feel about a particular profession, what is their general approach to the appropriate mix and the entry points to practice, and once that broad framework is provided, when general direction is given, when a commitment is made that hospitals and other facilities then begin to manage within that framework, but the sense is now that there is a vacuum on that front, that the government is not providing that leadership and has not made a commitment, a public statement or even a commitment directly to the affected profession, that it believes in the licensed practical nurse and which then sends a signal to institutions who are looking at cutting either an education facility or staff directly employed in that profession.

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, I realize what my honourable friend is saying. I mean, I could have closed my eyes and listened to the president of the MALPN say exactly those same things. I reminded the president of the MALPN that a Minister of Health will value all professional caregivers in the health care system. I have said that, made no bones about it, but that is not enough, because what some people want is for a Minister of Health to go out and advocate for a particular professional discipline, and say they must be hired, they must be retained, they must be used in the system.

That may be a laudable goal from the individual's trained perspective, but it is not a goal that a Minister of Health in the past has acceded to or can accede to. I suggest that if on day one the Minister of Health, this hypothetical Minister of Health—let us use one of those rather than the real thing—said on Monday, you know, RPNs are absolutely essential to the system and should be hired right through the length and breadth of the system. On day two, you might have a call from the professional association of MARN saying, hey, what are we, chopped liver? Then on Wednesday, you might have a call from the MALPN saying, hey, are we a forgotten commodity, what happened to us?

A Minister of Health recognizes the contribution to the health care system of all of our trained professionals, but managers make the decision within their budgets as to what the appropriate mix of them will be to carry out the mandate of care

delivery. That is the way the system has worked now for probably 20 years. No Ministers of Health, predecessors of mine in either political party of recent history, have mandated the conscription, enrollment and utilization of any particular professional discipline, and very deliberately so, because that is a responsibility that we place with the managers of the health care system.

That is why the survey is important. That is why an understanding of the issue is important.

The LPNs make the case that some of the managers in the system are biased against them because they happen to be registered nurses. Whether that is right or wrong, I do not know. I suspect somewhere in between there is probably some accuracy, but if that is the roadblock, what is the matter with the direct course to the administrator and/or the board? It is open, it can be done, and influence their position in the workplace.

They make the case, up until the last month or so, not even the MNU ever protected them in terms of a layoff or a change in status in the workplace, but all of a sudden there was this interest in recent communication by MNU coincidental and prior to the meeting that the MALPNs held at their membership on Thursday four weeks ago.

There is a whole lot of dynamic and concern and worry in the workplace, but I have never favoured one trained discipline of nurse over another, and I will not do that because I do not believe it is my role.

I have indicated that RPNs are valuable, and I think very valuable in a reformed mental health system. I have said LPNs are valuable to our health care system. Diploma RNs and baccalaureate RNs are important. So are nurses' aides. So are physiotherapists, occupational therapists. So are psychologists, medical doctors, et cetera. But if one accedes to the demands of any particular professional group for where they want to be in the health care system, he will be unable to do it.

That in essence is what some of the associations were asking for, and I am neither in a position, nor do I think it appropriate, for me to indicate a preference for any professional discipline in the health care system.

Managers of our institutions will make the decisions as to who can appropriately deliver the level of care that we have mandated them to do, and we will make the hiring decisions and the staff mix decisions, et cetera.

Where government has a role is in trying to get the best indication of what the managers of the system believe that staff mix to be in the future, so that we can then understand what our future needs are going to be for trained disciplines, whether it be RPNs, LPNs, nurses' aides, diploma nurses or baccalaureate nurses, and from that attempt to structure appropriate capacity in our educational system so that we can take out the ups and downs and the roller coaster of surplus to shortage in nursing, because that has been a very cyclical professional discipline, from surplus to shortage in about a ten- to fifteen-year period of time.

That is why we have engaged all of our health care managers and facilities to tell us what they think their professional needs will be for care delivery five years out so that we can then begin to provide as good a direction and advice as we can to the education system to assure that the program capacity and the skills development is there for the care deliverer requirements that our institutions envision down the road.

Mr. Neil Gaudry (St. Boniface): Looking at the time, Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, I think I will wait until eight o'clock, because we are just one minute away from five o'clock.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: In that last remaining minute or so I am wondering if the minister would indicate whether or not there is a role for government in terms of outlining educational opportunities and playing a role in terms of ensuring educational opportunities are there to meet that mix that the minister talks about.

Mr. Orchard: I think that that is a role and that is where I have some concerns because, you might recall, about this time two years ago we undertook a recruitment advertising campaign with the professional associations to encourage more people to go into nursing. I was accosted, not accosted, but it was drawn to my attention by some individuals who took up that challenge and went into nursing because they saw an opportunity there, because really all the advice was that the union was saying that there were shortages, there were people leaving the province, that the recruitment efforts were approaching a crisis situation. You might recall that two years ago.

We bought in as government and financed an advertising campaign and now some of those students are pointing out that they do not see the career opportunities in nursing that allegedly were

there two years ago. We did that because we believed some of the pressure that was being put on. We did not have an accurate survey projecting us into the future. We hope to have that accurate survey at our disposal this year.

The Acting Deputy Chairperson (Mr. Reimer): Order. The time is now 5 p.m. and time for private members' hour. I am interrupting the proceedings of the committee. Committee of Supply will resume consideration at 8 p.m.

Call in the Speaker.

FAMILY SERVICES

Madam Chairperson (Louise Dacquay): Order, please. Will the Committee of Supply please come to order. This section of the Committee of Supply has been dealing with the Estimates for the Department of Family Services. We are on item 6.(b)(1), page 63.

Mr. John Plohman (Dauphin): I appreciate the opportunity to ask a few questions on these very important Estimates by my colleague. It involves a situation in my constituency. I would like to get this on the record because it is a serious matter and ask the minister to follow up on the concerns that are raised with him here today.

I have written to the minister about this case. It involves the apprehension of an infant child at birth from the parents. The mother has never had custody now over one year since the baby was born. In early 1991, a couple came to Dauphin. The woman was expecting a baby in very short order, and they were not able to find employment. They were relying on social assistance. However, none was forthcoming from the offices, and the expectant father picketed at the welfare offices in Dauphin. The baby was born shortly after, and the father allegedly attempted to remove the newborn infant from the hospital. He was unsuccessful in doing that.

The baby was then apprehended by Child and Family Services, where the baby has remained now for over a year in the custody of Child and Family Services or in the placement of a foster home. Since that time there have been numerous assessments, court appearances and thousands of dollars in legal fees spent on this case. The mother has been told that she must have nothing to do with the father, first of all, if she wants to have a chance of having her child back. When that condition is met, the father is no longer in the picture at all, she

is told she needs a parenting course. Then that is withdrawn, and she is told that she is an unfit mother. She has been told that she does not bond with the child, and her visiting hours with the child are moved around. In some cases, part of the time is missed by Family Services not having the baby there at the appointed time.

There are allegations of supposed independent assessments being done by relatives of the Child and Family Services staff—that kind of an allegation has been made to our office—allegations of the child being taken out of the province by foster parents, contrary to proper procedures. The mother has attended in my office on numerous occasions. I have had a meeting with the senior staff, the regional co-ordinator and the other senior staff involved, Kathy Hallick and Tom Carberry. They assured me that at the time they were not trying to keep Cheryl Machin, who is the mother of this baby, from having custody of her child but there were certain things that they had to do in the interest of the child in protecting the child, and if the conditions were met and she could assure them that there was no contact with the father, that she could provide a safe home separate from the father and if she took a parenting course that the baby would be returned.

This has not happened. This is now over a year since that baby was born and the mother has not had custody of that baby. Instead they have proceeded to put more roadblocks in her way along the way, waffling on the situation, changing their position, appealing in the courts.

The judge recently made a ruling calling for another independent assessment, for new eye glasses to be provided to the mother, because they said she did not have direct eye contact with the baby—just unbelievable some of the kinds of allegations that have been made against this mother. Now the minister's department is choosing to appeal this again.

Can the minister today tell us—and I have written to the minister on March 2 and I did not receive any definitive answers. He suggested, and I do not have that letter with me and I thank the minister for responding in that letter—but he did not answer specifically, more or less saying that the mother, Cheryl Machin, should work closely with the staff in Dauphin and so on.

This thing is an unbelievable nightmare for this mother. I believe from all of the information that my assistant has seen and that has been brought to my

attention that surely she deserves a chance to be a mother to this baby. She is being prevented from having that opportunity.

I want to ask the minister, if he has first of all made a personal investigation with his senior staff into how this situation has been handled in Dauphin, and is therefore satisfied himself and his senior staff that this has been handled properly, and that the staff in the area in Dauphin who are handling this case have followed all of the proper procedures in dealing with this case.

* (1430)

Hon. Harold Gilleshammer (Minister of Family Services): Madam Chairperson, this particular case is currently before the courts. In the involvement that our staff have had, uppermost in our mind always is to have the best interest of the child in mind. There are many issues that we cannot discuss in terms of specifics. I would offer to have my senior staff meet with the honourable member to go over some of the information that we are at liberty to do so with. Other than that, I do not believe there is a lot I can say other than this is not the best place to discuss specific cases.

Mr. Plohman: Madam Chairperson, I take this unusual step only because it seems to me that there has not been, in all instances, proper handling of this case. That is why I asked the minister if he has assured himself and his senior staff through an investigation by them personally that indeed all of the proper procedures have been followed.

I was not asking the minister to provide in-depth detail on the situation because I realize that this is not necessarily the proper place to do that. On the other hand, all of the pieces of information that I have brought before this House have been brought forward by the mother herself out of her concern about the situation and the fact that she is being prevented from being a mother to this child.

It seems to me highly unusual that a child is apprehended before it is born. I admit at the time there were extenuating circumstances, but since that time a child is apprehended and the mother having done no wrong is not able to be a mother to that child. I think the minister in that respect then should be able to tell the House and myself whether he has undertaken a personal investigation and whether in fact he is convinced that this has been handled properly. If he has not, would he ensure that he does that?

I appreciate his offer to be briefed on the situation. If there is some information that can be provided to me that would shed some different light on the position that I have taken, my assistant as well who has spent numerous hours with this person who is just in a hopeless situation it seems fighting with powers that she cannot fight.

Mr. Gilleshammer: Madam Chairperson, the staff have reviewed it. I will ask them to review it again, and I will make that offer to have them meet with you to deal with some of the specifics.

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

Mr. Plohman: Okay, I will leave it at that and look forward to it. Can the minister indicate to the House whether that session could be held this week or almost immediately or what is the earliest opportunity that we could arrange such a meeting?

Mr. Gilleshammer: I would commit that they would meet with you in the near future, within the next 10 days.

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Acting Chairperson, I would like to look at the payments to External Agencies and I would like to get some comparison figures here.

In terms of the Child and Family Services line which was the \$33,341,000, who exactly is included now in that Child and Family Services agency line?

Mr. Gilleshammer: Included in that line are the Westman Child and Family Services, Central Manitoba Child and Family Services, Winnipeg Child and Family Services and Jewish Child and Family Service.

Mrs. Carstairs: Does the minister have any breakdown as to specifically what each one of those four groups is going to be getting, and how does that compare with their 1991-92 grant?

Mr. Gilleshammer: Mr. Acting Chairperson, included in that list should also have been the Churchill Health Centre.

The numbers for the 1991-92 Adjusted Vote for Winnipeg Child and Family was \$25,251,700; the budgeted amount for this year, \$26,493,200. Central Manitoba Child and Family, the Adjusted Vote for last year, \$2,183,500, and this year it is \$2,245,100. For the Westman Child and Family, last year was \$3,354,100; this year it is \$3,439,800. Jewish Child and Family last year was \$91,500; this

year it is \$111,300. The Churchill Health Centre was \$62,900; this year it is \$60,600.

Mrs. Carstairs: In the figure that was \$25,200,000 for '91-92 to the Winnipeg agencies, did that include the \$2-million deficit?

Mr. Gilleshammer: The \$2 million is not included in there, and I would just want to add to the previous numbers, also there is \$721,000 that is unallocated for some workload adjustment during this particular budget year.

Mrs. Carstairs: Thank you, but I am confused. On page 90 of the detailed Estimates book there is \$65,469,000. It was my understanding that that would be for all of the per diems plus the grants to external agencies, and if you took the grants to external agencies and you took this line, Mandated Agencies/Regions, you would come up with that \$65 million figure for this year.

Is that not correct?

* (1440)

(Madam Chairperson in the Chair)

Mr. Gilleshammer: The \$64 million that you are referring to I would explain in the following way, and I think we are understanding what you are looking for. In '91-92, it included the central support and program grants of \$23.8 million; project grants of \$250,000; child sexual abuse grants of \$150,000; basic maintenance of \$25,085,600; special rate and exceptional needs \$10,609,700; the Exceptional Circumstances Fund of \$1 million and support services of \$4.3 million for a total of \$64,272,700.

Mrs. Carstairs: So the \$23.8 million is now what?

Mr. Gilleshammer: That figure of \$23.8 million is for the central support and program grants for all of the agencies.

Mrs. Carstairs: That central support for all the agencies and that \$23.8 million is the '91-92 figure or the '92-93 figure?

Mr. Gilleshammer: That is the '91-92 figure.

Mrs. Carstairs: What will that figure be for '92-93?

Mr. Gilleshammer: For 1992-93, it is \$22,642,000. That is less the \$2 million that was taken out for the deficit reduction.

Mrs. Carstairs: The \$22.6 million they are going to get this year, was the \$2 million taken from the \$22.6 or off the \$23.8 figure?

Mr. Gilleshammer: Taken off the \$23.8.

Mrs. Carstairs: The \$22.6 million they are going to get this year—was the \$2 million taken from the \$22.6 million or off the \$23.8 million figure?

Mr. Gilleshammer: It was taken off the \$23.8 million.

Mrs. Carstairs: So to be clear here, last year for central support they were getting \$21.8 million. That would be the \$23.8 million minus the \$2 million. This year they are going to get \$22.6 million. Is that correct?

Mr. Gilleshammer: That is basically correct.

Mrs. Carstairs: Madam Chairperson, of that central support, \$23.8 million, can the minister tell me how much of that money would have gone to the Winnipeg agencies that are no longer?

Mr. Gilleshammer: I am told that staff have to do some calculations on that, but we can get you that figure.

Mrs. Carstairs: Madam Chairperson, just so the minister knows where I am coming from, I do not agree with the decision they made last year, and I am not going to rehash that. The government has made that decision. I think you were wrong, and we will let it go at that. We will have a philosophical disagreement.

* (1450)

Part of the rationale that the government used was efficiency, and I want to get some figures as to where this efficiency is actually showing itself. If you went into this thing with the basis of your belief that you could cut administrative costs and you could cut some bureaucratic red tape, then there has to be some dollar value that can be attributed to that. If I take the \$23.8 million figure and I take off \$2 million, which gives me \$21.8 million, and I look at \$22,642,000 for this year, then I am looking at an increase, basically in administration, of 5.3 percent, which is very high, particularly if the purpose of consolidating the agencies was to cut administrative costs.

Mr. Gilleshammer: Madam Chairperson, we will put together some figures for the critic to give you some clarification of those numbers that I gave you. I would point out, as I did the other day, that there are a lot of changes that are starting to take place within the agency. Some of them relate to the workload and the existing contracts that existed that no one in this restructuring was dismissed or nothing was dismantled immediately. The contracts that

were in place with some of the senior staff are being maintained and honoured. Some of the changes have started to take place, others will take a little longer.

The efficiency that we are looking for, I suppose, shows up in the fact that we are not looking at a \$2-million deficit at this time. The other efficiencies are service efficiencies which I think is more important in many ways than financial ones. We will give you some more figures on that to help give you an understanding of it.

Mrs. Carstairs: I would feel a little bit more comfortable if he had not used the word "service" and had in fact used the word "bureaucratic." Perhaps "service" connotes the fact that there is less service available to a child, which I do not think the minister intended to say. I will give him an opportunity to put on the record that is not what he meant by a service cut.

Mr. Gilleshammer: I am always reluctant to use the word "bureaucratic" in front of staff because I do not think it is regarded as being a term that they find particularly endearing.

What I am saying is, as I said last day, I think that the agency and administrative staff of the new board can make some changes with something like night service where there can be a very, I think, service-driven staffing component put in place which was not there before. In the area of recruiting foster homes, I think of the whole auditing and the banking system and the accounting system that was in place in the past. There were six of each, and I think that, if we can save dollars on the administrative side, these are dollars that we can certainly use on the service side, so that a lot of the restructuring is going to give us those opportunities is still in process.

Mrs. Carstairs: I will put it on the record that I think many of those things could have been done without doing away with a lot of volunteer boards.

Can the minister tell us how much money is in this budget for fostering? Is it broken down that way, and what would be the comparative figure with last year?

Mr. Gilleshammer: Madam Chairperson, under basic maintenance, in '91-92 there was \$24,085,600. This year there is \$24,810,400. In the special rate, exceptional needs, last year there was \$10,609,700; this year there is \$11,180,400. The Exceptional Circumstances Fund was at a

million dollars last year, and it remains at a million dollars this year.

Mrs. Carstairs: Can the minister explain why the fostering dollars or the maintenance dollars would be less for '92-93 than they were for '91-92, unless it was reversed?

Mr. Gilleshammer: I could go over those again. Basic maintenance for last year was \$24,085,600, and for this year it is \$24,810,400. So there is an increase there.

Mrs. Carstairs: In terms of the increase then, is that as a result of a new fostering agreement which I understand has to be signed the end of this month, or is it the status quo and just includes an increase in children in care?

Mr. Gilleshammer: There is no new agreement in place at this time. That is an issue that is under discussion between the department and the Manitoba Foster Family Association.

Mrs. Carstairs: Can the minister tell me when the agreement actually does run out?

Mr. Gilleshammer: The agreement expired March 31, 1992.

Mrs. Carstairs: When does the minister anticipate that an agreement with the Foster Family Association will be concluded?

* (1500)

Mr. Gilleshammer: The department staff are working very hard on that. There have been some discussions to date. I am hesitant to put a time frame on it, but I would think that in the coming months one will be concluded.

Mrs. Carstairs: Is it fair to say that there are no new dollars in this budget line for foster parents, in other words, higher per diem rates for them for '92-93 or the balance?

Mr. Gilleshammer: Yes.

Mrs. Carstairs: Recently the minister has been made aware of a case—and I do not want to get into the case but I do want to get into a policy issue—of a child who has apparently complained about abuse in the foster parent home. Can the minister tell me what are the rules and regulations with respect to the report and the investigation of an abuse against a foster parent?

Mr. Gilleshammer: I can give the critics some information on standards for abuse investigations in foster homes. Two meetings have been held

between the MFFA agency representatives and the Child and Family support branch to draft standards.

One area where there has not been consensus around is the issue of which agency should conduct the abuse investigations. Further consultations will occur before the standards can be finalized.

The MFFA has requested consideration be given to ensuring that the issues which place foster families in a more vulnerable position to abuse allegations be available to the Child Abuse Registry review committee and are asking for an appointment to that committee.

Just while I am on this topic, I can maybe answer a question that the member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett) asked on April 16, that I provide copies of the various protocols being developed for reporting child abuse.

I will table a set of the protocols which include a professional protocol format recently developed by the provincial advisory committee on child abuse; a revised physician's protocol which is in the final stages of revision; a revised nurses' protocol in the final stages of revision; a revised teachers' protocol, also in the final stages of revision; and a new social worker protocol which is ready for publication; and a new child care worker protocol which was published in July of 1991.

In addition, this set of information also includes copies of the old teachers, nurses and general protocols. The general protocol is currently being revised. Now, these have been developed in consultation with the respective professional groups, and I would table those.

Mrs. Carstairs: The minister went through a number of areas, but I did not hear him say foster parents, so I assume that is still being worked on at the present time.

Mr. Gilleshammer: Yes, we are still in discussions with the Manitoba Foster Family Association to further develop and finalize these.

Mrs. Carstairs: In the case of a child who, for example, has accused either parent of a sexual or physical abuse, it is my understanding that the child is interviewed apart from the family. In other words, the family is not in the room. I understand that is not necessarily the case with regard to foster parents. Why would there be any differentiation made as to the presence of the potential abuser in a fostering situation vis-a-vis a natural situation?

Mr. Gilleshammer: Yes, in response to that, there should not be any difference in the interviewing of the child or the victim.

Mrs. Carstairs: Thank you. I am very pleased to have the minister say that.

In the case where a serious abuse had been identified by a child, would there be any difference in the way in which the child was taken into care? In other words, would they be taken into care as quickly in a foster parent situation as they would be in a natural situation?

Mr. Gilleshammer: Yes, it is the agency's responsibility to protect the child, and they should not act any differently in whether the child is being apprehended from the natural family or from the foster family.

Mrs. Carstairs: I am particularly interested in a recent case with regard to a mother who was charged some years after the event occurred with the death of a child that she was fostering. What would be the protocol in place for a woman or a man under investigation for a possible abuse if that person was a foster child? Do we have almost an ironclad rule that that individual would not be given any other children to foster until the investigation was totally completed?

* (1510)

Mr. Gilleshammer: As a general policy, that is correct.

Mrs. Carstairs: Well, the minister says it is a general policy. Is there any reason to think that it is not the policy?

Mr. Gilleshammer: That is the policy that we operate under at this time.

Ms. Becky Barrett (Wellington): Madam Chairperson, I would like to ask a couple of questions on the boilerplate contract, if I may, that the minister left with us at the end of last week, in particular Section 5 on page 2, the levels of funding. My understanding is that Schedule A and Schedule B will be regulations or will be part of the contract as it is finally agreed upon with the various Child and Family Service agencies. I am wondering if the minister can talk in terms of particularly the per diem rate, Section 5.2. Can the minister give us the status currently and how it reflects on Section 5.2 of the boilerplate contract of the structured care continuum?

Mr. Gilleshammer: The issue that the member raises with respect to the structured care continuum is an issue that is still something that is before government, the department and the agencies, and is used as a guideline for the funding that they receive. At this point in time, it is an issue that we would deal with the agencies on, with some degree of flexibility.

Ms. Barrett: The structured care continuum is in effect or is not in effect? If it is in effect, are there dollar figures attached to various levels of per diems that will be paid, based on the various definitions of necessary care?

Mr. Gilleshammer: There will be funding tied to the structured care continuum. We are in the process of working with agencies to have it implemented. At this present time, we are being flexible in our implementation of the structured care continuum. It is going to take some time yet before we are fully using that particular structure.

Ms. Barrett: How many levels will be involved in the structured care continuum?

Mr. Gilleshammer: There will be four levels plus the Exceptional Circumstances.

Ms. Barrett: The basic maintenance and special rate figures that the minister gave to the Leader of the Liberal Party a few minutes ago, are they based on a structured care continuum formula, or are they based on some other method of determining those figures?

Mr. Gilleshammer: Yes, it has been used, it has been factored in, in determining the funding.

Ms. Barrett: So the government has a structured care continuum process or guidelines in place in order to factor in for funding, but has not yet finalized those guidelines with the agencies?

Mr. Gilleshammer: Well, it is an issue that is under ongoing discussions. It has not been fully implemented as yet, but we are working with the agencies on that issue and I would report some progress.

Ms. Barrett: Do the agencies know the formula and the dollar amounts attached to the various levels that the government is working and operating under?

Mr. Gilleshammer: Yes.

Ms. Barrett: So if the structured care continuum elements are known to the agencies and have been used to determine the basic maintenance and

special rate monies available under these budget estimates, why are they still being discussed with the agencies, and why are they not now fully implemented?

Mr. Gilleshammer: Well, we are working with the agencies to have them and the department come to a common understanding and usage of that. Plus, I think, one should understand that the various children that come into care that have to be, I suppose, cared for at different levels whether they are just a normal, standard child coming into care or whether they may be a child with more difficulties that is going to take additional work on the part of the foster parent.

A foster parent, perhaps who has additional skills, that has to be factored in. So it is going to take some time for this process to be fully implemented, and our position is that we will be flexible in dealing with the agencies in, you know, resolving this.

* (1520)

Ms. Barrett: Could the minister share with us the formula for determining the various funding at which levels?

Mr. Gilleshammer: There has been quite a bit of work done on the structured care continuum to look at, of course, starting with the basic maintenance and looking at the special rates and special needs of a child.

The Level I, there is no additional fee paid. Level II, the additional stipend is \$4.82 a day; Level III, it is an additional \$18.87 a day; and Level IV is \$35.43.

Then, of course, the special rates above that would include some exceptional circumstances.

Ms. Barrett: In order to determine the basic maintenance and the special rates, leaving the exceptional circumstances aside for the moment, the department must have put some percentages or numbers of cases beside each of those levels in order to determine what the grants or per diems would likely be. Can the minister share how they determine the amounts of money that would go into each of these categories?

Mr. Gilleshammer: I think it is fair to say that the department looked at the current status of the number of children in care and, working with the agencies, examined the levels of children and the funding that would go for those special rates. Again, this is not a scientific measurement, if that is what my honourable friend is looking for, that you

cannot take the child's temperature and at the same time say: As a foster child, you are a Level III.

So there is some decision making and evaluation that has to take place at the agency level, and try to best provide for the needs of the child. I think it is something that the department and the agencies will get better at as they are able to use these levels and determine the appropriate funding for these children.

Ms. Barrett: In my reading of the draft or the boilerplate agreement, service and funding agreement, it says at some point, Section 8, Deficit and Surplus Policy, the bottom of page 2: Manitoba shall not be responsible for any of the agencies' expenditures in excess of the maximum amount of funding set out in Section 5.

Now I would take that to mean that, should an agency in attempting to fulfill its mandate to protect and provide the best services for children overstate or expend higher in the areas of the basic maintenance and special rates, Section 8.1 would say to this agency: If you do that, we will not be responsible, the government will not be responsible, which would potentially lead to an agency saying: We have this pot of money. It is based on this percentage, generally speaking, of children being taken into care at basic maintenance at Level II, Level III, Level IV. So we are not going to look so much at what the child needs, but what we can afford.

I am wondering if the minister has taken that into account and if I am being accurate in my assessment of how the structured care continuum funding policy will work in regard to Section 8.1 of the boilerplate service and funding agreement?

Mr. Gilleshammer: Well, the boilerplate contract was put in place for a great variety of agencies that deal with Family Services, or that we deal with, and I know what you are saying, it is as if we put a cap on social allowances, and said, sorry, we are all done. Of course, that is not the way it works there, and I think the member is aware of that.

So within the agencies, I think it is important that the staff from our directorate and the agencies work together to look at the number of children in care and the levels that they have. We have within the budget a little flexibility to deal with exceptional circumstances, but by the same token it is important that boards realize that there are liabilities that they take on when they become part of a board, that they cannot overexpend their budgets year after year

after year by substantial amounts. So that I think the member knows that agencies will not see kids not have service, but that we will have some flexibility within the department and within the structured care continuum to work with agencies to be sure that they do provide service to children in need.

Ms. Barrett: I would like to very strongly respond to the phrase that the minister just said, that agencies will not see kids not have service. I think that there are instances already where the triage concept is in place, where because of situations such as the structured care continuum, agencies will be forced to say, you are an older teenager, you have serious problems, we cannot take you because we do not have any more money in our basic maintenance and special rates, or we can only take you at a basic maintenance level because we just do not have the flexibility because our service and funding agreement states that. It does not matter what the need is; if we have reached our limit, that is it.

I would like to say, too, that the minister talks about the fact that there is no cap on social assistance because the recognition is there in legislation that you can never totally predict what will be the requirements of individuals who need social assistance. It is an accurate legitimate responsibility of the government to provide those things. I am saying that the implementation of the structured care continuum has, by its very definition of a cap on funding, and when the minister talks in terms of the percentages and the proportions that children are currently in in-service, and states that we have to be flexible because you cannot say a child has this kind of a temperature, therefore I am stating exactly that same thing. But it appears to me that Section 8.1 of the service and funding agreement states that agencies will be under severe financial constraints if they choose or if they go along with what their professional expertise tells them is the need of this child, and they back up against the funding cap, if you will.

* (1530)

Mr. Gilleshammer: Yes, I maybe misled you with my last statement, and I would like to correct that if I did. The basic maintenance is volume sensitive so that—[interjection] You understood that.

I think the other thing I would say is what you are suggesting, perhaps, is that under this area of Family Services that we just leave the line blank and

fill it in at the end of the year. We cannot operate that way. There has to be a budget.

I think everybody understands that. That we do have to project the costs of the Child and Family Services agencies and work with them to see that they provide the best service available, and I will tell you, it varies.

I met a board member out in western Manitoba, a very valuable member of the board, I might say, not unknown to my honourable critic. He tells me that they have—at that time, and it was the opening of the Family Resource Centre, after its renaming out in Brandon—a million-dollar surplus, and I certainly complimented him and other board members on that.

You know, they have a little bit of, I suppose, financial resources there to fall back on from time to time. But, you know, we will commit to work with the agencies, their boards and their administration to be sure that the very best service is available that they can provide and that the funding matches their service needs.

Ms. Barrett: I am not for a moment suggesting that that line be blank. I am suggesting, however, that the parallel with social assistance which is not—I mean, the social assistance payments are listed in the Estimates book as an estimate.

We all understand it can be over or underexpended, but it is volume sensitive, based on the understanding that we have, as a society and as a government, a responsibility to provide for the basic needs of our citizens.

Now, we will agree to disagree on the amounts and many of the other things, but we are all in agreement about the basic principle there that this is a requirement that we are obligated as a society to fulfill.

I am saying to you that what appears to me and to many others as a potential hazard of the structured care continuum, when put into the context of Section 8.1 and other actions that this government has undertaken with regard to Child and Family Services agencies that there is a potential hazard of children either not being taken into care or being given less than what they should be given in care, because the cap has been reached on the funding for other than basic maintenance.

My suggestion is that there are areas in Child and Family Services agencies, there are areas in this department where there is much more potential for

control over the expenditures, but this is not an area where children should be held hostage to the bottom line.

I see a real concern as a potential for that to happen. If the minister is saying that the structure care continuum at this point is based on 54 percent of children in care currently receiving only basic maintenance, and 30 percent receiving Level II, and 20 percent receiving Level III, and 10 percent receiving Level IV, et cetera, and that is the basis upon which you are estimating, that is fine, if it is an estimate. But if it is not just an estimate, if it is a statement, this far you shall spend and no more, that to me is not providing services to children at a level to which they should be expected to have access.

Mr. Gilleshammer: I would point out to the critic that there is a million dollars in the Exceptional Circumstances Fund that agencies can draw on when, in fact, there are exceptional circumstances.

I am just going to try and think of some analogies here as we go on to further this discussion. You are part of a party that supported a no-deficit procedure with hospitals, and I believe still are in favour of that. You are nodding your head in the affirmative, that is good. So this is consistent with the concept of a no-deficit fund with the agencies that we are involved with.

We do have some latitude within that Exceptional Circumstances Fund to take care of exceptional circumstances, and agencies, I think, have a challenge in front of them to manage their resources but, at the same time, to let us know if there is a dramatic change in volume or in the level of children that are being taken into care and to work with the department.

I have already indicated to you that the department is going to be reasonable and flexible in the implementation of this. I have not had a discussion with all board members of all boards, but some that I have talked with and some senior staff indicate that this process is moving along, and that we have to be able to assign some costs to the type of treatment and the type of care, and I see the member is agreeing with that.

I have the comfort that we are going to implement this over the next while with some care and caution, and that we do have a million dollars in the Exceptional Circumstances Fund, and I did tell you that the basic maintenance is volume sensitive. So I think that we will do the very best we can with the staff and the resources that we have.

Ms. Barrett: The minister is saying that he and his department are going to be reasonable and flexible with the agencies, and I think that is only fair, particularly in light of the fact that the structure care continuum is a new implementation. I do not see in the boilerplate agreement anywhere the words "flexible" and "reasonable." All I see is Section 8.1, Manitoba shall not be responsible for any of the agency's expenditures in excess of the maximum.

That is my concern. I have no quarrel with the concept of a structured care continuum which allows for different per diem rates for different levels of need—no quarrel with that concept at all. What I have a quarrel with and which other groups and individuals have concerns about is the fact that the other levels, other than Level I, are not volume sensitive. There is a cap on the budget, and there could potentially be some serious miscarriages of application here.

The question I have about the Exceptional Circumstances Fund is that my understanding was that this Exceptional Circumstances Fund would be used for what we would call Level V children, that it would be for children who are not categorized in either of the first two levels, that the Level V would be the Exceptional Circumstances Fund so that, while that is accessible to agencies to deal with truly exceptional and the most difficult and challenging cases, it would not necessarily or at all be available to deal with an additional number of Level IIIs and IVs that might come in. That fund would be accessible only for Level V children rather than an additional number of lower level. Is that accurate, or am I misstating the purpose of the Exceptional Circumstances Fund?

* (1540)

Mr. Gilleshammer: Madam Chairperson, yes, that is basically correct, and I will tell you, I am pleased that you are supportive of the structured care continuum because there are other so-called experts who, I think, without looking at it or understanding it have spoken negatively about it. This is why I think we have to take some time to work with the agencies in terms of implementation, and I think it is proceeding. There are some differences of opinion that we have to work through, but to, you know, put on the table for the agencies the responsibility when they take children into care and, hopefully, are able to assign them to an appropriate foster home, and to recognize that for some foster

parents there is a tremendous challenge, and that they have the skills to do it is only right and proper.

So we are going to continue to work in this direction, and I will, given the comments made by the member, certainly take every opportunity to check through the department with the staff of the agencies to see what their perception of the proceedings are, and would look forward to their feedback.

Ms. Barrett: I would certainly hope that would not be at my instigation, but that the minister would have undertaken to do that on his own.

I would like to ask the minister if he would be prepared to table the deficit and surplus policy that is referred to in Section 8.1 of the boilerplate agreement.

Mr. Gilleshammer: That issue is a policy issue which is still under discussion within the department and that we do not have finalized yet.

I wanted to just add something further to my previous answer, and that is that we rely on legal people to bring us the legal wording for documents like this. I know part of the problem in working through this is that the legal language sometimes is very stark and has to say things in very straightforward language which was already the understood policy, but had never been written down before. As a result, sometimes people are offended by it, but it is going to take a little time and I think a recognition that contracts like this have to be drafted and have to be put in place to have the relationship between the department, government and the agencies that are external and operate externally, and I know from time to time people want to bring specific cases here and say to the minister, would you go and fix this, when the responsibility is with the agency.

I think if you make the same analogy to the hospital system, the school system and the university system, that to have the minister involved in the day to day cases that come up, is not the way that the department and the agencies should run. Those agencies are external to government. They do access a lot of funding and I think that our relationship has to be spelled out in a contract and that is what we are basically working on.

Ms. Barrett: I would like to ask a question or two about the Child and Family Services agency that the minister has referred to several times before. I

believe it is Westman Child and Family Services Agency that has a million dollars in a surplus.

Can the minister explain to us if that surplus is eligible to be accessed by the agency should it run into an operating deficit at any point in time?

Mr. Gillieshammer: I say to you that agencies acquire funds in different ways. We are mostly concerned with operating funds, but there are times when agencies are left a legacy and in effect inherit some funds. There are other times when there are special fundraising projects for capital development, and by the very nature of the manner in which the funds were acquired put some limitations on what they can use them for. In fact, if a legacy was left to a particular agency for a specific purpose, if it was to be used for the further training of workers and was stipulated, then that has to be followed. Agencies would be bound by the manner in which they acquired those funds as to how they are going to be spent.

Ms. Barrett: Thank you. I appreciate that clarification because the context within which the minister was making the earlier references to this agency with its million dollar surplus potentially could have meant that the province would at some point look to those externally raised and targeted funds to overcome any future operating deficit. I am glad that the minister has clarified that for me and for agencies throughout the province.

I have a couple of questions if I may about the native child and family services agencies. I will be the first to admit that this is a very complicated part of the department. I may not have all of my facts completely straight, but I have understood that the native child and family services agencies, such as Anishinaabe, Southeast, Sagkøeng, and West Region, have had a change in their funding formula from the province. I am wondering if the minister can verify that funding change and explain the rationale behind it if there has been such a change.

Mr. Gillieshammer: There was a change in the manner in which we funded, flowed funding to those agencies in a number of ways. The basic maintenance and the special rate were increased. The native supervision fees were changed to grants, grants similar to how we grant other agencies so that there were increases in the first two that I mentioned and the change from the supervision fees to a straight grant, and this was done part way through this last budget year.

Ms. Barrett: The minister stated in his response that the grants were similar to those provided to other agencies. When the change in funding formula was undertaken, were issues such as travel and accessibility and things such as that, the need for additional telephone requirements, taken into account, and also were the administrative costs taken into account when the funding formula was changed?

Mr. Gillieshammer: We looked at all aspects of the situation. What I am saying to the member is that with other agencies there was a basic grant which was not in effect with the native agencies so we made that change and all of those agencies now get grants. A number of factors were taken into consideration and a couple of the concerns that were raised were the cost of psychological services and legal services.

* (1550)

We agreed at that time to monitor the work of the agencies and the cases that they had before them and made a commitment that we would not see any child not have psychological services or that there was not legal work that had to be done that would be found wanting for lack of funds. So we have worked with the agencies and indicated that we would see that those services were provided, and in fact they have been.

Ms. Barrett: Some information that I have received states that the province's new formula has as the cost of one direct service worker about \$71,400 per year. The actual cost of services as provided by Winnipeg Child and Family Services for those same services that are being provided out of a grant of \$71,400 per year by the Native Child and Family Services cost the province or the Winnipeg Child and Family Services agency approximately \$120,000 per annum.

I am wondering if the minister can explain that almost 100 percent cost differential.

Mr. Gillieshammer: I do not think that the information that the member was given is correct. The cost of a worker in the system is around \$71,000. That consists of the direct service worker's salary, a portion of the supervisor's salary, a portion of the clerical staff, and the total salary for that position with those costs added in is somewhere around \$58,000. Then part of the operating costs would also include travel, building maintenance, operations, professional fees and

other of about \$13,000, bringing it up to \$71,000. That is the cost estimated for a worker in the Winnipeg system.

With rural Child and Family Services agencies, experience is approximately the same cost for direct service workers. However, there may be additional travel costs and telephone costs, but I think that it would be difficult to make a case that it cost more. I forget the figure that the member used—\$120,000 for a worker in Winnipeg, that is simply not correct.

Ms. Barrett: Can the minister tell us approximately how many of the children who are under the care of the aboriginal Child and Family Services agencies are, quote, the provincial responsibility, that the parents were off reserve or this kind of thing, that there is a definition that had been worked out between the aboriginal Child and Family Services agencies and the province as to whose responsibility these children were. I am wondering if the minister can share with us approximately the percentage of those children who are now in the care of aboriginal Child and Family Services agencies that are the province's responsibility.

Mr. Gilleshammer: I will have some numbers for you in a minute, but this is one of our other issues with the federal government, the responsibility for native child welfare.

You know, on the one hand, when I read the AJL report, the commissioners indicate the remarkable growth and changes that have taken place in the last 10 years with the native agencies. On the other hand, we have a major issue over the question of jurisdiction that it is clear cut. If the child is resident of one of the reserves and is apprehended in that locale, the jurisdiction is with the native agency.

But we have a rather fluid situation with some of the children who come into care. In the past the federal government took responsibility for those children, and as of partway through this last year they indicated they would no longer fund children who reside off reserve, and that was a net cost to the government of Manitoba of about \$5 million. That is the other side of the funding issue that we have with the federal government.

As far as the number of children in care, and the member was in attendance last week, I believe it was at a panel discussion that I took part in, and one of my fellow panel members was Chief Jerry Fontaine, who spoke of the disproportionate number of natives who are represented in the child welfare system, in the justice system, in the

hospitals. He, of course, is correct, and I am told somewhere between 60 and 70 percent of the children who are in care in the province of Manitoba are of aboriginal descent.

The native agencies not only operate on the reserves but also have offices in Brandon, Dauphin and Winnipeg, and there is a question of jurisdiction of these children from time to time. We, I think, in our budget line have a cost of about \$7 million that we flow to those agencies.

There is a constant check that goes on between the department and the agencies to determine the residence and the residency requirements of that child to determine whether the child in effect is a provincial responsibility or a federal responsibility. When the child is a federal responsibility, the entire costs are picked up by the federal government. When it is a provincial responsibility, we share that cost. I would hope that in the next few minutes we will have a number for you about the total number of native children in the care of the agencies which are the responsibility of the province.

Ms. Barrett: My understanding is that in the past under the old funding agreement all of the aboriginal agencies in a sense shared a pot of money. While there may have been specific figures attached to each agency, it was allowed for if one agency had some money left at the end of the year and another one of the aboriginal agencies was a little over, they could move that money around. Now, under the new funding formula, if say, for example, Awasis goes over its budget line, it has a debt, and if West Region underspends, that extra money goes back to the province, so that there is not the flexibility within the aboriginal agencies that there was before. Is that an accurate assessment of the new situation?

* (1600)

Mr. Gilleshammer: The number of children in care varies from time to time, but it will be around 450 children. The relationship of the government and the agencies and the flexibility of funding—that relationship has not changed; the director has the ability to look at the agency in some of the cases and make some decisions.

I indicated that part of the concern, when we went from the native supervision fees to the grants, was that there would not be money for legal fees and psychological services, and we were able to work with the agencies to be sure that every child that

needed some psychological assessment was able to achieve that.

Ms. Barrett: On that, so that the legal costs and the treatment costs will not come out of the grant, or the grant will be raised should it be shown that additional money is needed for legal and treatment costs?

Mr. Gillieshammer: What we indicated to the agencies at that time—their major concern was that, if there was a shortfall of money, legal fees and psychological fees in particular would not be provided, and the director was able to work with the agencies to ensure that was not the case. As we worked our way through the last budget year, the agencies were able to accommodate all of the children in respect to psychological assessment and legal fees. As I say, the department worked with the directors to ensure that those services were in place.

Madam Chairperson: Item 6.

Mrs. Carstairs: I just have several questions with respect to native agencies. The Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae) met with the chiefs, and I understood that the Minister of Family Services was there as well, and they made the request for an independent investigation of some of the allegations being made with respect to the interference of chiefs and band councils into the activities of the native child agencies.

Can the minister tell us why the government chose not to in fact have this independent investigation?

Mr. Gillieshammer: The member is asking a question that is more properly answered by the Minister of Justice, but I would answer in part. The concern that was raised is one that concerns me deeply as well, that agencies must be allowed to apprehend and to operate in a normal fashion irrespective of who the clientele is.

There are issues before the court that are currently being heard, and I cannot comment further on those. The directorate from time to time is asked to review certain cases and has done so. In some cases, the directorate has found that the agency has acted appropriately; in other cases, there have been corrections that need to be taken.

The bigger issue that you raise of the service provided by the native agencies is one that I have discussed with Chief Jerry Fontaine who sits on the Manitoba assembly and is responsible for this department's issues. A committee has been struck

that is going to investigate the relationship of the agencies with the clientele and with the citizens on reserve. I have written to Mr. Fontaine twice to ask for the membership of the committee and the scope of the committee, and recently had a reply that they were going to forward more detail to me in the near future, but there have been reported in the media some changes to that committee.

My concern is still the same. I have been assured that it is going to be addressed under the issue of self-government, that the native leadership in Manitoba has made a commitment to review the operation of the agencies, and I await their report on that.

Parallel to that and going on at the same time are a number of court cases that I really cannot comment on. If you watch the coverage, there are obviously different points of view that are being expressed, and we await the outcome of that. We have conducted I think at least four audits in recent years and of the four that I am thinking of, three of them have deemed that the agency has acted appropriately; in the other, we are working with the agency and with the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, and we believe that there are some corrective measures being undertaken.

Mrs. Carstairs: Thank you, but there are still, as the minister is very well aware, some very serious allegations being made with respect to the interference, not only in criminal matters but on basic care matters, by the leadership on reserves.

Has the minister and Mr. Fontaine, or in fact either Mr. Jerry Fontaine or Chief Phil Fontaine, had any discussions about the appropriateness of members of the band council and, more particularly, the chiefs serving on the boards of the aboriginal child agencies?

Mr. Gillieshammer: Yes, there have been some discussions, and that is the subject of the committee's investigations and deliberations regarding the Child and Family Services agencies to see if they are being governed appropriately and, in fact, if there is conflict of interest and also to bring resolution to that.

You know, you open up the whole issue of life on the reserve. It is one that I think the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs is faced with. We have a number of concerns that we have raised with the agencies and the chiefs who serve on the committee that oversees child welfare and other social issues. Our hope is that committee of chiefs, and others, is going

to take a thorough review of the manner in which these agencies operate.

* (1610)

Again, there are a number of cases before the courts. I think through the court process and through this investigation by this working group, I am hopeful that we are going to see some changes in the next months and years. I say to you though that the question of the whole issue of quality of life on the native reserves is a difficult one.

We have had the opportunity to do some travelling since the last Estimates. Myself and three of my staff went down to Window Rock, Arizona, to look at the child welfare system, and by association we also had some ongoing discussions there of the justice system and the manner in which they operate. Similarly, we visited the Island Lake area, the Cross Lake Reserve, and met with the chief and council at The Pas specifically to talk about child welfare issues.

On the one hand, the manner in which the chief and council and elders speak of their children and attempt to put services in place on the reserves is encouraging. On the other hand, when we see the lack of employment and the poverty and some of the difficulties that are on reserve, it is depressing. Somehow out of this, I am hopeful that working group will address the needed independence that boards and Child and Family Services workers need to do their job.

Hardly a week goes by when there is not a case that is brought before the public, and in some cases into the courts, and I am hopeful that through the court process—and it is not an issue that is going to go away until it is resolved—I have the commitment of Chief Jerry Fontaine and the committee that they are going to work diligently on this and come forward with some recommendations hopefully that will be implemented. I believe that those workers must be independent, that they must be able to provide for the best needs of the child who is taken into care and that there cannot be different levels of service depending on who the child or the family is.

Mrs. Carstairs: On November 2, 1991, at the annual meeting of the Société franco-manitobaine the Premier (Mr. Filmon) announced phase 2 of the availability of French services in the province. Can the minister tell me how many services are now available in his department specifically dealing with child and family issues that are available in French?

Mr. Gilleshammer: We have regional offices not only within the city of Winnipeg but throughout the province, and we have targets in terms of staffing and in terms of service provision and are making every attempt to provide that service in the second language of our country or in French if you like. We keep that in mind in recruiting for staff in those offices.

I might specifically mention that we recently received a report on daycare, which we have made a response to, to the SFM within the last few weeks and we have accepted six recommendations. There are two others that we will work towards as funding permits us. I think there were seven or eight that are going to take some longer term study.

In the area of Child and Family Services, the Winnipeg agency, of course, provides these services within the city of Winnipeg. I know that there have been a number of meetings where this has been under discussion.

We have the same offices located in the same areas of the city that the previous agencies did. I have not had raised with me more than once, I think, the whole question of the availability of service. There may be an issue if a French-speaking family is going to access service in St. James or one of the areas of the city that is not predominantly Francophone, and the agency is committed to bringing somebody into the case very quickly to provide that service in French.

I know too that the Winnipeg agency has been working and had discussions with Service de Conseiller to talk about the counselling service that they offer in St. Boniface. I have had the opportunity to visit their premises and meet with their executive director and some of their board and staff, to talk about that service.

They are not funded by government at the current time, but I think there is a relationship developing with the Winnipeg agency whereby they are going to work together towards providing some of that secondary service that is required with families after they have taken a child into care or perhaps are working with the family to have the child remain in the home.

Mrs. Carstairs: The minister himself has raised the Service de Conseiller. Can he tell the House why they do not receive any funding as an external agency? I know that the government has been negotiating on and off with them since 1989. We are now in the budget year '92-93 and they still are

not recognized for funding purposes even though they were granted full accreditation last year in terms of their counselling staff.

Mr. Gilleshammer: It is an issue that I have had some delightful discussion on with the member for St. Boniface (Mr. Gaudry), who keeps the issue fresh in my mind. I do believe that they are developing, and have developed, into a valuable service, and I was most impressed with their facility and with their commitment. I know the day I visited, the assistant deputy minister attended as well, and we talked about program and the needs that they have, but we have not been negotiating any funding for them, one of the many groups that apply to this department for funding that we are not able to accommodate. For every year there are more and more groups, either that have been funded by another level of government, who had their funding discontinued, that we are also funding and have to top that up and give them additional funding.

I would hope that the Winnipeg agency is able to work with that organization so that some form of service agreement can be developed between Winnipeg Child and Family Services and Service de Conseiller. I am optimistic that that will probably develop over the next six months or so.

Mrs. Carstairs: One looks at Hansard dated October 12, 1989, the Honourable Charlotte Oleson was in fact saying exactly the same thing, saying that hopefully in the next budget there would be money for Service de Conseiller. We are now three budgets later and we still do not have support for Service de Conseiller.

* (1620)

The interesting situation was that in announcing his external grants the minister indicated that there would be a special program being offered this year at Marymount for male abusers. This seemed to be some kind of innovative new program and yet that is exactly the kind of programming that has been made available by the Service de Conseiller to male abusers and their families, 12 in number, who happen to speak French as their first language.

I wonder why an agency like Marymount seems to be able to find means to get additional funding from this government, but an agency like the Service de Conseiller is unable to make the same kind of case with the minister.

Mr. Gilleshammer: I have met with them, I believe three times now, and I am impressed with their

commitment and the work that they do. I have not misled them into thinking that funding was just around the corner, that we are in very difficult times. We have indicated that funding is not available, and I do not recall saying that it probably will be next year. We hope it will be next year. As we proceed into the 1990s, it is very apparent to me that the funding of new organizations and new groups that come along is going to be very, very difficult.

At the same time, we fund hundreds of external agencies, all of whom ask for additional funding. I think the best opportunity we have to have funding flow to that organization is through the Winnipeg Child and Family Services where they can purchase services from Service de Conseiller. It is an area, I know, that the director of Winnipeg Child and Family Services is discussing with them. While that does not give them perhaps all that they want, I think it does enable them to access some additional funding for services.

I know that funding that they have now comes from private sources, individuals, families that come for counselling, and I believe they are also, to some degree, a church-based organization which accesses some funding in that area. I can tell you that there are dozens of other organizations that also provide counselling in Winnipeg, in western Manitoba and other areas that we do not fund. I guess that I will not get into our 8.7 percent funding discussion right now, but it is very difficult to find those dollars.

We have, in this budget, given or arranged for an extra \$500,000 for Family Dispute Services. That is an area we are going to get into hopefully later today. But the fact that we do not fund them is not a reflection on the type of services that they deliver. Again, I say, I think their best avenue for support is going to be through services purchased by Winnipeg Child and Family Services.

Mrs. Carstairs: I think it is clear, and I have seen some of the correspondence between the Service and the minister, indicate that they are not asking for new money, they are asking for the reallocation of some of the money to provide the kind of French language services that the Premier (Mr. Filmon) gives speeches about when he goes to the annual meeting of Société franco-manitobaine.

I would also like to indicate that, when people need that kind of counselling, it is during a particularly stressful period, and often when one has a first language and then a second language, one

wants to revert to that first language when one is in a stress situation.

Just to give you an example, I have a daughter who is fluently bilingual, lives in Montreal, and likes very much to live in French, except when she had a medical emergency last fall, and all she could speak was English. The French simply would not come out at that particular time because of the stressfulness of the situation. I just ask the minister to consider that when he is re-evaluating, when Mr. Cooper is re-evaluating, the need for the provisions of those kinds of services in the first language of these people, not their second language.

Mr. Gilleshammer: I have a copy of a policy on French language services that the Winnipeg Child and Family Services has developed. In the area of service, each area of the agency will identify those employees who are able to work with clients in French, and secondly, where an area has no French-speaking workers, a worker or workers in another area will be identified to be available for assistance.

In the area of court proceedings, when dealing with a French-speaking client, all forms should be prepared in French and English. Secondly, particulars will be prepared in French for the client's lawyer on request. Thirdly, the agency will ensure that it retains the services of legal counsel who is able to conduct all phases of the court process in French.

So it is an issue that I think Winnipeg Child and Family Services has addressed, and I hear what the member is saying. It is an issue that we will continue to work on, but, as far as providing grant support, it is not there in this budget. I have indicated to a lot of groups that we are going to have a very difficult time finding funding for new agencies that we do not currently fund. But I think there is an opportunity for that particular group to work with Winnipeg Child and Family to provide some services through them.

Ms. Barrett: I would like to ask a few questions about the Children's Foundation, if I may. My understanding is that the Children's Foundation was established when the Children's Aid Society was disbanded, and there was close to a million dollars available for the Children's Foundation. Child and Family Services Eastern took their share, and Ma Mawi took their share. The funds that were left over were to be used to raise further money to help with community groups and the agencies. The

Children's Foundation was established to oversee this, and there was a board put together and activities were undertaken by the Children's Foundation, the last of which I believe was the Fight Back Against Child Abuse campaign.

I am wondering if the minister can let us know what the current status is of the Children's Foundation and the money that they were or are responsible for overseeing?

Mr. Gilleshammer: It is an issue that the board is going to have to address, and one which has not been addressed at this time. There is a separate board for the Winnipeg Foundation, and the board of Winnipeg Child and Family Services, I think, is going to have to become involved with them to work out their future.

Ms. Barrett: Can the minister tell us what the status is of the board of the Children's Foundation?

Mr. Gilleshammer: That board is still in place, but it is under review by the board of Winnipeg Child and Family Services, and it is an issue that they have not dealt with or completed at this time.

* (1630)

Ms. Barrett: Can the minister tell us who is currently on the board of the Children's Foundation?

Mr. Gilleshammer: This is arm's length from government and there have been some changes in the last year. At the present time, I believe, it is the four area directors plus the executive director of the Winnipeg agency. The area directors are Mr. Schellenberg, Mr. Waters, Ms. Gelmon, Mr. Kuryk and, of course, the executive director is Mr. Cooper, but it is an issue that the board is going to have to deal with.

Ms. Barrett: Did the Children's Foundation board, prior to the reorganization last June, have additional or different members on it?

Mr. Gilleshammer: Well, I believe it was the directors of the former agencies that served on the board, but we could check with the agency to get that information for you.

Ms. Barrett: No, I just wanted to see that there was not a major change, but unless there has been a major change in the composition that is—okay. Can the minister tell me how much money is currently residing under the auspices of the Children's Foundation?

Mr. Gilleshammer: I am sorry, we cannot. You could request that information of the board or, if you

would like, we would request it from them and forward it to you.

Ms. Barrett: I will make that request of the board of Child and Family Services. I would like to ask the minister at least one, if not more questions about the Fight Back Against Child Abuse campaign which has been a victim of the reorganization of the Child and Family Service agency, and wondering if the minister can give us a status report on the Fight Back Against Child Abuse campaign.

Mr. Gilleshammer: Yes, I would be pleased to enter into some discussion. As all members are aware, the critic for the NDP and some of her colleagues have been tabling petitions but have never ever in almost 50 days of sitting asked a question about it.

I have certainly been waiting for the member to raise the issue. I thought it was important to her, but apparently not important enough to raise a question in Question Period or anywhere else, so I am pleased that it has sort of come to light now that you want some information on that.

First of all, the Fight Back Against Child Abuse campaign was a fundraising and awareness campaign which was run by the agencies. I do not suppose it was a conscious attempt on the part of the member or her colleagues to have people believe that was a program run by the department. Clearly, it was a program, a fundraising campaign, an awareness campaign. Just like United Way campaigns, they have a start and a finish to them. The agency board, my understanding is, made a decision to bring the campaign to an end.

The ownership of this campaign—it is owned by an interagency committee consisting of Winnipeg Child and Family Services, Marymount, Macdonald Youth Services and others. So they were the ones who organized it, who owned it, who operated it, and who brought it to an end.

The Abuse is a Crime campaign is one that we did on family violence. I recall the member agreeing with me at that time that it was a very successful one. I believe in Estimates last year we talked about perhaps running it again because at one time there was a commitment to have the Abuse is a Crime campaign run a second time. The comment that the critic for the NDP said is that she would sooner see money go into program rather than a campaign. I do not know what the thinking or the discussion was around the table of that interagency committee when they made the decision, but in discussing it

since then, I am told that they are going to enter into other areas of fundraising and awareness.

I think that the member should know that there are many, many funded programs that the Department of Family Services funds that have to do with abuse of children. We fund groups such as the Community Resource Clinic, the Family Services of Winnipeg Inc., Knowles Centre Inc., Macdonald Youth Services, Ma Mawi Inc., Marymount Inc., Naturas Inc., parent support groups, Winnipeg Child and Family Services and a number of others. So I know that the member would not intentionally want to lead other members of the Chamber or members of the public into believing that we do not have a strong commitment towards fighting child abuse.

What we do believe though is that those independent agencies that we fund, that interagency committee has the right to determine what it is they want to do in the area of fundraising. If the member wants to question them, I think that is fine. She can write the board a letter, discuss that with the various groups that funded that particular Fight Back Against Child Abuse campaign.

So we have maintained our support to all of those agencies, and in fact enhanced our support for those agencies that were part and parcel of this campaign. At the same time, I think I would take the opportunity to remind the member that service and the services provided by our agencies have been of primary concern to the department and to myself and to our government. That is why we have embarked—and I will not go into a lot of detail right now but we will maybe get a chance to talk about it later—that is why we have gone ahead with the legislation on the Child Advocate. That is why we have spent hundreds and hundreds of thousands of dollars on an information system. That is why we have brought into use the high-risk indicators.

* (1640)

So, in answer to your question, our support to the agencies has been maintained and increased. I respect the right of the owners of the Fight Back Against Child Abuse campaign to make whatever decisions they wish on that particular issue.

Ms. Barrett: Can the minister clarify his earlier comments that I believe it was the department, but it might have been the external agencies, was going to enter into other areas of fundraising and awareness?

Mr. Gilleshammer: Yes, I can. When the member tabled her first petition, I inquired as to the history of this campaign and also found out who made up the interagency committee that owned and operated this program. They made comments to me about the program and its success and its longevity. They also said they felt it had run its course and that their commitment to fighting child abuse had not come to an end with the campaign, and that they were going to explore other avenues. I have not followed up my conversation that I had with some of those members back a few months ago, but my firm understanding from talking to some of the members of that interagency committee is that they were going to continue to publicize the fact that there was child abuse and to work on other strategies involved in soliciting funds for that particular cause.

Ms. Barrett: So the minister just stated that he talked to the interagency committee when the first petition was tabled, I believe 50 days ago, as the minister stated in his first response to my question on the Fight Back Against Child Abuse campaign, but has not had any discussions since then.

So I would suggest that the minister not castigate the critic for not having raised this issue in the House when the minister has not seen fit to raise it with the interagency committee since day one, to find out exactly what specific fundraising and awareness programs and projects are underway.

Mr. Gilleshammer: I did not mean for the member to take it personally but I appreciate the opportunity to respond to the question on this particular subject. I discussed this with some of the members of the interagency committee. They were going to pursue some other ideas. I have every confidence that they will do that, as that is their business. There are a number of areas of endeavour that the agencies are involved in outside of the direct delivery of service that I do not phone them on a monthly basis to say: How is it going in this area or that area? But I am confident that their commitment is still there to highlight this as an issue.

It is an issue that is frequently in the media. It is an issue that these organizations deal with on a day-to-day basis, because they see, on a day-to-day basis, the victims of child abuse. Some of them are treatment centres and they work with these children on a day-to-day basis. If the member would like, I will make inquiries to see if they have developed some new strategies in terms of highlighting the awareness of this issue or whether

they have in fact endeavoured to go into new areas of fundraising.

But I can tell you that we have increased our funding to projects that deal with child abuse. We have increased our funding to these agencies, whether it be the Winnipeg agency or other agencies, to work with children in providing the service required, to work with these children and help them overcome, if possible, some of the devastating effects that child abuse has taken. So I am confident, in talking to people who work at that Winnipeg agency or in other discussions I have had with Family Services of Winnipeg or with Marymount, that they will continue to work on this area.

As well, there are a number of other organizations that we also fund, and I can read the list if the member would like, who also deal with these problems. Just recently, we gave an additional grant to the Evolve program, operated by Clinic, to deal with some of the abusers. So I think that our commitment is ongoing.

Part of that additional \$500,000, that I am sure we will talk about later under Family Dispute Services, go to shelters and particularly for child care workers who will deal with the children who come into the shelters that we operate across the province, who have been again the victims of physical abuse and, in some cases, sexual abuse. We have given a very strong signal to those shelters in the system that they have to more and more treat the entire family who comes into care.

Ms. Barrett: The Fight Back Against Child Abuse campaign was different from any of the programs that the minister has referred to in his responses this afternoon. I am not wanting to get into a dialogue or a discussion about what were the reasons for the shutting down of that campaign other than to say I do not believe it was as the minister stated earlier that, like the United Way campaign, it was time limited.

I think whatever problems there were with the Fight Back Against Child Abuse campaign led to its closing down prior to any specific stated date that was understood at the beginning of the campaign.

I do not want to get into the specifics about the child abuse campaign, what was wrong, what was right, those kinds of things, because that is the purview of the Children's Foundation, and it is the purview of the Winnipeg Child and Family Services

agencies who are now having to carry on, hopefully, some of the projects that were undertaken earlier.

However, the Fight Back Against Child Abuse campaign was unique in that it was not designed to be programming. It was not designed to be an additional staff person such as the minister has provided for Evolve. It was not designed to be additional child outreach workers or child workers that the shelters will now have some additional funding for.

This program was different in the sense that it was different from the Abuse is a Crime public awareness campaign, too, in that the Fight Back Against Child Abuse campaign was a much more hands-on educative program than the Abuse is a Crime program which was mainly television and radio spots and posters and those types of things whereas the Fight Back campaign had a much more hands-on kind of approach and engendered a lot of community interest and involvement in that way.

It was a different kind of proposal, and it had a different look to it than most of the other campaigns and, certainly, the other programs that are included. I see it as a different kind of expenditure than the minister is talking about.

I will carry on and I will check with Child and Family Services of Winnipeg, and I will be very interested to see what, if any, kinds of specific fundraising and education awareness programs there are that are put in place by Winnipeg Child and Family or other agencies.

I would like to ask a question—

Mr. Gillehammer: In the last few minutes, as you spoke, you used the word "program" and "campaign" interchangeably. I think that is part of the misinformation that gets out sometimes. This was called the Fight Back Against Child Abuse campaign, and we supported that with a \$50,000 grant. I have indicated to you that that campaign was owned and operated by that interagency committee. I have also talked about programs that we fund, and there is a real difference between a campaign and a program and, as you spoke in the last few minutes, used those two terms interchangeably, and I think that leads to a fair amount of confusion with some of your colleagues.

* (1650)

Ms. Barrett: I will peruse Hansard to see if I did in fact use the two words interchangeably. The gist of my remarks was that they were very different. So I

think the minister and I are agreeing that the Fight Back Against Child Abuse campaign was a qualitatively different exercise than the ongoing funding of programs that the department undertakes and to which the minister referred in his answers to me about the Fight Back Against Child Abuse campaign.

I have a couple of questions that relate back to something that the minister raised in last year's Estimates, if I may, and that relates to the Family Fund. There were funds that were supposedly set aside in the order of \$3 million to \$4 million for prevention work.

I am wondering if the minister can show us what line in the budget those funds are and which organizations and agencies and programs are being funded or dealt with under this Family Fund.

Mr. Gillehammer: When we announced the restructuring, we announced four reforms that were going along with that, the Child Advocate, the high-risk indicators, the automated information system and the Family Fund. At this time we have not been able to develop that to the extent that I would have hoped that we could by this time and those funds are found within a number of areas of the budget.

In the Child and Family Services division, we have a line for family support activities of \$1 million. It includes also a grant to Rossbrook House, the Manitoba Metis Federation, the Pregnancy Distress Service Incorporated, The Pas Community Action Centre, Family Services of Winnipeg Incorporated, Ma Mawi Centre Inc., the Indian and Metis Friendship Centres, the Big Brothers and Big Sisters organizations, the Women's Resource Centres and the Age and Opportunity Centre. As well, there is also funding within established programs for rehabilitation and community living and some of the other advocacy organizations.

So we have not broken that funding out into a separate line at this time. Of the four reforms that we announced, it is the one that has received the least attention to this point in time. I would hope in next year's budget we would be able to give more profile to that fund.

Ms. Barrett: Those agencies that the minister referred to in his response, those funds that are part of the family fund that are going to those agencies, although they are not specifically broken out, when the organizations receive funding from the government, do they receive those funds as clearly

identified as family fund prevention money or are they just again part of the grant that the government gives to these agencies?

Mr. Gilleshammer: In this budget year they are part of a general purpose grant and do not have the detail attached to them as far as service provision goes, but by next year I would hope that we are able to do that.

Ms. Barrett: Since this money is supposedly—or at least in last year's Estimates was to be identified as prevention money, what you are hoping for in the next budget is what you hoped for last year, which is to be able to isolate that money and specifically address it to prevention programming within those agencies. If that is the case, would that then mean that money would be found-from-within money or would it be additional funding, so that if it were found from within, agencies would have to deal with less untied money and more tied program funding. Is that accurate?

Mr. Gilleshammer: It is difficult to start talking about next year's budget and what appropriations we may have and what increases are going to be in next year's budget. [interjection]

I would be prepared to give way to the deputy critic of Family Services if he has additional questions, but I suspect he does not.

We are going to work with a number of these groups where the grant has simply been a general purpose grant and try and have them identify more and more the specific programming that they are providing under this area of family support and family programming. So again, of the four reforms that we announced I readily admit it is one that we have not made as much progress on as the others.

Ms. Barrett: I understand that we are not yet in next year's Estimates, but I do think that the historical precedent of this government in making changes in the middle of fiscal years, major changes to funding, to agencies' existences, to program and campaign existences, requires that we be as vigilant as possible in trying to make sure that the minister is held as accountable as possible to the programs and the objectives that he states year after year. I just want to put on record the fact that the government is yet again trying to deal with a family fund. I would just hope that funds, if they are clarified in next year's budget, do not jeopardize but only enhance the programming that is already being provided by those agencies.

Mr. Gilleshammer: I appreciate the member's vigilance. I can tell you it does not go unnoticed. I know that, when you came out to western Manitoba for that great event that we had out there a few weeks back, people were anxious to know who that critic was that was always raising significant issues with Family Services. Your vigilance is not only appreciated by this minister but by the people of Manitoba.

Madam Chairperson: Item 6.(b)(1) Salaries \$1,985,800—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$2,809,900—pass; (3) Maintenance of Children and External Agencies \$91,788,600—pass.

6.(c) Seven Oaks Youth Centre.

Ms. Barrett: I would like the minister to explain under Seven Oaks Youth Centre the footnote No. 1, which discusses a decrease in the professional and technical staffing of the Seven Oaks Youth Centre. The statement says: "The decrease reflects workforce adjustments." If the minister could respond to that?

* (1700)

Madam Chairperson: Order, please. The hour being 5 p.m., I am interrupting the proceedings for private members' hour. This committee will reconvene at 8 p.m. this evening.

Call in the Speaker.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS—PRIVATE BILLS

Bill 52—The Pas Health Complex Incorporation Amendment Act

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable member for The Pas (Mr. Lathlin), Bill 52, The Pas Health Complex Incorporation Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi constituant en corporation "The Pas Health Complex," standing in the name of the honourable Minister of Urban Affairs (Mr. Ernst).

An Honourable Member: Stand.

Mr. Speaker: Stand. Is there leave that this matter remain standing? Leave. It is agreed.

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS—PUBLIC BILLS

Bill 16—The Health Care Directives Act

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable member for The Maples (Mr. Cheema), Bill 16, The Health Care Directives Act; Loi sur les directives en matière de soins de santé, standing in the name of the honourable Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard).

An Honourable Member: Stand.

Mr. Speaker: Stand. Is there leave that this matter remain standing? Leave. It is agreed.

Bill 18—The Franchises Act

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway), Bill 18, The Franchises Act; Loi sur les concessions, standing in the name of the honourable member for Sturgeon Creek (Mr. McAlpine).

An Honourable Member: Stand.

Mr. Speaker: Stand. Is there leave that this matter remain standing? Leave. It is agreed.

Bill 25—The University of Manitoba Amendment Act

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable member for Osborne (Mr. Alcock), Bill 25, The University of Manitoba Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'Université du Manitoba, standing in the name of the honourable member for St. Vital (Mrs. Render).

An Honourable Member: Stand.

Mr. Speaker: Stand. Is there leave that this matter remain standing? Leave. It is agreed.

Bill 27—The Business Practices Amendment Act

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable member for The Maples (Mr. Cheema), Bill 27, The Business Practices Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les pratiques commerciales, standing in the name of the honourable member for La Verendrye (Mr. Sveinson).

An Honourable Member: Stand.

Mr. Speaker: Stand. Is there leave that this matter remain standing? Leave. It is agreed.

Bill 31—The Municipal Amendment Act

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable member for St. Boniface (Mr. Gaudry), Bill 31, The Municipal Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les municipalités, standing in the name of the honourable member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Rose).

An Honourable Member: Stand.

Mr. Speaker: Stand. Is there leave that this matter remain standing? Leave. It is agreed.

Bill 50—The Beverage Container Act

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable Leader of the Second Opposition Party (Mrs. Carstairs), Bill 50, The Beverage Container Act; Loi sur les contenants de boisson, standing in the name of the honourable member for Gimli (Mr. Helwer).

An Honourable Member: Stand.

Mr. Speaker: Stand. Is there leave? Leave. It is agreed.

Bill 51—The Health Services Insurance Amendment Act

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable member for The Maples (Mr. Cheema), Bill 51, The Health Services Insurance Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'assurance-maladie, standing in the name of the honourable member for St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau).

An Honourable Member: Stand.

Mr. Speaker: Stand. Is there leave that this matter remain standing? Leave. It is agreed.

Bill 54—The Consumer Protection Amendment Act

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway), Bill 54, The Consumer Protection Amendment Act; Loi sur la protection du consommateur, standing in the name of the honourable member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett).

An Honourable Member: Stand.

Mr. Speaker: Stand. Is there leave that this matter remain standing? Leave. It is agreed.

Bill 55—The Workers Compensation Amendment Act (2)

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable member for Transcona (Mr. Reid), Bill 55, The Workers Compensation Amendment Act (2); Loi no 2 modifiant la Loi sur les accidents du travail. I got that. That is mine.

* * *

Second readings, Public Bills, Bill 36, The Health Care Records Act; Loi sur les dossiers médicaux—no, we are not proceeding with that one.

Are we proceeding with Bill 56? No, okay. Are we proceeding with Bill 66? No, okay.

PROPOSED RESOLUTIONS

Res. 14—Fire Safety Safari

Mrs. Shirley Render (St. Vital): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Niakwa (Mr. Reimer)

WHEREAS the government has supported the introduction of an imaginative approach to fire safety designed for the elementary school level; and

WHEREAS fires occurring in the home are a serious problem in Manitoba; and

WHEREAS approximately one-third of all fires occur in family dwellings; and

WHEREAS residential fires account for 80 percent of the fire fatalities and injuries within the province; and

WHEREAS the main focus is fire prevention and awareness in the home with the target audience being grades three to six; and

WHEREAS public fire safety education initiatives contribute greatly to the safety of communities throughout the province.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba support the Fire Commissioner's Office for the implementation of the Fire Safety Safari, the new fire prevention program, and encourage all citizens of Manitoba to participate in this program at local levels for the benefit and safety of their children.

Motion presented.

Mrs. Render: It gives me great pleasure to rise to speak to this resolution. I know that some people thought that a resolution named such as Fire Safety Safari program might be a frivolous kind of

resolution, but really I find it hard to imagine how anybody could think that fire safety or prevention of fire could be something frivolous.

I just wonder how many people realize that one-third of all fires in Manitoba occur in the home and that 80 percent of all deaths and injuries caused by fires are also in the home. So, Mr. Speaker, I think that any program that is aimed at reducing the number of fires, reducing the number of deaths and injuries is a very good step to take.

Some of you, I am sure, will remember an article in the newspaper not too long ago about a fire in a home that was caused by a couple of young children. In fact, shortly after that particular fire, I remember reading another article in the newspaper where there were two young children in the home and both of the children just sort of sat by idly, because they did not recognize the dangers that were in the home.

Because the Fire Commissioner has recognized the fact that most of the fires in a home can be prevented, and many of those fires can be prevented by children, he has put together a program, which incidentally was produced solely in Manitoba, which will teach students, young students, aimed at the grade 3 to grade 6, how to look out for some of these fire hazards. It is called the Home Fire Safety Safari program, and the two heroes in this program are a young boy called Nero and a very safety-smart cat called Ashcan. Just picture, fellow MLAs, the Fire Commissioner going out to the school in his uniform and with a big red package—I am just sorry that I cannot bring these things into the House—with a number of buttons in it. It is a very fancy button, and I just happen to be wearing one today, so I hope you all look over and see this fancy button that the students will get, and a very, very colourful poster and magnets and a safety booklet, which is called the Home Fire Safety Safari.

The word "safari" was used simply because a safari is like a journey and a home can be like a jungle, a jungle of traps. [interjection] Yes, as the member said, a home is full of booby traps, and that is exactly how the program is demonstrated to the students.

The teacher or the Fire Commissioner in this instance takes a student through each of the rooms in a home. They usually start off in the kitchen, and they teach the students that things that are put too near to a stove such as tea towels or oven mitts can

be a potential hazard, or a pot handle that is hanging over the edge of the stove, or some of these young children will watch their mothers in the morning as the moms are hurrying to prepare breakfast.

All mothers, I am sure, at seven o'clock in the morning wear housecoats with droopy sleeves, and the sleeves are dangling over the elements. Now, if that child has had that fire safety prevention program, that child is more likely to say to his mother: Mom, you are doing something that is unsafe. Your sleeve of your housecoat could catch on fire. [interjection]

* (1710)

Well, yes, the child could also say, Mom, roll up your sleeve, but I guess what I am saying is, if the child is not conscious of what can cause a fire, how can that child possibly do anything to prevent a fire?

The Fire Commissioner, as I say, goes right through the whole house. They start in the kitchen; they teach the children what kinds of things to look out for in the kitchen. Then they move to the living room and the family room, and, of course, there are things like careless smoking or electrical cords in poor repair. Of course, all of us have seen the cords. Sometimes we get a little lazy and we shove the cords under the rugs or we jam a whole pile of cords into one socket, and we know darn well that is not smart, but if we have our children saying to us, gee, Mom, gee, Dad, you should not do that, the Fire Commissioner told us in school today. [interjection] No, I do not do that, and I know the Minister responsible for Seniors (Mr. Ducharme) does not do that.

Of course, there are other things that sometimes many of us do not even think about. The fact that sometimes we jam our TV and our stereo equipment into areas that do not have enough ventilation or space heaters that are too close to things that could cause a curtain or magazines to burn.

Then the Fire Commissioner says to the children, okay, now we have gone to the kitchen, which is the room that is most often used in a house, and the living room, family room, which are other rooms that are most often used; then they head to the bedrooms and the bathrooms. Of course, the Fire Commissioner zeroes in on things like smoking in bed.

I know that no members around here smoke in bed, but you would be surprised at how many other people do. Again, many, many fires—in fact, one of

the most recent fires in an apartment block about four weeks ago was determined by the Fire Commissioner to have been started by somebody carelessly smoking in bed. If you have young children saying, Mom, Dad, you must not do that, parents are very likely to listen to a child who has been educated in this way, and a child who has brought home a pamphlet from the school, and who leads the parents, as they have been led by the fire chief, on this fire safety trip through their home.

(Mr. Ben Sveinson, Acting Speaker, in the Chair)

Once the child goes through all of the rooms—now I mentioned the kitchen, the living room, the family room, the bedroom and the bathroom, but there is also the basement, and, of course, all of us have basements that are usually full of rubbish, flammable liquids such as gasoline, and then of course the Fire Commissioner says to the children, where else can you look in your home? I remember when this was first introduced, it happened to be introduced in a school in the constituency of St. Vital. It was Glenwood School, and I was out there at the very first presentation of this program by the Fire Commissioner. I was very interested to learn, when I listened to the Fire Commissioner ask questions, these children were very, very in tune for some of the things that all of us are sort of in tune with, like not smoking in bed, but there are a lot of things that the children really did not realize were dangerous concepts, were very dangerous kinds of habits that all of us get into.

Some of the things that the children did not realize were things such as flammable liquids and paint and that sort of thing which all of us tend to store in the garage. Of course, we think, well, if mom and dad store these in the garage, it must be okay, but the Fire Commissioner pointed out to the children that it was not okay, that if you store these things, they must be stored in proper kinds of containers. They should be stored outside. They should be stored in areas where you get good ventilation.

Then the Fire Commissioner also talked about some of the other activities which can also be dangerous such as lawn mowers or snowblowers and about refuelling of these things, so that you were not putting gas into a lawn mower or a snowblower in an enclosed environment, in an area where something could touch off a spark and possibly cause an accident. [interjection] As the member for Niakwa (Mr. Reimer) says, it will go boom.

One of the reasons why I think this program is so good is because it is not a dry kind of program. As I say, the Fire Commissioner goes out to the school with his uniform on; he goes out with the big red kit; he goes out with posters, very decorative posters and buttons and magnets; and it is a very, very imaginative approach. It is not a dry kind of approach where the students sort of sit there, and they close their eyes and they say ho ho hum.

An Honourable Member: It is not a fear program.

Mrs. Render: No, it is not a fear program, but it is a very educational kind of program, and the children learn, because as we say, it is a jungle, it is a trip through the house, a house that can be a jungle full of unsafe areas. Of course, the fact that they use cartoon characters with funny names, like Nero and Ashcan, these are just all the kinds of things that will grab the students' attention.

Of course, they also have a video that they show at the school, and they give a little booklet that they give to the children to take home. The children are asked to follow the booklet and take their parents through this safari in their own home. Once the child does this, they will receive buttons designating them as official guides, and that is very important.

The buttons, and I hope that all members will note that I am wearing one of these buttons, and the students feel very proud when they come back to school because that shows that they have taken their parents through this fire safety program, that they have passed that program, and they get to wear this button, because they are officially designated as official guides.

Once they get through that program, they also get something else. They get a magnet to put on their fridge.

Now, the cost of the program, because this is one of the questions I have been asked, is about \$75,000, which when you think of the cost in lives, in the cost of destroyed homes, in destroyed belongings, is really a negligible cost when you consider the fact that it is human lives that are involved.

Mr. Acting Speaker, I wonder if you would tell me what kind of time I have left? Okay.

So, I just really want to reiterate a few things. Let me just talk about the minister who is responsible for bringing this in. It is the Minister of Labour (Mr. Praznik), the minister responsible for the Fire Commissioner's Office.

As the Minister of Labour told me, this program is the second in a series. The series is called Nero and the Ashcan series. As I mentioned earlier it follows the adventures of a young boy called Nero and his very safety-smart cat called Ashcan as they learn about fire prevention.

I think I mentioned earlier that the program was totally designed in Manitoba, and I think that is good. I do not know if there are any other programs of this nature in Canada, but I think it is good that we have designed a program right here in this province that is made in Manitoba. Of course, all program materials were conceived and designed and produced right here in the province.

This program was introduced last fall, October 1991, in Glenwood School in the constituency of St. Vital and since then it has been introduced into, I understand, hundreds of schools throughout the province and is aimed at students in Grades 3 to 6. As I say, it is the fire chiefs that go out to the school.

Each fire department has received an education kit which includes a step-by-step lesson plan so each of the fire chiefs presents the program in the identical way so each student gets the same kind of instruction, the same kind of information as given out to the student, to the teachers. As I mentioned, each student takes home a number of little pamphlets, a number of little brochures and the button, and once they have completed the program then they get a magnet to go on their fridge as a souvenir, and it is called a Nero and Ashcan fridge magnet.

It really draws the whole family into this program of fire safety prevention. That, fellow members, is really the only way we are going to cut down on home fires is to bring the whole family into the education process. Education is the way to go, and education is not just for adults, education is for young children also.

If we can start bringing in our young people then that is a very good step to make. Many times it is our young people who say to their parents, Mom and Dad, this is how it should be done; Mom and Dad, please be careful. I learned this from the fire chief. This is unsafe. Quite often parents will listen to their young children talk about fire safety.

* (1720)

Once again, I just want to commend this program. I think this Fire Safety Safari Program that was introduced by the Minister of Labour (Mr. Praznik)

and the Fire Commissioner and aimed at the Grades 3 to 6 students is an excellent way to help prevent fires in the home and to make all of us far more conscious of the things that sometimes we do with no thought but which eventually and ultimately lead to very destructive fires and, of course, to the destruction not only of homes but to human life. So I hope this program continues throughout the province so that all of our young people will have the opportunity of learning from it and, just as importantly, their parents too will have the opportunity of learning about this very vital program and we will cut down on the fires that result.

Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona): Mr. Acting Speaker, I will not be closing debate on this particular piece of legislation like the members opposite have raised. I know that was part of the debate that was in this Chamber Thursday last when we were discussing another very important piece of legislation that was before us dealing with The Workers Compensation Amendment Act, Bill 55, which I was very proud and pleased to be the sponsor of. I believe that piece of legislation should still go forward, because it provides the necessary support and coverages for those that fight the fires, because we are on the topic of firefighting and fire protection in our province, because that would provide protection to the firefighters and those that provide that level of support to us in this province.

Going back to the resolution at hand, Mr. Acting Speaker, this is, I believe, a very, very important resolution for us. It provides to us in this province some level of guidance in that we can provide educational opportunities for our young people. We look at the content of this particular resolution itself and see that the target audience is for Grades 3 to 6. This resolution, I believe even for my own family, has some impact because, like many other members of this Chamber, we have young families and this would impact upon us and the safety in our homes. There are several things that I note that were omitted, I believe very serious items that were omitted to be discussed here by the person bringing forward the resolution. I feel it is incumbent upon me to raise these as issues that should be mentioned.

What we find, Mr. Acting Speaker, and it seems to be quite common around the Christmas holiday season where we see our heating systems in our homes in a large part of our province, in particular the rural areas of our province, we see a large

number of fires that occur during that time of the season, and it is a very, very sad situation. We see quite often, and far too often, that there is loss of life, and most times there are young children that are involved. That is why I believe that this resolution can have some impact upon the young people in our province by making them aware of safety in their own homes.

In our own home, Mr. Acting Speaker, I know we try to educate our own children—and I know my neighbours do the same—in fire safety, not only to the point of having home fire extinguishers, which was omitted in the discussion by the member bringing forward this resolution. I believe fire extinguishers should be in every home as a means of first response to any minor fire emergency that might occur in a home.

Now, I say "minor" in the sense that there are sometimes small fires that can be immediately extinguished if someone has the presence of mind to grab a fire extinguisher, if it is available, to attend the fire scene and to put out that particular fire without having to call the fire company to attend. But quite often we see that fires occur that are beyond the means of anyone within the home extinguishing those particular blazes. All too often, we see that there are young children who are trapped within those residences or dwellings. I believe it is important that the children themselves should be taught, at the earliest possible age, fire safety in the home, and means of exit from the home in the event of a fire.

What we have undertaken to teach to our children and our neighbours have undertaken to teach to their children, because we have discussed this issue in our homes, in our community, is that in the event of a fire occurring in one particular portion of our house, we quiz our children and ask them if they know of the quickest and safest possible means of leaving the building without having to pass through a particular fire spot within the home.

So we tried to teach our children that you can exit that building by leaving through the windows. Even if you have to smash that window during the course of a fire, it is much more important that you leave the building by the safest possible means and not have to pass through the fire.

We also teach, if there are smoke-filled rooms, to move down to the floor level, that is where the air will remain the easiest to breathe for our children in the event of a fire; and also to have smoke alarms,

because they are very commonly available now in most of the hardware stores throughout the province, and at a very modest cost, for this particular type of protection, an early warning type of device.

I did not note that fire extinguishers and smoke detectors were part of the topic of conversation that the member for St. Vital (Ms. Render) had brought forward when introducing this resolution. I believe that those are two items that can lead to increased protection and security for the families in their homes.

The member for St. Vital talked about mothers and fathers playing a role in the education of the young people. Well, I must inform the member for St. Vital that there are a lot of homes in our provinces here in this province that are not two-parent homes. There are a lot of single family homes where there is only one parent and that onus then falls upon the one parent to educate the children who are in their care.

It is not only the parent or the parents who have to educate the children on fire safety within the home, but it is the grandparents who should be involved, and the baby sitters of those children who may come to the home. There should be programs to instruct those people, anyone coming into the home, tending to the care of the children within the home, that those people coming in there to provide that care are also aware of fire safety precautions and what actions to take in the event of a fire within the home.

So there is a lot of education that has to take place in this process—the parents, the grandparents, the baby sitters, the children—because it is the children and the families that we are looking to protect here.

There are many causes, not only just fire, that cause us to leave our homes. There is an issue in my own community of Transcona dealing with faulty furnaces, carbon monoxide poisoning in our homes. This issue is very important to our people, because we found that some of our young people, our very young children, and I am talking infants here, have been, we believe, poisoned by carbon monoxide gas.

So there are many other causes that we have to educate our children to be aware of. We have to take steps to protect them in the ways that we see the most efficient as far as educating our young children.

The member for St. Vital (Mrs. Render) talked, in her comments on her resolution, about video programs for elementary school children. That may be one way of teaching the children, booklets for those young children that can read, and I see that Grades 3 to 6 are the target area. By Grade 3 there is a good chance that they will have a good grasp of reading skills, so they will be able to read some type of booklet. Educational programs—I am well aware of the booklet. I can assure the member for St. Vital that my children have talked with me about this on many occasions, and we want to ensure that their safety is protected, as I am sure all members of this Chamber would for their families and for the residents of their communities.

We see all too often, going back to fires that occur in—it seems to be an increased incidence of them in the Christmas holiday season—very tragic circumstances any time we see a fire where there is loss of life.

Quite often we see that there are young people, young children left unattended in their homes. That is where I believe that, if we had educational programs in place in the home and in the schools to educate the young people to the hazards of fire and how best to protect themselves, even if these children are left unattended, which is not proper, but if they are left unattended, they will have the presence of mind on how to remove themselves from a very difficult situation should a fire occur in the home.

* (1730)

Fires, of course, are caused by many different circumstances. There could be electrical cords, the overloading of outlets in the home, improper electrical services, worn or abused equipment not attended to by way of repairs, and smoking in bed—a major cause of residential fires, mattress fires.

This is something that is going to be very difficult to eradicate even with an educational process in place, and reading in the headlines of our newspapers throughout the course of the year of the fires that take place. Seeing these fires happening in our own communities and knowing that they are happening as a result of the habit of smoking in bed still have not changed the practices of many adults who continue to put themselves at risk and their families at risk.

The member for St. Vital (Mrs. Render) talked about lapel buttons and fridge magnets. Well, this may be important to her as a way of demonstrating

her support for this particular type of program, but this is not the only way that we can educate our young people.

Lapel buttons and fridge magnets are not the answer. Education of our young people is. The more time we spend speaking one-on-one with our young people in our families, in our communities, in our schools, the more that message will be reinforced with our young people.

So we have to take this educational program to the furthest extent that we can to educate our young people. The Minister of Labour (Mr. Praznik) thinks that this is not a very serious matter, that we stand up here today and we add our comments to indicate our support and our interest in providing some education for our young people and for our families in this province.

It is unfortunate that he does not think this is a serious matter, because if he had the opportunity, I am sure that he will have the chance to stand up and put his comments on the record—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Sveinson): Order, please.

Point of Order

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Labour): Of course, this is a very serious matter. Just because the member did not understand the essence of the Nero and Ashcan kit does not mean that I am not taking this seriously. Certainly, I am taking this seriously. The member to imply that from his seat in his speech is just wrong.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Sveinson): The honourable Minister of Labour (Mr. Praznik) does not have a point of order. It is a dispute over the facts.

* * *

Mr. Reid: Mr. Acting Speaker, it is unfortunate the Minister of Labour took exception with the comments I had made with respect to this resolution. I see the other members of the House are a bit sensitive as well. I am sure the other members of the House take this matter very seriously, but I was only listening to what comments the Minister of Labour (Mr. Praznik) was making on this topic. I am sure all of us take fire safety as a very serious issue. Otherwise, we would not be here debating it today, and this resolution would not have been brought forward.

There is also one other area that comes to mind, talking about fire safety. We think back to the bill that is before this House, talking about Headingley seceding from the City of Winnipeg. It would be interesting to see what type of fire protection the community of Headingley will have to lend that type of support in fire protection for the residents of Headingley when they do secede from the City of Winnipeg.

There are many issues that have to be talked about here today and to be debated, and we look forward to further comments by other members on this particular resolution. Thank you.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Acting Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to stand up to comment or put some words on the record on behalf of the Liberal caucus regarding this particular resolution [interjection] and the member for St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau) says, and support. Yes, we do support the resolution. After all, one has to ask the question, who could not support the resolution?

Mr. Acting Speaker, I would call into question why it is the resolution was brought forward from a private member; why, if the government was serious in terms of giving out accolades, we did not see a ministerial statement; why, if the government was serious about the issue, in particular the member not serious about the issue, why was there not any sort of public announcement made with representatives from the government and, say, to the Minister of Labour (Mr. Praznik)? Was there a government minister there for the press conference?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Sveinson): Order, please. I am having trouble hearing the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux). Those who wish to carry on conversations, would they do so in a loge or perhaps out of the Assembly.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Acting Speaker, I appreciate your comments and will try to be as brief as possible on this particular resolution because, as I say from the onset, it is a resolution which one cannot oppose. A resolution is an opportunity for members to bring forward to this Chamber issues, specific issues, issues that deal with policy, issues that in fact deal with local concerns of we as individuals.

I, in fact, had brought forward a resolution dealing with the environment, an initiative that was taken upon by a number of elementary children in my area. This is an initiative that has been taken on behalf of

the member for St. Vital (Mrs. Render), and I commend her on taking the initiative for it.

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair)

But I am, as I say, disappointed in terms of the government, and the government, if they feel that the program is as highly appreciated in their own caucus, one would have thought that the very least we would have seen is some sort of a ministerial statement. There are hundreds of programs that are available. Most of those programs we have seen some sort of comment on, whether through the Estimates process, whether it is through debate on bills, there is always some sort of a comment in regard to different programs that are announced from the government. But, Mr. Speaker, if we took a resolution for every program that is out there that we as a House accept as a good program, well, we would not have enough time through the year to deal with each and every program.

I do not want to, by saying that, underestimate the importance of the contents of this resolution, because I like to think that there is no member inside this Chamber who would oppose the resolution. In fact, all of us would have enough principle to recognize the program as an excellent program worth its weight in gold. In fact, Mr. Speaker, it was just the other day when I was watching a program—I think it was on CBC; it could have been on CTV. It was regarding 911—[interjection] No, they do not watch CBC.

Well, I cannot really recall which program, but I believe it was 911. For 20 minutes they talked about fire safety and fire prevention, and there were a couple of kids who had the privilege of going to the school, of being taught fire prevention. Then two months after that, their house burned to the ground, and the reason why those kids are alive today, as had been explained in detail through this particular program, was because of the course, because the course was made available in that particular school facility. The children had the know-how, had the knowledge in knowing what to do if, in fact, a fire occurs.

Mr. Speaker, I know there are so many cases in which individuals who have had a course of this nature or have learned what to do in the case of fires that we all win in the sense that the more we have an educated population when it comes to fire prevention, the amount of damage both emotionally and materially will be minimized.

In reading through the WHEREASes, it is pointed out fairly clearly in the fourth resolution, where it says: WHEREAS residential fires account for 80 percent of the fire fatalities and injuries within the province. Well, I would argue that a program of this neighbourhood where the initiative came from, the Fire Commissioner's Office and other individuals will go a long way in bringing down that statistic in making it more favourable.

* (1740)

So, Mr. Speaker, the resolution as it is worded is a resolution that does warrant the support of the Chamber. One of the things that is lacking from the resolution is any sort of direction that the government might have. It is all fine and dandy to talk about what it is or what program is being made available, from whom, where the initiative has come from, but is the government itself willing to commit the necessary resources?—whether it is one of information, whether it is one of financial, to ensure that in fact the program is being enhanced in some way or another other than just taking a program and saying that this is a wonderful program, let us commend everyone that has been involved in the program and so forth.

That is something that could be done for so many different worthwhile programs, and there are ways in which—and I pointed out or I alluded to one at the beginning through ministerial statements, through the Estimates process that allows for it. What discourages me is that if the government chose to start using private members' hour for things of this nature, policy issues would not necessarily get the treatment which they could if through private members' hour we were talking about more questions of policy.

I do not want to question the sincerity from the member for St. Vital (Mrs. Render), because I like to think or at least I hope and I trust that in fact this resolution is here because she feels obligated to bring it to this Chamber. It is not my place to question motives or impute motives because after all it is private members' hour.

Mr. Speaker, members of all three political parties should be well aware that when we go through the Estimates or government bills that that is another opportunity for nonpolitical statements or, for the government, ministerial statements, that provides another alternative to making a resolution. We have to be very careful as to the very limited amount of time that we have during private members' hours

to deal with resolutions, that we are touching the broader issues.

Mr. Speaker, that is one of my overriding concerns. I do not want the government or, in particular, the member for St. Vital (Mrs. Render), to misinterpret what it is that I am saying. I believe in her sincerity of this particular resolution; I believe that all members of this Chamber—Mr. Speaker, I would ask that you let me know when I have a minute because I do have an amendment that I would like to move on this particular resolution. If you would give me notice on a minute, I would take that opportunity to move it.

Mr. Speaker, where was I? Well, the education is very important. It is very important, and we cannot underestimate the importance of implementing programs of this nature through or within our schools. The government can find ways in which to become more involved, in fact, encourage individuals, students, to participate and retain what it is to give them a sense of feeling good about they have done: things such as certificates.

What about providing some form of certificates for those who have had the course? So the children can go home and they can show Mom and Dad, or one parent or their guardian, what it is that they have done today. They can put it on their wall. They can see whenever they look on the wall that, yes, they have graduated from a course on fire prevention, that they stayed in tune in terms of sitting down, listening to what makes individuals and our homes more protected.

So I see that I have less than two minutes, Mr. Speaker, so I am going to move, seconded by the member for St. Boniface (Mr. Gaudry), added after the final clause:

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Assembly urge the government of Manitoba to consider arranging for the issuing of certificates to all participants in the program in order to recognize and emphasize its benefits.

Motion presented.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable member's amendment is in order.

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to indicate that this is a very interesting amendment that the member is putting forward, and one that if the member for St. Vital (Mrs. Render) as a sponsor of this is supportive of, I think members on this side should have no problem supporting that.

I would like to—just a few short words because I know members of this House would like to be able to vote on this amendment. I would like to thank the member for St. Vital (Mrs. Render). I know that the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) has put some comments on the record as to why this resolution would come forward, but I would just like to remind the honourable member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux), and I am sure my friends in the New Democratic Party would concur with this statement, that this particular time is a time that is available to all private members of this House to bring forward resolutions that they feel are worthy of consideration of this Chamber.

That is a right, Mr. Speaker, that all private members, whatever party, have had, and it is a fundamental right of members of this House. To say that some resolutions are better than others, or that because a member sits as a member of a party in support of the administration of this province, that somehow that right is any less, for a member of the third party, with but six members in this House, to be questioning the rights of private members is indeed very shameful, Mr. Speaker—shameful indeed.

I would like to just point out to members of this House that the member for St. Vital (Mrs. Render) was part of the kick-off for this campaign that was created by staff in the Fire Commissioner's Office, that she took an active role in promoting this particular campaign in her own constituency in the St. Vital community in our capital city of Winnipeg and has been very supportive of these efforts. I am very honoured that she would bring forward this resolution.

* (1750)

I would like to thank members opposite who have made some very kind comments about the thrust of the Fire Commissioner's Office in fire prevention. I would, on behalf of the staff in the Fire Commissioner's Office, thank members who have made those comments, because we as ministers are often backed by very good hard-working public servants who do a super job at what they do. The creation of Nero and Ashcan as characters in fire safety prevention, the creation of this particular campaign, was the work of some excellent staff people in the office of the Fire Commissioner. I as the minister responsible today would like to put on the record my gratitude and I think the gratitude of all members of the House for the work that they do.

I know the member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk) may want to make a few comments.

I would just like to say, Mr. Speaker, that the importance of having young people aware of fire hazards and putting pressure on their parents in the home to clean up those hazards, whether they be daily hazards or Christmas tree lights, as the member for Transcona (Mr. Reid) has pointed out, which is certainly an area that has to be addressed, is very important. I think the support of all members for that cause means a great deal to staff in the Fire Commissioner's Office.

So, again, Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank all honourable members for their contributions to this debate, and they certainly will be conveyed to the staff in the Fire Commissioner's Office who did the work on this project.

Mr. Speaker: Is the House ready for the question? Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the amendment moved by the honourable member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux), seconded by the honourable member for St. Boniface (Mr. Gaudry), added after the final clause:

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Assembly urge the government of Manitoba to consider arranging for the issuing of certificates to all participants in the program in order to recognize and emphasize its benefits.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the amendment? That is agreed.

Now, the question before the House is the resolution as moved by the honourable member for St. Vital (Mrs. Render), seconded by the honourable member for Niakwa (Mr. Reimer):

WHEREAS the government has supported the introduction of an imaginative approach to fire safety designed for the elementary school level; and

WHEREAS fires occurring in the home are a serious problem in Manitoba; and

WHEREAS approximately one-third of all fires occur in family dwellings; and

WHEREAS residential fires account for 80 percent of the fire fatalities and injuries within the province; and

WHEREAS the main focus is fire prevention and awareness in the home with the target audience being Grades 3 to 6; and

WHEREAS public fire safety education initiatives contribute greatly to the safety of communities throughout the province.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba support the Fire Commissioner's Office for the implementation of the Fire Safety Safari, the new fire prevention program and encourage all citizens of Manitoba to participate in this program at local levels for the benefit and safety of their children.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion, as amended?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Mr. Speaker: The resolution is accordingly carried.

The hour being 6 p.m., this House is now recessed. I am leaving the Chair with the understanding that the House will reconvene at 8 p.m. tonight in Committee of Supply.

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

Tuesday, April 21, 1992

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