



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

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS
(HANSARD)**

42 Elizabeth II

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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
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, Cliff	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
GRAY, Avis	Crescentwood	Liberal
HELWER, Edward R.	Gimli	PC
HICKES, George	Point Douglas	NDP
LAMOUREUX, Kevin	Inkster	Liberal
LATHLIN, Oscar	The Pas	NDP
LAURENDEAU, Marcel	St. Norbert	PC
MALLOWAY, 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
ORCHARD, Donald, Hon.	Pembina	PC
PALLISTER, Brian	Portage la Prairie	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 Flon	NDP
SVEINSON, Ben	La Verendrye	PC
VODREY, Rosemary, Hon.	Fort Garry	PC
WASYLYCIA-LEIS, Judy	St. Johns	NDP
WOWCHUK, Rosann	Swan River	NDP
<i>Vacant</i>	Rossmere	
<i>Vacant</i>	Rupertsland	

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, June 3, 1993

The House met at 10 a.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Ms. Becky Barrett (Wellington): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Beverly DeSpiegelaere, Lawrence Van Den Bossche, Eileen Adam and others requesting the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) consider restoring the Children's Dental Program to the level it was prior to the 1993-94 budget.

* * *

Mr. Conrad Santos (Broadway): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Dow Fraser, Steve Landon, Carla Bruyere and others requesting the Premier (Mr. Filmon) to consider making as a major priority the establishment of a solvent abuse treatment facility in northern Manitoba.

* * *

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Marina Pittet, Richelle Lemieux, Nadine Bibault and others requesting the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) consider restoring the Children's Dental Program to the level it was prior to the 1993-94 budget.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Mr. Speaker: I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member (Ms. Wasylycia-Leis). It complies with the privileges and the practices of the House and complies with the rules (by leave). Is it the will of the House to have the petition read? [agreed]

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

WHEREAS there is a very serious solvent abuse problem in northern Manitoba; and

WHEREAS according to the RCMP over 100 crimes in Thompson alone in 1992 were linked to solvent abuse; and

WHEREAS there are no facilities to deal with solvent abuse victims in northern Manitoba; and

WHEREAS for over three years, the provincial government failed to proclaim the private member's anti-sniff bill passed by the Legislature and is now proposing to criminalize minors buying solvents even though there are no treatment facilities in northern Manitoba; and

WHEREAS for nine years, the 25 Chiefs who comprise the Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak, supported by medical officials, police and the area Member of Parliament, have proposed a pilot treatment project known as the Native Youth Medicine Lodge; and

WHEREAS successive federal Ministers of Health have failed to respond to this issue with a commitment; and

WHEREAS the Manitoba provincial government has a responsibility to ensure that there is adequate treatment for solvent abuse.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba may be pleased to request the Premier to consider making as a major priority, the establishment of a solvent abuse treatment facility in northern Manitoba.

* * *

Mr. Speaker: The honourable member for—no? Okay. Presenting Reports by Standing and Special Committees—

Order, please. Is there leave to revert to Reading and Receiving Petitions? [agreed]

* * *

Mr. Speaker: I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member (Mr. Storie). It complies with the privileges and the practices of the House and complies with the rules (by leave). Is it the will of the House to have the petition read? [agreed]

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

WHEREAS there is a very serious solvent abuse problem in northern Manitoba; and

WHEREAS according to the RCMP over 100 crimes in Thompson alone in 1992 were linked to solvent abuse; and

WHEREAS there are no facilities to deal with solvent abuse victims in northern Manitoba; and

WHEREAS for over three years, the provincial government failed to proclaim the private member's anti-sniff bill passed by the Legislature and is now proposing to criminalize minors buying solvents even though there are no treatment facilities in northern Manitoba; and

WHEREAS for nine years, the 25 Chiefs who comprise the Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak, supported by medical officials, police and the area Member of Parliament, have proposed a pilot treatment project known as the Native Youth Medicine Lodge; and

WHEREAS successive federal Ministers of Health have failed to respond to this issue with a commitment; and

WHEREAS the Manitoba provincial government has a responsibility to ensure that there is adequate treatment for solvent abuse.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba may be pleased to request the Premier to consider making as a major priority, the establishment of a solvent abuse treatment facility in northern Manitoba.

* (1005)

Mr. Speaker: I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member (Mr. Dewar). It complies with the privileges and the practices of the House and complies with the rules. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read? [agreed]

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

WHEREAS there is a very serious solvent abuse problem in northern Manitoba; and

WHEREAS according to the RCMP over 100 crimes in Thompson alone in 1992 were linked to solvent abuse; and

WHEREAS there are no facilities to deal with solvent abuse victims in northern Manitoba; and

WHEREAS for over three years, the provincial government failed to proclaim the private member's anti-sniff bill passed by the Legislature and is now proposing to criminalize minors buying solvents

even though there are no treatment facilities in northern Manitoba; and

WHEREAS for nine years, the 25 Chiefs who comprise the Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak, supported by medical officials, police and the area Member of Parliament, have proposed a pilot treatment project known as the Native Youth Medicine Lodge; and

WHEREAS successive federal Ministers of Health have failed to respond to this issue with a commitment; and

WHEREAS the Manitoba provincial government has a responsibility to ensure that there is adequate treatment for solvent abuse.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba may be pleased to request the Premier to consider making as a major priority, the establishment of a solvent abuse treatment facility in northern Manitoba.

* * *

Mr. Speaker: I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member (Ms. Wowchuk). It complies with the privileges and the practices of the House and complies with the rules (by leave). Is it the will of the House to have the petition read? [agreed]

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

WHEREAS the Canadian Wheat Board has played a vital role in the orderly marketing of Canadian wheat, barley and other grain products since its inception in 1935; and

WHEREAS the federal Minister of Agriculture is considering removing barley from the jurisdiction of the Wheat Board; and

WHEREAS this is another step towards dismantling the board; and

WHEREAS, as in the case with the removal of oats from the Wheat Board in 1989, there has been no consultation with the board of directors of the Wheat Board, with the 11-member advisory committee to the board or the producers themselves; and

WHEREAS the federal minister has said that there will be no plebiscite of farmers before the announcement is made.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba may be pleased to request the Manitoba Minister of

Agriculture (Mr. Findlay) to consider conducting a plebiscite of Manitoba farmers on this issue as soon as possible.

* * *

Mr. Speaker: I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member (Ms. Friesen). It complies with the privileges and the practices of the House and complies with the rules. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read? [agreed]

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

WHEREAS Manitoba has the highest rate of child poverty in the country; and

WHEREAS over 1,000 young adults are currently attempting to get off welfare and upgrade their education through the Student Social Allowances Program; and

WHEREAS Winnipeg already has the highest number of people on welfare in decades; and

WHEREAS the provincial government has already changed social assistance rules resulting in increased welfare costs for the City of Winnipeg; and

WHEREAS the provincial government is now proposing to eliminate the Student Social Allowances Program; and

WHEREAS eliminating the Student Social Allowances Program will result in more than a thousand young people being forced onto city welfare with no means of getting further full-time education, resulting in more long-term costs for city taxpayers.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba may be pleased to request the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer) to consider restoring funding of the Student Social Allowances Program.

* * *

Mr. Speaker: I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member (Mr. Clif Evans). It complies with the privileges and the practices of the House and complies with the rules. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read? [agreed]

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

WHEREAS there is a very serious solvent abuse problem in northern Manitoba; and

WHEREAS according to the RCMP over 100 crimes in Thompson alone in 1992 were linked to solvent abuse; and

WHEREAS there are no facilities to deal with solvent abuse victims in northern Manitoba; and

WHEREAS for over three years, the provincial government failed to proclaim the private member's anti-sniff bill passed by the Legislature and is now proposing to criminalize minors buying solvents even though there are no treatment facilities in northern Manitoba; and

WHEREAS for nine years, the 25 Chiefs who comprise the Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak, supported by medical officials, police and the area Member of Parliament, have proposed a pilot treatment project known as the Native Youth Medicine Lodge; and

WHEREAS successive federal Ministers of Health have failed to respond to this issue with a commitment; and

WHEREAS the Manitoba provincial government has a responsibility to ensure that there is adequate treatment for solvent abuse.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba may be pleased to request the Premier to consider making as a major priority, the establishment of a solvent abuse treatment facility in northern Manitoba.

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Highways and Transportation): Mr. Speaker, I would like to table the Highway Construction Programs for the Department of Highways and Transportation for the year '93-94.

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: Prior to Oral Questions, may I direct the attention of all honourable members to the loge to my right, where we have with us this morning Mr. Sid Green, the former MLA for Inkster.

On behalf of all honourable members, I would like to welcome you here this morning, sir.

Also with us this morning, we have from the Charleswood Junior High School one hundred and eighty Grade 9 students under the direction of Ms. Barbara Fitzjohn. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable Minister of Urban Affairs and Housing (Mr. Ernst).

On behalf of all honourable members, I would like to welcome you here this morning.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Canada-America Health Care Plan Introduction

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Lels (St. Johns): Mr. Speaker, the Premier told Americans yesterday in New York that he and we here in Canada want to keep universal medicare and, in fact, said it is part of the Canadian dream, but yet there are growing fears and concerns among Canadians about the future of our most prized social program and our national jewel.

Here in Manitoba we are seeing some worrisome trends with the opening some time ago of a private hospital and now, Mr. Speaker, very recently the opening of the American Medical Security right here in Winnipeg on Hargrave Street, a firm that offers for Manitobans the Canada-America Health Care Plan. That is an offensive move here in Manitoba. It is a worrisome concern.

I want to ask the Premier, in light of his comments and his longstanding, at least rhetorical commitment to medicare, if he feels it is appropriate for this kind of a firm that offers the Canada-America Health Care Plan to be opening here in Winnipeg and singling out seniors and advertising to seniors the benefits of an additional insurance plan to deal with waiting lists here in Manitoba.

* (1010)

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, I do not want to go into a lengthy dissertation, although I assume I will have as much time as the member did to ask her question, so that will give me plenty of time to say that the point I made to the American audience was that Canada was taking the steps necessary in all provinces through the reform of health care to ensure that we could continue to live within our means and continue to have the best health care system available anywhere in the world.

Despite the urgings of some people in the investment community, perhaps in the business community, that Canada could not afford to continue with a medicare scheme, I said that we continue to have a different idea, what we believe is a better idea than the Americans, and that is that universal health care can provide for the needs of all of our citizens and can indeed offer us the kind of security for our elderly people, for people with long-term

illnesses, so that they will never have to be destitute because of the costs of health care, and that we would continue to keep that as a very fundamental goal that was important to our society, that sets us apart from the Americans.

What they were seeing was the realization by governments of all political stripe that the way to do it was to work within the health care system to ensure that we fundamentally adjusted for the changing times, that through the reform of health care we would provide that health care on a more efficient basis, on a more effective basis, but that we would indeed continue to be committed to health care.

That was the gist of my remarks to them, and I might say that I think they were very well received, Mr. Speaker.

Government Action

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Lels (St. Johns): Mr. Speaker, then the Premier should be very concerned about the opening of an American firm here in Manitoba that advertises: Never worry again about having a long wait for hospital treatment.

I want to ask the Premier, since this firm charges, say, a family of seniors in the neighbourhood of \$1,600 a year for that coverage, which means a two-tiered health care system, which means people pay twice, which means the erosion of medicare, what is the Premier and his government doing to drive this kind of company out of business to make sure there is no market for this kind of insurance scheme and the creation of a two-tiered system.

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, what an incredible bias to suggest that the role of the government should be to drive the company out of business. I mean, she assumes some fundamental ignorance on the part of the public that they would willingly spend money for something they do not need.

The fact of the matter is, we have had reports here in this Legislature by the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) showing members opposite and others who have concerns as to how we are working to continue to reduce the waiting lists for people who needed surgery, showing in some areas that Manitoba ranks as well, in fact, in amongst the top provinces in the country in terms of short waiting lists.

We recognize that there are some other areas in which, for a whole variety of reasons, there may be unacceptably long waiting lists, and we are working to correct and improve that. We are working to improve the health care system through a program, a very thoughtful program of health care reform, which is something that is being opposed, step by step, by New Democrats.

The Liberal opposition, a very responsible opposition, with a knowledgeable critic, are working with the Minister of Health, encouraging him towards that goal. The New Democrats are just saying, no, no, no, do not do anything; let the program deteriorate so that we can take political advantage of it—Mr. Speaker, a very, very foolish attitude, a very, very irresponsible attitude. Obviously, Manitobans do not support that attitude.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: Mr. Speaker, I would have thought the Premier would have found it offensive to see this kind of advertisement—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I would remind the honourable member for St. Johns, this is not a time for debate.

The honourable member for St. Johns, with your question, please.

* (1015)

Health Care System Waiting Lists

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Lels (St. Johns): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask this government, since the presence of this company is obviously here because of a need and people's concern about waiting lists or their feelings that they are not able to access our health care system, where are the results of not only one, but two studies that this government undertook when they acknowledged waiting lists were longer than they should be and established and brought in outside consultants, reviews and studies to deal with the waiting list problem? Where are the results of—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member has put her question.

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I am very intrigued with my honourable friend's questions. I am really intrigued with my honourable friend's approach to how business can and should be undertaken in the province of Manitoba.

My honourable friend is holding up this new insurance company's venue as an answer to a lot of people's problems. When that was first announced to be coming to Manitoba I said, read the fine print. Mr. Speaker, I say that because if you read the fine print in some of the insurance provisions in the United States that my honourable friend seems now to be embracing—or whatever she is doing, I do not know—my honourable friend ought to have one single caution before she starts using—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Point of Order

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, this is a very serious matter. The minister should acknowledge that we have asked what this government is doing to drive out American health—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I would remind the honourable member for St. Johns that a point of order should not be used to direct another question.

* * *

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Speaker, I could indicate that my honourable friend is at least consistent, because when she was around the cabinet table, they drove out the U.S. consulate from Winnipeg.

Mr. Speaker, I want to tell my honourable friend that if she wants to talk about waiting lists and compare waiting lists in Manitoba to other provinces, I will undertake that scrutiny.

But more importantly, my honourable friend ought to consider the waiting list of 35 million Americans who do not have insurance and compare that to the 26 million Canadians who have universal access to our program, receive needed services and have care appropriately delivered in a very, very good system that is undergoing change, reform and shifts from B.C. to Newfoundland.

Despite the fact that my honourable friend from the comfort of opposition persists in resisting every single change proposed in Manitoba, even though they are being undertaken in Ontario, Saskatchewan, and British Columbia, I tell her to contact her confreres—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Point of Order

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: Yes, I regret that I must rise on another point of order, Mr. Speaker. I would like the minister to know that the last question I asked

was precisely the same question asked by the Liberal Health—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member for St. Johns knows she does not have a point of order.

ACCESS Programs Funding Reduction

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of Education.

As a result of this minister's action, funds for ACCESS programs at Manitoba's universities have been reduced by \$1.25 million. I would like to table the Estimates page on that.

As a result of this minister's action, there will be reductions in ACCESS programs of minus 24 percent at the Winnipeg Education Centre; of 19 percent in the Social Work program at the Winnipeg Education Centre; minus 19 percent in the University of Manitoba's ACCESS program North; minus 16 percent in the professional health programs; and the list goes on. I would like to table that report.

As a result of this minister's actions, only—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member for Wolseley, would you kindly put your question now, please.

Ms. Friesen: I would like to table that letter.

My question for the minister is: Where are the possible economic benefits to Manitoba of cuts such as these to the educational future of the most disadvantaged part of our community, people who come from communities where the unemployment levels are the highest in the—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member has put her question.

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, we have been discussing this issue for some time. I will begin by reminding the member again that the federal government has changed the way that it is funding ACCESS students. The provincial government has moved in to pick up the shortfall of the federal government, \$1.1 million last year.

I will remind her, Mr. Speaker, that in fact, our commitment to ACCESS programs still remains at \$9.9 million, and that we do have a total funded intake of more than 11 students.

* (1020)

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Speaker, the minister continues with the view that it was the role of the federal government.

Two years ago, the federal government did cut back, and I want to ask this minister, who has made such a public commitment to Kim Campbell, has she conveyed her views that those cuts to ACCESS are unconscionable? Will she tell these ACCESS students and this House, how the world is going to be different under the Minister of Defence?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Speaker, I will be pleased to table in the Estimates process a letter that I have written to the federal minister responsible, to put forward Manitoba's position and to explain that it is unconscionable, what had happened in terms of the federal funding for ACCESS programs.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Speaker, has this minister, whose education policy includes building better golf courses and better car dealerships in the city of Winnipeg—will she tell us what the cumulative effects of her education policy are, the million-dollar grabs from ACCESS, from New Careers and from Student Social Allowances?

What is the effect—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Speaker, let me just tell the member the total amount of money that is provided for ACCESS students and for ACCESS supports.

ACCESS students do receive a bursary. ACCESS students also receive rental subsidy. ACCESS students also receive transportation allowance. ACCESS students also receive daycare expenses. They receive medical and optical benefits. They receive free tuition. They receive special supports.

We currently support 712 ACCESS students in this province and we have taken in new intakes this year.

Gimli Country Resort Audit

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, for the past week, we have been examining the audits which have been conducted on the Immigrant Investor Fund. We have become concerned about those projects that have not been audited.

On August 3, 1989, this government approved a project to Lakeview Developments, from immigration investment funds, called the Gimli

Country Resort. We raised questions about the appropriateness of that project in 1989. We know that the project was at least \$10 million of Immigrant Investor Funds.

Can the minister responsible tell this House why that has not been audited in light of the previous minister, the member for Charleswood's (Mr. Ernst) statement, that Lakeview has a proven track record in syndicating projects through the Immigrant Investor Program?

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism): Mr. Speaker, when we tabled our original audit report back in December of 1992, at the end of December, that made some specific recommendations in which some events had occurred at that particular time relating to the Sheraton Hotel here in Winnipeg, we decided to undertake a review of specific funds.

We basically looked at doing the maximum amount in terms of the dollar amount of Immigrant Investor Funds in Manitoba that we could. So we undertook five of the largest funds which totalled some \$101 million out of approximately \$200 million of Immigrant Investor Funds in the province of Manitoba.

It was on that basis that we chose the funds that were originally done. We all now have seen the audits. We have provided all of that information to everybody in this Chamber and the public at large.

From those audits, we made a series of recommendations to the federal government in terms of how we see improving the program. I think everybody in this Chamber knows we have withdrawn from the program. We are not participating in the program as a result of those audits.

To do more historical audits might very well confirm a lot of what we have just found which is historical. What we are doing today and have been doing over the last many months is saying, this is a program that has problems; it is a federal program and should be treated the same across Canada.

The federal government has a responsibility in terms of compliance, monitoring and due diligence. We have indicated to them, get on with doing that.

* (1025)

Mrs. Carstairs: Mr. Speaker, the reality is this is one of the very few, or at least the only one project that we know of, that actually had a contribution of

provincial dollars, all the more reason it would seem to me for the province to conduct an audit to see what happened to their \$1 million of funds.

Can the minister tell us today why, since there was provincial money involved, not just immigrant investor money, this government chose not to do an audit in the same process that they did the audits of other uses of Immigrant Investor Funds?

Mr. Stefanson: Mr. Speaker, I have just outlined in great detail for the Leader of the second opposition party why. When she refers to the support provided to the Gimli resort project under the Canada-Manitoba Tourism Agreement, a joint agreement between the federal and provincial governments, I think, as the Leader of the second opposition party knows, that is a form of support that is forgivable over a period of time subject to meeting certain conditions, that the province and federal government take back security for those funds in the form of the real estate itself, in the form of the hotel that is up and built and functioning and operating out in Gimli.

Mr. Speaker, we are in the process of completing the first phase of that particular audit on the million dollars that was provided. That forgiveness is given over a five-year period of time at approximately \$200,000 a year if all conditions are met. We will be determining whether or not all conditions have in fact been met. It was tied to capital costs. We are reviewing those capital costs to confirm that they have in fact been met.

That is a part of the process that we do with the Canada-Manitoba Tourism Agreement, as we do with the Manufacturing Industrial Opportunities Program, as we do with a series of government initiatives.

Mrs. Carstairs: With the greatest respect, Mr. Speaker, that does not answer the question.

We have an Immigrant Investor Fund that, quite frankly, is in shambles, that has been badly managed, badly set up by this side, badly managed by that side. We have an Immigrant Investor Fund that gets a contribution for part of its project from this province. We conduct an audit of projects which get no government funding, an independent audit, but we do not do the same for this particular project. Is it because the government, quite frankly, did not want the independent audit to put egg directly all over the face of this government?

Mr. Stefanson: Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the second opposition party could not be more inaccurate if she tried. We are doing an audit of the funding support that we have provided, as we do under the Canada-Manitoba Tourism Agreement, as is done under all kinds of other financial programs. That support is tied to a series of conditions. It is tied to a minimum of a certain capital cost, in this case, some \$6.4 million or \$6.5 million. Part of our audit includes verifying that those costs did in fact occur, and there are other conditions. That is the nature of the financial support under the Canada-Manitoba Tourism Agreement.

We have a responsibility to do our audit to see that all terms and conditions are in fact met, and we are doing just that. I am not sure where she is heading with this entire issue. We have audited other Immigrant Investor Funds. They pointed to problems in that program, which is a separate program. We made very specific recommendations to improve that program, to improve the credibility. We have withdrawn from that program, and we will continue to press the federal government to resolve those issues.

Sunday Shopping Minister's Position

Mr. Jerry Storie (Flin Flon): Mr. Speaker, last night we began the process of public hearings on Sunday shopping legislation in the province of Manitoba. I have to say that the representation that we heard last night, certainly from rural Manitoba, was unanimous in its opposition to this, and the presenters expressed concern that no one was listening, certainly the rural members.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation has three strikes against it already as was pointed out last night. It is not wanted in rural Manitoba; it is not wanted by many merchants in the city of Winnipeg. The Canadian Federation of Independent Business says 57 percent of retailers are opposed to this. Finally, every single presenter said this government had shown cowardice in passing off this decision to the municipalities.

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Rural Development, the minister who is supposed to stand up for the interests of rural Manitoba: Does he support this legislation?

* (1030)

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Rural Development): Mr. Speaker, the member asks

whether or not I personally support this kind of legislation. Over the last year or so, this has been a point which has been discussed by UMM, MAUM and many of the organizations, the Chamber of Commerce of Manitoba. I have had extensive meetings with these organizations. There were resolutions that were presented at the floor of the general meetings of both MAUM and UMM.

Let me say that in discussing the approach that has been taken with MAUM and UMM, they did not indicate to me that they had any serious difficulty in their being able to make those decisions for their people in their communities, because they are the people who are closest to those communities.

Mr. Storie: Mr. Speaker, I do not know what world the Minister of Rural Development lives in, but I have dozens of letters from chambers and rural municipal councillors opposing this.

Legislation Amendments

Mr. Jerry Storie (Flin Flon): Mr. Speaker, my question is, again, to the Minister of Rural Development.

Given that last night, in a surprise to many, two representatives from major chains indicated that they would be satisfied with no Sunday shopping if there was a level playing field for the major chains, and given the fact that the Manitoba Chamber of Commerce and rural representatives there last night said they oppose this, my question is: Will this minister urge the government to strengthen the existing laws to meet the interests of the presenters last night, rather than barging ahead with wide-open Sunday shopping which Manitobans do not want?

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Rural Development): Mr. Speaker, through the hearing process that has been established here at the Legislature, Manitobans from right across this entire province can come in and make their views known. That is what the process is for, to allow Manitobans to express their views.

Mr. Speaker, I deal with many rural Manitobans and especially with the organizations such as UMM and MAUM, which represent the municipalities around this province. From my discussions with them, they have indicated to me that they are the people who are closest to the communities and they are the ones who could probably make the decisions best for their communities at that level.

Rural Public Hearings

Mr. Jerry Storie (Flin Flon): Mr. Speaker, the members who presented last night almost without exception said the government is showing cowardice in fobbing off this decision to the municipalities.

Mr. Speaker, my final question to the Minister of Rural Development is: Given that the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, in their presentation on this matter, said that there was inevitably going to be siphoning off—and I quote: We are also worried about the inevitable siphoning off of—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Your question is?

Mr. Storie: Mr. Speaker, will the Minister of Rural Development now urge his colleagues to move the hearings to rural Manitoba, so that rural Manitobans will have an equal opportunity to present their views, given the fact there were two representatives—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member has put his question.

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Rural Development): Mr. Speaker, the member knows well the process and the procedure that is followed on hearings on debates on bills.

Rural Manitobans are aware of what is happening at the Legislature. They do know that if they want to make a presentation, presentation can be made before the committee. The committee is publicized widely. It is not as though rural Manitobans are unaware of what is going on in this building. Rural Manitobans are very much aware.

Mr. Speaker, if they want to make presentations, they will be here to make those presentations.

Department of Education and Training Administrative/Clerical Staffing

Mr. John Plohma (Dauphin): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Education consistently says that services to children are her primary concern, prior to cutting back on educational services to children. She says she is also always working within a plan and a planning process, yet when she cut the Program Development and Support Services branch, she cut 83 professional and technical staff who deliver direct services to children, and professionals that provide direct support such as therapists and child psychologists. At the same time she increased management—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member for Dauphin with your question now, please.

Mr. Plohma: Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the Minister of Education, in light of the fact that she has increased the management ratio to staff by 20 percent and the secretarial support by 33 percent, how can she justify this under efficient management? How can she justify—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member has put his question.

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, of course, the member is wrong in his numbers. The numbers were given to him the other day, and he has the numbers wrong again. As the member knows also, the clinicians will now be employed directly by school divisions. They will now be employed directly by the area where there will be the closest contact and supervision by the school division who will be making decisions on behalf of students, and clinicians will work directly with those individuals.

As I also explained in the past, clinicians' work has been done within school divisions. Therefore, when we look at the administrative support changes within my department, the administrative support was not necessarily given to clinicians previously. That work was done in the field. If the member also looks in terms of the administrative support, again, he will find a reduction.

Mr. Plohma: Mr. Speaker, the minister says my numbers are wrong. I am using her numbers that she finally gave us in the House, in the Legislature, in the committee.

Mr. Speaker, in view of the fact that well—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member for Dauphin, with his supplementary question now, please.

Mr. Plohma: Nate Nurgitz referred to the yellow dogs, Mr. Speaker, and—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member for Dauphin will put your question now, please.

Mr. Plohma: Yes, Mr. Speaker, in view of the fact that this minister cut clinicians and at the same time revealed—

Mr. Speaker: Question, please.

Mr. Plohma: I want to ask the minister how she can justify cutting the clinicians while increasing the

secretarial support for the remaining staff in absolute numbers from 85 to 87. What sense does this make?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Speaker, again, I have a decrease of eight SYs in the area of administrative support. As I have said to the member, as well, there was also some reclassification which was done, people who have been reclassified from Professional/Technical into the Administrative Support area.

I have also explained to the member that that administration support is offered not only to the individuals who work on a full-time basis within the Department of Education and Training, administrative support is also provided on a contract basis to those people who work for our department, for instance, in the area of some languages, just like heritage training languages, whose support is offered by that administrative support.

I remind him again that on behalf of clinicians, administrative support to clinicians was in the past previously provided by school divisions and now will be provided by school divisions as they are employed directly by school divisions.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Speaker, in light of the fact that the clinician funding is totally inadequate, the superintendent of Flin Flon said: \$20,000 per clinician inadequate to meet the needs, so let not the minister—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. This is not a time for debate. The honourable member for Dauphin will put your question now.

Mr. Plohman: Well, Mr. Speaker, I want to ask this minister how she can justify increasing the management ratio by 20 percent, while she is cutting the clinicians in the province of Manitoba in the schools.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Speaker, the member's question tends to think that we have in fact increased the management when in fact there has been a decrease in the management. So he tends to allow people to think that—

Point of Order

Mr. Plohman: On a point of order, this minister continues to mislead this House. In fact, there was an increase in the ratio.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member clearly does not have a point of order.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Speaker, so we have fewer managers within the PDSS section, Program Development and Support Services division. I will also tell the member that we have worked very hard, and we discussed this in the Estimates process around the restructuring and the reorganization within that division that has included both internal reorganization and external consultation as well, so that our service delivered will be the most efficient and will meet the priorities that have been identified by the client group.

* (1040)

Agassiz School Division Extracurricular Activities

Ms. Avis Gray (Crescentwood): Mr. Speaker, Agassiz School Division trustees, in an attempt to manage the unfairness of this government's funding formula, have decided to delete transportation for students for sports activities and field trips. This will mean that either students with financial resources only will be able to participate or in fact these educational opportunities will totally be gone.

Can the Minister of Education tell this House: Does she support the decision by the trustees in Agassiz School Division to take these measures?

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, as the member said in her question, it is the trustees' decision about how they will spend the money available in the area of transportation.

Ms. Gray: Mr. Speaker, this minister is a walking, talking contradiction, because Bill 16 and Bill 22 directly intervene with the ability of the school divisions to make decisions.

Mr. Speaker: The question is?

Ms. Gray: Can the Minister of Education tell this House, because she is directly involved with decision making in the school divisions because of Bill 16 and Bill 22, does she support the decisions of school divisions to cut out extracurricular activities? It is a simple question.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Speaker, I am sorry that the member does not support actions on behalf of taxpayers of Manitoba. We have clearly had the message that taxpayers cannot continue to support more and more in the province of Manitoba.

School divisions, with Bill 16, were given an opportunity within a limited range to look at increasing the amount of money needed for their special requirement. There certainly was money available, and perhaps the member needs to look at whether or not the full amount available was used by that particular school division.

Ms. Gray: Mr. Speaker, I have a final supplementary for the Minister of Education. She speaks of taxpayers. Well, taxpayers want to know the answer to this question as well.

Does she support the actions of school divisions to eliminate extracurricular activities? Can she tell the House, come forth, be honest, let us know her position?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Speaker, decisions will be made by school divisions in terms of how the money that is available to them through our funding formula and also through their own special levy is spent within their own school divisions.

In terms of the availability for extracurricular activities, that will be the decision of the school divisions and also the other individuals who are involved in offering those activities.

Elder Abuse Educational Video

Mrs. Shirley Render (St. Vital): I think most of us know of the video, Standing Up for Yourself, which was produced for the Manitoba Seniors Directorate.

I have just found out very recently that this video received second place in the Silver Screen Awards, which is sponsored by the United States-International Film and Video Festival. I think congratulations are definitely in order.

Would the Minister responsible for Seniors tell the House how this video provides assistance to Manitoba's seniors?

Hon. Gerald Ducharme (Minister responsible for Seniors): I would like to thank the member for St. Vital for this wonderful question, Mr. Speaker.

As you know, in 1989, when the Discussion Paper on Elder Abuse was on, the prime concern that came out of that discussion, the major concern, was elderly abuse and financial abuse.

As a result of that, a video was produced, and as a result, there are 1,500 copies throughout Canada and the United States. This release has been a

valuable tool for the seniors, for different people throughout—the service providers.

I would like to congratulate further, Mr. Barry Lank, Lank Beach Productions from Winnipeg, a local production firm and Le Cercle Moliere who are the actors and actresses, and also a local person, Mr. Monty Hall, who donated his time for this video.

CP Rail Employee Layoffs

Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona): Mr. Speaker, in March, CP Rail confirmed that 200 jobs were going to be lost in their maintenance and mechanical areas. Right now the layoff notices are going out to 170 CP Rail shop employees here in Winnipeg, jobs that are being transferred to Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan.

With the 200 jobs that the CP Rail announced, actually only 174 of those customer service centre jobs were new jobs coming to the province of Manitoba, so we have a net loss of some 200 jobs for Manitoba.

Can the Minister of Transportation tell us what success he has had in keeping railway jobs in the province of Manitoba?

Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Highways and Transportation): Mr. Speaker, this is such a wide-ranging question. For the last two years we have realized that rationalization is taking place with CP and CN as well. Some time ago, in the last year, CN announced that they would be cutting 10,000 jobs across the country in order to rationalize their operations. The same thing is happening with CP.

As late as this morning, I have heard that between the two rail lines, they are obviously looking at rationalizing their operations between the two of them, that ultimately we could end up with one rail line to provide the service for Canadians.

If the member wants to start picking at what are the job gain and losses, there will be job losses in the rail industry as well as in the air industry as they rationalize their operations. These companies cannot continue to lose money. The air industry, for example, has lost \$2 billion in the last few years. CN and CP are both on the verge of losing money, are losing money, and have to rationalize their operations to be competitive. And that, whether we like it or not, is what is taking place out there.

Mr. Reid: Is the Minister of Transportation aware that CP Rail plans to transfer its crew-calling bureau

to Montreal this fall and that Manitoba stands to lose another 12 jobs as a result of this action?

Mr. Driedger: Mr. Speaker, I could repeat the answer that I gave before, but I just want to tell the member that the actions that were taken by our Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) in reducing the tax on locomotive fuel by another 3.15 cents a litre is something that has been lauded across this country because it basically gives the message out there that we value transportation.

We know how important it is, and it gives us an opportunity to continue to negotiate with these companies in terms of trying to keep the jobs here. You try and make it as fair as possible in terms of equitable job losses across the country.

Mr. Reid: My final supplementary to the same minister, Mr. Speaker: What action will the minister take to ensure that these 12 jobs remain in Manitoba and, using our time zone advantage, that the remaining CP Rail crew-calling jobs in Canada would be transferred to Manitoba?

Mr. Driedger: Not only myself, but our Premier (Mr. Filmon), the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness), other of my colleagues, the Minister of I, T and T (Mr. Stefanson) are in constant—[interjection] The place is falling apart, Mr. Speaker.

There are ongoing discussions in terms of seeing where there are economic and job benefits to be gained for the province, and we will continue to do that on an ongoing basis at all levels within our government to try and make sure that if there are job losses taking place, we are treated fairly in this province.

Chemical Warehouse—Fisher Branch Clean Environment Commission Hearings

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Premier.

The Premier has throughout his mandate indicated his concern for the environment, his pleasure at the location and, indeed, his government's funding of the Centre for Sustainable Development, but once again, there has been a bad rating of the environmental practices of this government, this time by the Sierra Club that, in fact, gave the province an F rating. [interjection]

Well, the government can discount that particular organization as it does any organization with which it does not agree, but the reality is they took a look

at a few specific projects and said the government gets an F. I would like to know—for the Premier—about one specific one.

Will he tell the House today why his government still refuses to order a Clean Environment Commission hearing on the Fisher Branch facility?

* (1050)

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, if I may, because this is a special day, I think, in the life and career of the member for River Heights, I want to, on behalf of all of my colleagues, wish her well in her continuing endeavours.

I think all Manitobans will recognize that this is her last day in the House as Leader of her political party. Regardless of political stripe, I know we will want to congratulate her for the efforts she has put in on behalf of people in Manitoba and wish her well in her continuing endeavours. I am not saying I will buy her book, but I promise that upon my retirement, I will write a rebuttal to it.

Mr. Speaker, it is interesting—[interjection] No, mine will not be that soon.

It is interesting that the Sierra Club, in making its recommendations or its determination from a distance, seizes upon all of the political issues of the day as justification for trying to make an objective environmental judgment on a province.

Mr. Speaker, I find it absolutely fascinating when I read the list of projects they choose to criticize the province for. They choose to criticize the province for one project that has not even begun its review by the Clean Environment Commission. Without any knowledge on their part, they have already made a decision that because the New Democrats are opposed to it, it is a bad project.

Another one that is gaining public positive attention right across this country and right across North America, now that it is in a completed stage—and every person who is there recognizes the tremendous impact and value of the Interpretive Centre at Oak Hammock Marsh, and they are still reading from the old speeches of the New Democrats, Mr. Speaker. It is an unbelievable—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Point of Order

Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, I am wondering, in tribute to the Liberal Leader on her last day in this

House, perhaps if the Premier could answer the question briefly.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable member does not have a point of order.

* * *

Mr. Filmon: I am sure the Leader of the Liberal Party will appreciate on her final day in the House that she has finally gotten the support of the House leader of the New Democratic Party. I am sure she will not consider that going out on a high, mind you.

Mr. Speaker, with respect to the project at Fisher Branch, I know that is an issue under review by the Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings), and I think he has indicated that he will look at the project in view of concerns being expressed. I take the concerns of the Leader of the Liberal Party more seriously than I do of those from afar, who make their judgments based on the press clippings they read of questions New Democrats raised in this House.

Mr. Speaker: The time for Oral Questions has expired.

Committee Change

Mr. Neil Gaudry (St. Boniface): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for The Maples (Mr. Cheema), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Economic Development be amended as follows: the member for River Heights (Mrs. Carstairs) for St. Boniface (Mr. Gaudry).

Motion agreed to.

Nonpolitical Statements

Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister responsible for Multiculturalism): May I have leave to make a nonpolitical statement? [agreed]

It is my pleasure to bring the forthcoming celebration of Philippine Heritage Week to the attention of members of this House. June 6 to 14 marks a special observance for Manitoba's Filipino community. It is a celebration of both their cultural heritage and the 95th anniversary of the independence of the Philippines.

Philippine Heritage Week is a joyous and exuberant recognition of the Filipino cultural legacy within the context of Manitoba's diverse multicultural society. At the same time, it is a proud commemoration of the historical emergence of the Philippines as a free and independent nation. Philippine Heritage Week provides an excellent opportunity for all

Manitobans to share, learn and understand more about the Filipino heritage and Filipino people.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage all members of this House and all Manitobans to join with me in wishing our Filipino community all the best during this festive occasion.

Thank you.

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

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Lels (St. Johns): On behalf of the New Democratic Party, I would like to join with the Minister responsible for Multiculturalism in acknowledging that this marks the beginning of Philippine Heritage Week, a very important week of multicultural celebration in Manitoba today.

This is an appropriate time, Mr. Speaker, to acknowledge the contribution of the many Filipinos in our community at large and to pay tribute to the commitment of Filipinos everywhere in Manitoba to the preservation of their heritage, their culture, their language and their determination to share their heritage with Manitobans everywhere.

We are stronger for the contribution of the Filipino community, and this week we delight in celebrating with Filipinos a number of celebrations, festivities and activities that will enhance our quality of life and take one more step toward the preservation of our mosaic here in Manitoba.

So on behalf of everyone here, I would like to add our congratulations and best wishes to the Filipino community on their organization of Philippine Heritage Week.

Mr. Speaker: Does the honourable member for The Maples have leave to make a nonpolitical statement? [agreed]

Mr. Gulzar Cheema (The Maples): Mr. Speaker, I would like to join with the minister and the member for St. Johns on this very important occasion for the Filipino community in Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, this is their week of celebration where they are going to enjoy their traditional culture. Also, as the member for St. Johns has said, this community is contributing in a major way to this province and to our city of Winnipeg, and they have become a very important part of our community.

I think we are proud of them and, certainly, I would like to commend the community for doing a wonderful job last year. The celebrations, we all

enjoyed. We enjoyed the food and their cultural activities.

Mr. Speaker, I would hope that Mr. Speaker would join with the Filipino community and come and celebrate the occasion.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Hon. Clayton Manness (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, per previous discussions and agreement, we are planning to go into Estimates now. It is my understanding, an agreement has been struck that Health Estimates will begin at this particular point in time.

I also understand that we will sit, by agreement—Mr. Speaker, I do not know whether a final time has been set—

Mr. Speaker: Two thirty.

Mr. Manness:—but certainly discussions will lead to a final time.

Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Energy and Mines (Mr. Downey), 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.

Mr. Speaker: Prior to putting the question, I will recognize the honourable opposition House leader.

Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader): Just on House business, Mr. Speaker, the agreement was to sit until 2:30, and I would suggest that perhaps we announce that now so that we, since we are going into Estimates, do not have to adjourn Estimates and come back into the House. The agreement was for 2:30.

Mr. Manness: Mr. Speaker, I am aware of that. If there is no trust, and I know there was trust built around that, but if 2:30 was the established time—I am reluctant to always put that out, because sometimes there is a will. [interjection] I am not pushed by the government. The government will not push me on that, but sometimes there is a desire to work beyond that time. Indeed, if the members want me to announce 2:30, that is what I will do. I will announce 2:30 so not to frustrate the good process of negotiating that the deputy House leader of our party has engaged, indeed, all House leaders.

So, Mr. Speaker, under that basis, I would move, seconded by the Minister of Energy and Mines (Mr. Downey), 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.
* (1100)

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 Education and Training; and the honourable member for Seine River (Mrs. Dacquay) in the Chair for the Department of Health.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY (Concurrent Sections)

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Mr. Deputy Chairperson (Marcel Laurendeau): Order, please. Will the Committee of Supply please come to order.

This morning, this section of the Committee of Supply meeting in Room 255 will resume consideration of the Estimates of Education and Training.

When the committee last sat, it had been considering item 2.(1)(a) on page 35 of the Estimates book.

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): At the end of last time, I think, we were looking at the changes in the I.B. program over the period since 1985, and I was expressing my concern about the shift away from the diploma and whether this reflected anything, any larger concerns in the schools. I think right at the end of last time, I was expressing my concerns, and I want to follow it up with questions about the amount of work which is done by students outside of schools in the years above Grade 9.

I wonder if the department collects any numbers on that. I know anybody can get informal numbers by talking to teachers in high schools, but some of the informal numbers in Estimates that one gets are that over 50 percent of students in some schools are in fact working more than 20 hours a week. I wonder if the department does collect statistics on this and how long they have been collecting them and what is happening in Manitoba.

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Education and Training): I am informed that we do not collect formal statistics on the number of hours students work outside of school time, and our information would be the informal statistics the member has spoken about to this point.

Ms. Friesen: I am sorry, I missed the last sentence on the informal statistics.

Mrs. Vodrey: The member referred to informal information from discussion with teachers, and we would have the same kinds of informal conversations.

Ms. Friesen: The minister will have to refresh my memory, but I think between certain ages, the principal must approve students who do take on work outside school. First of all, maybe we should get the information correct. What ages is that? What hours of work are limited? Does the department or do the school divisions collect that information centrally?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, it is the school divisions that might collect some information. They do not report the information to us. The principal may sign off where asked to for children or young people under 16 years of age who wish to be employed during the week. I am informed that not all employers ask for that sign off.

Therefore, the information that we have is not relative to all employment that young people may take on. It would be the school division doing some monitoring and then parents doing also, knowing whether their young person is involved in an after-school or after-hours job as parents are responsible till age 18.

Our Student Support branch which deals particularly with our at-risk students, has not had concerns raised by schools to include this as an area for us to collect data. We are in the process of getting feedback from divisions regarding the conditions and the characteristics that are a concern to them in order to revise our data collection process.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I am sure the minister is aware that this is a growing public issue. I do not think it has been addressed in Manitoba, but certainly in the United States it is increasingly an issue and there have been a number of studies which have looked at the school participation and marks, in particular. I recognize that is only one element of student evaluation, but they are certainly looking at the marks of students in relation to the number of hours that they are working.

Once you get above about 10 hours, the marks drop off. Up to 10 hours, it is possible that some studies in fact do show that there is an improvement in marks, but after a certain level they begin to drop

off. After, when students are putting in 30 hours, then the marks drop off very rapidly. Teachers I have spoken to bear that out, again, in an informal way. It seems to me that it is an area of concern, and I wonder if the department has ever looked at this and if it is a concern for the minister.

* (1110)

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, as I said in my previous answer, we are aware. We have done some of the same reading that I am sure the member has. There have been recent newspaper articles on the issues of students who work as well as attending school.

In the first instance as I said, school divisions have not raised this as a characteristic of concern for them. Through our Student Support branch, we are looking at characteristics of students at risk, and we are attempting to revise our list of characteristics in order to deal better with programs for students at risk.

So school divisions which would have the closest association with the number of hours that students might work or whether or not there are a large number of students within schools working certain numbers of hours have not raised that as an issue.

I am informed, as well, that there does not seem to be any conclusive research in the correlation between the numbers of hours worked and student performance, that there may be some research on both sides and there may be varying threshold numbers, but there does not seem to be anything specifically conclusive on that.

Ms. Friesen: Is it the practice of the department to wait for school divisions to raise issues such as this? This seems to me something which would affect students across the province, at least in areas where that kind of employment is available. Is it not possible for the minister to have a concern and to raise this with the school divisions to see if it is a concern with them?

It seems to me there is a leadership role for a Department of Education to play in essentially saying and creating a climate that does not just say stay in school, but that your first job is to be a student. I think that is what we are losing, not just in Manitoba, but in North America generally, the idea that being a student and studying and being in the library and reading and attending to matters of student work are the first concern of young people.

Because we are losing that battle to create I suppose what the publicity agencies would call a learning environment, I think that any of these kinds of public relations campaigns the minister and her federal counterparts are involved in are really only going to touch the edge.

I think we have to get across the idea that learning begins at the beginning, and it begins in school, and that school is the most important thing, and that 30 hours a week and 40 hours a week which students are now beginning to do at Grade 10—and they are doing it in part because they want to keep a job right through university, so in college and university, they are turning up having three to four years of experience of essentially part-time schooling which has been passed off as full-time schooling. Their expectations of what learning and work and study are about are changing.

I know there are economic reasons for this, but it seems to me there is also a responsibility of the Department of Education to begin to say, look, here are the studies which do present particular thresholds for your marks, and here are the consequences of starting in Grade 9 and 10 to work 30 hours a week.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the member is raising some concerns about young people and their engagement in the education process. I agree that one of the main tasks of education is to seek the engagement of students within that learning process and then, throughout the process, to continue the engagement and where students are at risk of that disengagement, for education to be some of the support which helps students remain in the system.

The federal government and the provincial government have taken the issue of, and not just students dropping out, but as the member said, perhaps a sort of part-time schooling, as an important issue, in that we want students to be able to remain in school and make the most of the education process.

As the member said, there are a number of reasons that young people may decide to work on a part-time basis which are outside of the scope of what actually happens on a daily basis in school in terms of whether schools can entirely influence that. There are economic factors within a family that may cause a student to work on a part-time basis. That work may be in order to assist the family, or it may

be on behalf of the student himself to provide for some of that student's own needs because of the family's economic situation.

The school's role in that area is to support the student in every way in the continued engagement of learning. There is another outside factor which influences whether or not the student will continue working part time, will work part time for a short or for a long period.

* (1120)

Other issues which influence students working full or part time are migrancy issues, families moving, students needing to help out sometimes as a way to become involved in the community. There are a number of reasons which account for students working and which the educational system can continue to provide support for the student's continued engagement in the learning process but which may not be able to change the factors within the family that cause students to work on a part-time basis.

In terms of helping students as they make decisions about this, because if there are pressures which are not in the family but which are, in fact, then peer pressures or pressures relating to that student's own age range, the Skills for Independent Living course, which we will be offering on a compulsory basis in the fall, does have content areas which look at decision making, problem solving and choice making. These are some of the considerations which young people would be using as they make decisions about whether or not they will be in part-time work or whether they will limit the amount of part-time work to a certain number of areas.

So this point, two factors, one, issues and pressures outside of what education can control education has to support them. Where students do not experience those pressures we do provide some support within our own system to help students make the best choices possible in terms of whether or not they will engage in part-time work. Then we also look for parents to be involved where possible as well, that parents are a valuable source to students in terms of decision making and also in developing attitudes toward school.

In terms of actually collecting data or a survey, some of the difficulties with the data collection—this is outside of a specific reason, but a data collection, for instance—is that the students may be employed

on a short-term basis for a certain number of hours and then leave, or they may be employed on a longer-term basis and change the hours they are working. For schools to try and attempt a comprehensive data collection process would be very comprehensive and could be very time consuming. That is one of the issues that has been identified as a difficult one.

I can say, again, the overriding issue appears to be one of engagement. We want to make sure that students remain engaged in the educational system and in the process, so where students are at risk, we look to guidance counsellors to assist in helping to identify those students. We try to support through course work. In addition, our Student Support branch is very happy to work with schools on behalf of young people in regard to a number of issues.

I remind the member too, in terms of the Student Support branch, the Student Support branch works with individual schools as they develop programs. It is not necessarily a whole division-wide plan that has to fit in. Where schools identify an issue that particularly affects them, then we can look at working with schools toward helping them with those students at risk in their particular area.

Ms. Friesen: I am glad to see that Skills for Independent Living has the opportunity to look at that because I think it is an appropriate place. I do not think work hours are specifically identified in the curriculum, but it is one area where there is enough flexibility presumably to introduce that. I think if the department chose to, if the minister chose to, there are ways of bringing that to the attention of the teachers and the students who are going to be involved in that.

The data collection, yes. I mean, data collection from Statistics Canada downward is difficult and is accompanied by many of the same difficult criteria the minister has suggested for this particular range of data collection. The smaller and smaller samplings that Stats Canada now has to do, in fact, does certainly shed doubt on the levels of accuracy of much of their material.

I do not think it is impossible to do. I think there are kinds of spot studies and small-scale studies that at least could give us an idea of whether it is an issue and where it is an issue. For example, I am sure that in the areas of the province north of the Parkland, where the unemployment rate generally

is in the 80 to 90 per cent range, it is not an issue. There are different reasons for not being in school.

In other parts of the province, obviously in agricultural communities, there are going to be different issues than there are in the inner city and in the suburbs. My sense is that a suburban school is going to be as concerned by this as the kinds of communities which we often think of as at risk. I would support the minister if she were to look at some spot studies of this to see, in fact, whether it is an area that we should be bringing to people's attention in a public way.

Again, I am looking at it for its effect upon the whole educational system in the province, from Grade 9 upward, right through to university and college, because it is not that students are going to school part time and then working part time. It is that they are going to school. I do not really want to use the word "passing off" but, essentially, that is what it is. They are going to school full time, but they are not giving their full attention or their full time to it; certainly, when they are working 20-30 hours a week, they are not. That expectation of what school is and what level of studying and work and written work can be expected from students begins to go down, and the effect of that is being felt, I think, throughout all our educational institutions.

So I do think there is a real leadership role for the government, for a Minister of Education, to play in here. I accept that Skills for Independent Living might begin to look at that, and on an individual basis students might begin to take into account the long-term effects of the decisions that they are making.

It is also establishing in Manitoba, and in North America generally, a culture which says that being a student is a job and that it is something which people should do, in the best of all possible worlds, on a full-time basis, and that learning is important in school as much as it is out of school and all the lifelong learning efforts that the city of Winnipeg or anywhere else wants to initiate. If you lose it in school, then I think you have lost the battle for the public mind, in a sense.

So those are my concerns. I did want to draw them to the attention of the minister, and I would support anything that she could do in fact that would begin to change those perceptions.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I accept the serious discussion that we have had on this issue. I

will certainly add it to the consideration of the department in the next year.

Ms. Friesen: I wanted to again go back to curriculum and to the International Baccalaureate program and the question that the member for Osborne (Mr. Alcock) raised. He asked about the relationship between an international curriculum really and the International Baccalaureate curriculum. The minister's concern is that the students fulfill the Manitoba curriculum first. That is right, and they do.

What is startling about that program is that the students in that program complete the Manitoba curriculum so quickly. For example, I know that in math and some of the sciences the I.B. students are completing the Manitoba curriculum for an entire year in one term. They have to go at that rate in order to move through to the later years.

Given that, in the five schools in which it is offered, there is a range of students who can do that, what are the reflections of the department? How does this affect how you look at our own curriculum? Are there areas of change that we should be looking at? Is our curriculum in those areas challenging enough for our students? If we have some who can complete a whole year in one term, presumably, we have another 20 percent who can complete a whole year in half a year, and then, presumably, there is another 10 percent who can do that year's work much faster.

So, given the desire of the minister and, I think, Manitobans generally to increase the challenges in our schools, is there some evidence here? Is there something we should be working with and paying attention to?

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Order, please. I would like to remind the honourable member that we are dealing with (a) Division Administration (1) Salaries. The line you are dealing with at this time with your questioning is the Curriculum Services, which is (b), the next line. If you would like, we could pass Division Administration and move on to Curriculum at this time.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I realize, strictly speaking, that you are right, but I thought what we had been doing is that, for example, we have asked questions on the Manitoba School for the Deaf, on distance education, I think, and a couple of other things in this area, and then we would pass the whole thing.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: If that is the will of the committee, that is the way we will do it.

* (1130)

Mrs. Vodrey: I am not sure if the member is suggesting then that we not go line by line in this area, but, instead, we discuss it in a holistic way and then pass the division.

The point that the member raised is that I.B. students do complete the curriculum in a somewhat shorter time, and then the question that seemed to flow from that is, is there any effort on our part then to totally evaluate our curriculum in terms of its own excellence?

Where I would start is again to say, as the member herself has said, students who do the I.B. program tend to be among the more advanced students academically, and those students are able to accomplish that, but other students in Manitoba perhaps do need a little bit more time in which to accomplish the curriculum.

As our curriculum is set up, it is developed with a set of time guidelines where one credit allows for 110 hours, and a half credit allows for 55 hours in which to accomplish the content area.

But when we look at our curriculum, one of the issues we have spoken about is to look at the whole area of standards, and we do want to make sure that Manitoba's curriculum is a strong curriculum and a curriculum which will allow our students to be competitive.

We are in the process of a review of our curriculum comparing Manitoba's curriculum with the curriculum in Germany. We are looking at the differences in the curriculum, the goals and the objectives of the curriculums, so we can look at our curriculum in an international way. In our math curriculum, we have looked at an extensive comparison with countries in western Europe.

So we are looking in an international way at our curriculum. In addition, we are also looking at revisions within our curriculum, particularly to strengthen it based on our own review, particularly in the area of science and math.

Ms. Friesen: Are any of those curricula reviews ready yet or completed? What is the fate of them? Are they going to be for public discussion or is it for internal review?

Mrs. Vodrey: Those studies and reviews are currently in progress. They are for the use of the K

to 12 Steering Committee, and the K to 12 Steering Committee is made up of a representative group of superintendents, trustees, teachers, parents and also post-secondary institutions.

Ms. Friesen: Is that the beginning of a consistent or a longer-term international comparison? For example, you started with math and science, and, obviously, that is easier to compare, but is it going to look at other areas; language studies, for example?

Mrs. Vodrey: In terms of looking on an ongoing basis, as part of our direction for reform, as part of wanting to make sure that in the reform process our curriculum is the best, we are trying to look at our curriculum in comparison to those which people have said are among the best in the world.

But also today, I would like to tell the member that the Canadian Directors of Curriculum from across Canada are meeting today in Winnipeg at our offices at 1181 Portage, and that is part of our effort, as well, across Canada in a national sense to examine our curriculum, to look at our curriculum in the light of curriculum and curriculum issues across Canada.

So we are trying to, through the process of reform, look at our own internal curriculum review, a curriculum review across Canada and then also in an international sense.

Ms. Friesen: Thank you, but the question I was asking is, you are beginning with math and science. Are you intending in the Manitoba context to look specifically at, for example, language studies, not just English language but French and third and fourth languages?

Mrs. Vodrey: The next area that we are planning to look at is vocational education and technology.

Ms. Friesen: I wanted to go back perhaps to the lessons that I.B., in a way an experimental program, offers, and that is, some students are able to move much more quickly than others, but we are only looking at a range of five schools where that is possible. It is obviously one of the criticisms that is often offered of the I.B. program, that it is not made available to all Manitobans. There are lots of historical and practical and financial reasons for that.

But I wonder if the Manitoba government's responsibility might not be to make the other opportunities available for a speedier passage through the Manitoba curriculum in other schools. Now I know some of those other schools do offer

Challenge programs as well, the American Challenge program, but, again, that is still a relatively small number and there must be a wide number of students. I mean, we are looking, presumably, at 20 percent of students who can move more quickly through the existing Manitoba program.

I wonder, since you have a review in progress, are those the kinds of questions that a review is looking at?

* (1140)

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I would just like to point out that, first of all, in each of the curriculum areas, there is an area for enhancement and enrichment and expansion of the curricula as it stands, as there is also an area for modification of the curriculum where a student may need more time than the 110 hours or somewhat different teaching style and experience in accomplishing that curriculum.

Within the curriculum that we have now, we are looking to offer the most extensive experience for students depending upon which area their needs are in. We also do offer, as the member says, some advanced courses. Those advanced courses are available to students where the curriculum has been completed and then they can take an advanced course within the high school program. The advanced courses have been primarily offered in the area of math in Senior 4.

We have looked at Answering the Challenge and some of the strategies in Answering the Challenge, and there are two strategies, Strategies 73 and 74, which look at the development by the department of courses in an advanced area. That would be within our curriculum, though, as opposed to the placement of a university credit within the high school years.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, does the department have any sense of whether the numbers of students taking those kinds of programs or of the enrichment being offered within the Manitoba curriculum—do you have any sense of the numbers of schools where that is happening?

I am also looking for, of course, a trend. Is it increasing or is it decreasing? What sort of five-year period are we looking at here?

Mrs. Vodrey: We know that number is increasing.

Ms. Friesen: Is the minister looking at a particular five-year period, or increasing over last year? What does increasing mean? Can you get any closer than that?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, we have spoken a little bit about our tracking system in the past while. The way, at the moment, that we are able to track students is really at a one-time-a-year snapshot in terms of enrollment. That enrollment has indicated that there has been an increase. The latest statistics that we have available specifically in that tracking are the school year '90-91, which showed a continued increase.

As we move to our new management information system and education information system, we will have a much more efficient way to track students and perhaps at more than just a once-a-year enrollment date.

Ms. Avis Gray (Crescentwood): Mr. Deputy Chairperson, since we are looking at this section in a global way, I have a number of questions on Distance Education and Technology.

My first question would be to the minister. Could she just give us a snapshot or a synopsis of where Distance Education and Technology is at in her department, what the objectives or goals are within the next year in regard to Distance Education and Technology?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, in the area of Distance Education and Technology, we really do see some benefits which will be available to our province with distance education. One of the major initiatives in '93-94 for the Distance Ed branch is to continue with the five-year plan for the K through Senior 4 course adaptation to distance delivery. This plan will help to further develop and refine courses offered through the Independent Study Program and also the Teacher Mediated Program.

In 1993-94, the staff in the Technology Applications and Training Unit of the branch will be continuing their research into the area of interactive television, the CD-ROM and the interactive video disk materials. An example of this research is a field project which involves schools participating as pilot sites to evaluate the Grade 5 science laser disk materials. As indicated in the 1993 schools funding announcement, a professional development grant has been made available to each school division interested in advancing in the area of instructional technology. The branch will be responsible for

approving applications from school divisions for the funding.

Then the Task Force on Distance Education and Technology presented their final report to me. During 1993-94, the branch will be responsible for enabling divisions to develop consortia to support community-based, lifelong learning through the Distance Education infrastructures. Then, during the last year, Manitoba Education and Training, through our Distance Education program and our Curriculum Services Branch, established a partnership with provinces of Alberta, Saskatchewan and British Columbia to develop computer-assisted learning materials for mathematics courses at Senior 1 through 4 levels. Now all four provinces will benefit from the combined output by sharing in the courseware development.

Then, in 1993-94, Education and Training, through our Distance Education Branch and the Universities Grants Commission, will continue to support the FYDE program, offering First Year Distance Education to five rural and northern communities. This year, the branch will support the new and evolving distance education initiatives, such as the one in Evergreen School Division and the proposed Northwest Distance Education initiative, by providing the program delivery expertise, staff training and program development support to ensure that the regional initiatives are successful.

* (1150)

Ms. Gray: The minister mentions the Evergreen project. Is that then one of the pilot sites?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, at Evergreen, it would be considered a new program. It is a new area of work, and it is a new area of work in the interactive process. What we will be looking at is offering support and also developing information again about the interactive learning. Though it could be described as a pilot, it is, in fact, a new area of work.

Ms. Gray: Can the minister clarify then the particular proposal that was put forth from Evergreen regarding the interactive program? Has that been approved by the department? Are there monies that are allocated for that project?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, at this point the staff are still in discussion with the Evergreen School Division, and we are looking at establishing

the terms of reference and also the area of significant work that the department would do and that the division would do. So I am not able to give her, at this point, a complete end-point answer.

Ms. Gray: If the department is now working with Evergreen to look at terms of reference, does that mean that there is some approval in principle for a project go-ahead? Where would dollars be coming from for this project? Will it be up to the divisions to come up with those dollars, or is there other support from the department?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, what we would be looking at would be a partnership in which both the school division would be learning and we would be learning while service is being provided to schools. Because this is under discussion at the moment, I am not able to give the member details of that discussion right now or the results of the discussion.

Ms. Gray: Again, just another clarification, is it reasonable then to say that at this point in time there are ongoing discussions but no decisions have been made in regard to whether this project will go ahead? Is that a reasonable statement?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, that is reasonable.

Ms. Gray: Can the minister tell us what discussions she or her departmental staff have had with MTS, Manitoba Telephone System, in regard to the whole area of Distance Education and Technology?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, certainly with the work of the task force there was significant discussion with Manitoba Telephone System during the process of that task force. Now there is the potential of regional consortiums. With that potential, and continuing the ongoing work that was recommended by the task force, then there would be continued communication.

Ms. Gray: Can the minister tell us, with the task force report that she has, were there recommendations in that report about working closely with Manitoba Telephone System to look at the entire cost of this Distance Education and Technology? What some of the school divisions and individuals in the educational field are certainly saying to us, and I am sure to the minister as well, is that right now oftentimes these costs in terms of setting up distance education tend to be prohibitive for school divisions.

My first question is: Was that indicated in the task force, and was there a recommendation from the task force in regard to that? If so, what was that recommendation, and what is going to be done in regard to negotiating with MTS in regard to looking at some reasonable way to ensure that distance education could be accomplished within school divisions at a reasonable cost?

In fact, this technology could actually be used in communities not simply for education, but for other things as well, whether it is economic development, entrepreneurship in regard to small business, whatever. I mean, I think the field is limitless in terms of what could be achieved in rural and northern Manitoba with this type of technology.

Mrs. Vodrey: We think that there are some great possibilities for distance education and have been speaking about those possibilities for the education system and for other benefits to communities.

As we have looked at it, costing has been part of the look that we have done at Distance Education, but I can say to the member that, at this point, this is still under discussion by government and we are in the process of those discussions now.

Ms. Gray: Can the minister tell us if there is within one of the committees of cabinet—and I do not recall the names of all the committees—is there one of the committees of cabinet that is specifically looking at this type of technology in regard to the implications not only for education, but for other areas as well, particularly economic development?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the issue of distance education is an important one; it is a broad one; and it is being considered by government.

Ms. Gray: Can the minister tell us, to be more specific, how is it being considered by government, in what form?

Mrs. Vodrey: The task force report has been a very significant report. Phase 1 report was a very significant report. So I can tell the member that the information has been discussed with all members of government, and we are now looking at it as a government because we recognize that the benefits of distance education and the potential of distance education have a wide effect across many, many departments and ministries.

Hon. James Downey (Minister of Northern Affairs): Just on this subject, I would just like to make a comment as it relates to distance education.

This is something that I know that the minister has taken a leadership role in as we have had to deal with difficult economic times within government. What are some of the alternatives that are out there for particularly some of our rural communities and our northern communities?

It is a technology that holds a lot of promise, I believe, and I think that there will be tremendous co-operation and support for such a project, particularly when we see the interchange that is available and the technology that is there.

What you are really doing is moving the education to the students rather than the students to the education. I think it will maintain a lot of communities that have lost students because they have had to go elsewhere for education. It all boils down to efficiency and proper use of money.

* (1200)

I am quite satisfied that the Department of Education and the minister have been very open-minded and very co-operative on this front. They have seen that there have to be some changes take place to deliver the ever-increasing demands on the department and on the taxpayers who have to provide the funds for it.

I can say, again, as a member for rural Manitoba and representing northern Manitoba, I am, quite frankly, excited about it. I think that the principle of taking education to the students rather than the students to the education and a broad range of teachers who are sitting in a particular area providing that educational service can be provided to a far broader range of numbers of people than what has been traditional one on one.

There are certainly different approaches that have to be considered. There is the question of classroom supervision. There are all the technical things that have to be dealt with. I think the minister and her department are moving very aggressively on this front. I think we will receive very much support—and I say this for the school divisions that I represent, a lot of support on this initiative. It is better to do that than it is to see the situation where some schools may have to close because of lack of numbers and increased costs. It is an alternative.

On the other side of the coin, though, we have to be conscious of the fact that when we are introducing new programs we do not always have new resources to put with those new programs. So one would expect, at the same time, for school

divisions to make some decisions as it relates to where they are spending resources that can be given up to apply to this new process.

I think it is new and modern technology that has to be applied, has to be done properly. I think it will enhance the education opportunities for rural and remote communities. I just compliment the minister and want to publicly urge her to proceed on this path.

Ms. Gray: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, it is interesting to hear the comments from the Minister of Native and Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey) in regard to distance education technology. Again, he has referred specifically to how this new technology can be used within education. That is certainly one of the issues. I think as well that this type of technology available through Manitoba Telephone System has much broader implications. Many more opportunities are available for this government to take a leadership role and to use this type of technology to assist in other areas, not simply education as we may define it, but in terms of economic development, et cetera.

The Minister of Native and Northern Affairs referred to how this technology in regard to education specifically could assist some of the school divisions in actually remaining as viable school divisions, particularly in the rural areas, and not being forced to close. With all due respect to the five-year plan that the minister has outlined, I do not think some of these school divisions have five years left at the rate they are going.

I guess my question would be, is there any kind of a move on behalf of cabinet—we have heard about support from two ministers here in this room today on behalf of Distance Education. Is there some move afoot to actually look at this technology, speed up the plan, and actually decide if there are some things that can be done within the next two years in these school divisions in rural Manitoba? That is going to mean negotiating with Manitoba Telephone System to find out a reasonable way of delivering these services, because I do not think these school divisions, with all due respect, whether it is Antler River or whether it is other school divisions, necessarily have five years left in terms of their viability. Surely, the government would recognize that to come up with a plan and perhaps even have some dollars available in looking at this now, those dollars would be far better utilized than to be frittering away other dollars over five years in

trying to have school divisions stay open when in fact it is not viable.

I guess I just see a need to have a plan in place now, to have some dollars available to look at this because how viable is it? I mean, if it is going to be a saviour to some of these school divisions in rural Manitoba, which the Minister of Native and Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey) seems to indicate that it may be, well, let us get something going now. I still ask the same question: Is cabinet looking at this whole issue as a group? What discussions have gone on with the Minister responsible for Manitoba Telephone System (Mr. Findlay)? What can be done? Is perhaps this not an opportunity?

The Premier (Mr. Filmon) of this province is always complaining about how oppositions never come up with solutions or alternatives. Here is an idea and it is certainly not an opposition idea, but it is out there by people in the education field, out in the school divisions. It has been supported by cabinet ministers here. Here is an idea that possibly has some solutions for the viability of school divisions and the delivery of service and education in rural and northern Manitoba. Where is it on the cabinet agenda? What specifically has been done to look at this area?

Mr. Downey: It is not to answer the questions that the Minister of Education will deal with, but just to further comment, the reason that it is raised and discussed here, and I do not disagree with the member that there are broader applications of the technology as well as just in education, that does have a major Economic Development spin to it. The minister is absolutely accurate. Government is dealing with it. It is on our agenda. It is very much the interest of many of our members who represent rural Manitoba.

I have a little more confidence though than the member for Crescentwood (Ms. Gray), when she says that the time is almost urgent. It has to be dealt with, but I think we do have a number of years to deal with it. There are other issues within education, with economic activity, with decentralization of government. It is a total package of activities. It just is not the responsibility of the Department of Education to make sure that our rural communities and our northern and remote communities stay alive. It is a part of government planning, part of government strategy and the Department of Education will play a major role.

The question of having MTS involved: yes, they are. I hope the member, though, is not asking or maybe she is asking MTS to subsidize in a major way this whole educational program. If she is, then let us hear her put that position forward, because they may be challenged on some of the charges that they are putting forward for the services that they are going to be asked to deliver. I do not think, I hope she is not saying, that they should be asked to subsidize it. If they have excess capacity within their system and are not selling it into the communities, that is one thing, but if they have other opportunities to sell the excess capacity, then there is a competition.

The bottom line is though—the question is: Is she suggesting that—and I do not think she is—MTS should subsidize this program? If that is the case, then let her say so. Again, it has to be part of an overall rural economic activity, of which education plays a very important role in combination with other activities that are going on. I, quite frankly, am proud of this government's role in trying to revitalize a lot of the communities.

Let me just speak about northern Manitoba for a few minutes. We have spent a considerable amount of money on a Northern Economic Development Commission of which the whole picture came from the grassroots of the people of northern Manitoba—[interjection] Well, I have to get a glass of water for the member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen). She is choking and we should maybe—I do not know how much water it would take though.

In fairness though, the bottom line is, and she is scoffing I guess at the work that was done by the Northern Economic Development Commission. Well, I think that is a little bit unfair. There is a whole complex group of recommendations that have come forward from northern Manitoba of which education is a major part of it, resource extraction and development is a major part of it, use of the hydroelectric is a major generator of activity.

There is a broad range of activities that have come forward and recommendations have come forward from the communities. Education is a major part of it. The Minister of Education has taken the lead with the Roblin commission in looking at how does this whole area of distance education, where we are at today. These will all be pieces of information and valuable documents that will add to the basic platform for the people of Manitoba—

[interjection] Well, the member for Wolseley again makes some comment about the next election.

If she is honest with herself, is she not thinking about the next election? She is sitting here as if I would be the only one thinking of the next election. I am not thinking of the next election at all. I am thinking about, Mr. Deputy Chairperson and colleagues, the education and the future of the people of Manitoba. That is where it is at and the development of this province.

Education is a very major component of it, and so I say, with respect to the member for Wolseley, I think that she, if she were fair, would say that the Northern Economic Development Commission probably will provide some good ideas— [interjection] We now are being interrupted by the member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) who participated in distance education. The problem is he was so far away from it, he did not get any, that is how distant he was.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Order, please.

* (1210)

Point of Order

Ms. Friesen: On a point of order, I think there is some gall there in a minister who is filibustering these Estimates of his own minister. He is talking about—who to talk about the interruption of my colleague. I believe that the member wanted to speak on distance education briefly, and I believe that the member for Crescentwood (Ms. Gray) was asking questions on distance education. The minister took the opportunity to make comments upon various members around this table. I do not find that very appropriate. I think it changed the nature of the discussion which we were having. The minister feels it appropriate to speak upon people's facial expressions—

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Order, please. The honourable member for Wolseley did not have a point of order.

Mr. Downey: I apologize if the member is so sensitive. I hope I did not in any way personally make any comments that would offend anyone. It was not my intention to do so.

Anyway, the point that I am making is that I think progress is being made on distance education. I think it is part of a package, a government strategy. It is to support the youth of our society, to make sure

they have a broad range of opportunities that, in fact, may not be available to them if it were not developed and expanded in the way in which it is being done.

I thank you, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, and I think the minister had a response to a specific question of the member for Crescentwood (Ms. Gray).

Mrs. Vodrey: Just to add a few comments to those put forward by my colleague who I think has very well described the very wide interest by our government in the area of distance education, and I have talked about that in my previous answers.

In terms of action, I can just remind the member that we did put into professional development through our funding formula funding for PD and distance education. Also, I would say, and the member may know this, that the whole development of distance education really must be integrated into educational delivery as well as funding for it.

But in the funding area, I can tell the member that the Education Finance Advisory Committee who has been working now since the—from the development of the new Ed funding formula, will be looking at that at their next meeting and they consider it to be an important area.

In terms of the professional development for distance education, and just in terms of use of distance education, teachers have been using distance ed for professional development and they have used that as a means of reducing costs for those, particularly in the curriculum implementation sessions for professional development.

Also, with the interactive distance education satellite delivery, the member asks about application outside of the Department of Education. Recently, in the recent Health Education workshops in May '93, they were delivered by Distance Education to over 40 locations across rural and northern Manitoba. So teachers were able to receive their workshops in their home-school sites.

Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I just have a couple of items that have particular interest to me and I appreciate the opportunity that all members around this table have to ask questions of the minister because we have constituents and constituents' concerns as well.

I also would like to indicate that while perhaps people raise points of order for comments that are made into the microphone, points of order could also be raised for comments that are made around the

table by members opposite as we try to put forward legitimate questions.

I would like to indicate first of all that I really would like to commend the Minister of Education (Mrs. Vodrey) for having handled some very difficult issues that have come up for education in Manitoba. I know we have new things on the horizon. My two points of interest will be distance education and the International Baccalaureate which we have just discussed.

I understand that at the request of the member—I understand at the request of the member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen), we are having a broad discussion [interjection]

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Order, please.

Point of Order

Mr. John Plohman (Dauphin): Mr. Deputy Chairperson, for the record, I am raising this point that it is extremely unconventional to have ministers questioning their colleagues in the legislative committee.

It has been done on occasion in the past, rarely, and I want it noted, as a point, that this is very unconventional practice and we object to it and the record will show that.

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): On the same point of order, the member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) can complain or put on the record, he can do it until he is blue in the face, we could care less.

The reality is we all represent Manitobans. We all represent students in the public school system and we all have the right indeed, the duly right elected, to be here and to ask questions of our minister and of our government. I dare say—[interjection] Of course, it is the people's government, duly elected I say to the member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman). Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I have been in opposition for a number of years. I remember the member himself addressing questions to his Treasury bench members. We are not plowing a new turf here. We are indeed doing what is our parliamentary right to do.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Order, please. I would like to thank the honourable members for their advice, but the honourable members did not have a point of order.

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Mrs. McIntosh: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I wonder if the bullying techniques being put across the table could be called out of order and allow me to proceed with my question.

Point of Order

Mr. Plohman: On a point of order, it is obvious that the cabinet procedures are falling apart, that they cannot even question their own colleagues in cabinet to get things straight before they get to the committee.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Order, please. The honourable member does not have a point of order.

* * *

Mrs. McIntosh: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I appreciate the silence at the table now so I can hear my own voice.

As I was saying, there have been a lot of very difficult issues that have come forward that affect all of us who are interested in education, all of us who have particular ties with education in terms of our background, in terms of our ongoing interests and concerns.

I particularly wanted to respond to an issue that was raised by the opposition because I feel it was very important, particularly important for my constituents. It was a point that was raised in questioning that has now been put up for discussion at this committee which I would like to enter into because it has been raised by discussion for the opposition. I feel that I, too, have a right to make comment on the issue raised by the opposition which will affect my constituents very directly.

We have two schools in my constituency, and I was directly involved at the time with both of those schools when the International Baccalaureate program was introduced to those schools. Indeed, I was a key player at that time. I was quite interested in the comments raised by the member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen) asking about this program, particularly interested since with our division we have made valiant efforts for many, many years to have that program officially and formally recognized by the Department of Education and steadfastly were refused that recognition. I wish to thank the current government for finally recognizing the I.B. program and giving that opportunity to students throughout Manitoba to have their program recognized.

The particular point that I would like to draw to the minister's attention was you had made comment of the statistics, Madam Minister, about the number of students who were in the full I.B. program, versus those who were taking the part-time I.B. program. It is an interesting trend. I would like to indicate on behalf of my constituents that one of the things they are very grateful for is the opportunity to take the partial program because while the full program inspires those well-rounded students who have a broad-based ability to learn, the partial program enables those who are specifically skilled in, say, language arts, to take the higher-level learning program there and the regular curricula for those areas where they have an average ability. So I would like that ability to mix and match to meet consumers' needs, and I would like to indicate that is reflective of the views of my constituents, for your information, as you continue work in that area.

The matter of distance education is another that is of particular interest to me. My division had participated, as I think you are aware, with some preliminary work in technology and electronics in terms of getting programs of learning to people in isolated areas. The one piece of feedback information that I received, which I would like to share with you, is that there are two approaches that could be taken. One is sort of a piecemeal ad hoc approach, and the other is to develop an overall plan and then follow that plan.

* (1220)

I believe that you are, from your responses to questions made earlier, on the latter course, which I think will prove ultimately to be the best course to embark upon, because you then do not have the risk of having an ad hoc decision made which looks as if it would fit into an overall plan and then discover later that it does not indeed fit into an overall plan.

So I wish to share those comments with you in response to the issues that have been raised here, and if you have a response to those I would appreciate hearing it. If not, then I turn it back to the member for Crescentwood (Ms. Gray) who had indicated she wanted to speak.

Mrs. Vodrey: Just a quick response to the member. I thank her very much for the information that she has given me and also the views of her constituency regarding the ability to do the certificate or the diploma program in the I.B., and also the sense that

distance education is, in fact, and should be a planned and integrated approach.

Ms. Gray: Well, I frankly do not have difficulty with the minister sitting here and commenting on distance education. I am actually quite delighted that we have the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mrs. McIntosh), the Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship (Mrs. Mitchelson), the Minister of Government Services (Mr. Ducharme), the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness), the Minister responsible for Northern and Native Affairs (Mr. Downey), and the Minister of Education (Mrs. Vodrey) here, who have all obviously, if not spoken into the record, have nodded their heads when the Minister the Education has spoken about the importance of distance education, the importance of the new technology available, and in fact how high it is on the agenda of this particular government.

Now, I want to respond quickly to the Minister of Native and Northern Affairs. I am not suggesting that necessarily Manitoba Telephone System should subsidize Distance Education. I certainly am suggesting, however, that as a group of cabinet ministers and as government, they have the opportunity and the resources and the influence to actually make some decisions on how best this type of technology can be moved into rural and northern Manitoba, whether it is for education or whether it is for other areas.

But I still have the same question, and I will direct it to the Minister of Education, but I certainly would not have difficulty if other ministers answer it, because it is a simple question—oh, and I am glad we have the Minister of Rural Development (Mr. Derkach) here as well.

My question to the minister as a Minister of Education but also as a member of cabinet is: Given that the indications are that this whole area, this whole technology field is high on the agenda of cabinet, I simply want to know the process and how this issue is being addressed by cabinet, by which departments, and what is the process? A very simple question.

Mrs. Vodrey: I have given the answer a number of times. The issue is an important one, it is being considered by members of this government. We are looking at the implications, we are looking at the importance, and so it is having a very full discussion within government.

Ms. Gray: If the minister—I know she feels that she has answered it for me a number of times, and perhaps it could be my difficulty as a listener, but if perhaps she could—I simply want a little more detail in her answer rather than using generalities, such as implementation and it is in process and we are looking at it. Could she be specific about what—without giving away cabinet secrets—what exactly has been discussed in regards to this technology?

What is occurring, particularly with the Minister responsible for the Manitoba Telephone System (Mr. Findlay), and where is this government at in terms of this technology and using it as an opportunity to assist not only in distance education, but in the area of economic development as well?

Mrs. Vodrey: The member knows that we have received the report on distance education. That report will allow us to look at the recommendations of the people who worked on that report.

The report was done by a representative group of Manitobans, and now school divisions are looking at that report, and we are looking at in government. Each ministry has to look at what their part would be as we look at an integrated process of distance education.

I would say, too, that it is an important initiative for our government and that all members of our government have had an opportunity to be well brought up to date on the issues of distance education and, as ministers, look particularly at exactly what their part may be. I can tell the member again that the issue has been seen as an important one across all of government.

Ms. Gray: Can the minister tell us, has that task force report been specifically sent over to the Minister responsible for the Manitoba Telephone System (Mr. Findlay)? If so, what has been requested of that minister in regard to the sending of the report?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the report itself has been discussed by government, and it will have a public release very shortly. So I am not sure if that helps the member in terms of exactly where the issues are in terms of the public, but, again, we have discussed it as a government. It will also have public release.

Ms. Gray: Has the minister asked specifically for feedback from the Minister responsible for Manitoba Telephone System and/or his staff, and when has she asked for comments from him?

I mean, knowing governments and how we work in bureaucracies, when information and materials and reports are sent from one division to another or one department to another, usually, there is an explanatory memo saying, here is the report, we want X, Y and Z from you, and here is the deadline. Has that happened?

Mrs. Vodrey: As I said, there has been an explanation to all members of government. When the report is released specifically then into the departments, we will then look for each minister to look at how each department will put its piece in the distance education process together so that we can look at it holistically.

Ms. Gray: Can the minister release that report to members around this committee, and is she saying that each minister in cabinet has a copy of that report and that they have been asked to respond in regards to their thoughts and inputs on this task force report?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, there has been a presentation of the information in the report to government. When the report is released, then I certainly will be happy to provide it to the members opposite.

* (1230)

Ms. Gray: Can the minister tell us when we can expect some response or comments from the Minister of Education in response to that task force report? Does she have a time line?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chair, I can tell the member that with the release of the report there will be ongoing discussions among departments and among the staff of various departments. Again, because it does apply to several departments across government, I am not able to give her exactly a date in which I will be able to provide that complete response.

I can add, though, that through the Education Innovation Forum, which we look forward to hosting in the fall, that certainly the issue of distance education, we expect, will be one of the items for discussion.

Ms. Gray: Mr. Deputy Chair, speaking of this Innovation Education Forum, can the minister tell us what is the purpose of that particular forum? What do you hope to accomplish by that forum that is going to be held in the fall?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chair, throughout the process of community discussions we have had

presented to us what various constituent groups see as problems or concerns within the education system. One goal of the fora will be to bring forward the concerns and the issues that have been presented and ask for ideas for action that may come from areas other than the Department of Education alone.

We will use the opportunity to bring forward a number of issues as well which are in progress, issues that relate to legislation reform, for instance. Then we will also look for information to improve all aspects of education in Manitoba.

Ms. Gray: Mr. Deputy Chair, I am going to switch streams slightly and talk a little bit more about Curriculum Services. In looking at various curricula and the types of programs and courses that are offered in schools in terms of what current research tells us, can the minister also tell us what type of research she has, if any, or what type of research her department has access to, that speaks to an expansion of the academic courses, i.e., other activities that occur within the schools, whether those other activities are sports, debating programs, public speaking programs, drama clubs, et cetera. Does she have information about research in regard to the value, shall we say, of those particular types of extracurricular activities?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, we have done an extensive review of literature. We have done that as we look at the whole area of the learning environment. The whole area of the learning environment looks partly at areas of academic strength. It looks at development of students in the cognitive and affective and the social area. We have also been working very hard in the area of gifted education with the Advisory Committee for Gifted Education. So we are looking at a combined approach in terms of dealing with all areas of education.

Ms. Gray: What does the minister's research tell us in terms of students within a learning environment and the successes of these students being involved in extracurricular or other activities within the school, other than just the core curricula? What does the research tell us in regard to that?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, students do need a sense of belonging. With a sense of belonging, research does show that students do seem to do better. The sense of belonging can be accomplished through a number of ways. One of the

first ways is the teacher-student interaction. Where that is a successful interaction, then students do accomplish the sense of belonging. Secondly, academic success leads to a sense of belonging. Thirdly, a successful involvement with peers leads to a sense of belonging. Fourthly, attitudes that parents bring to learning, and attitudes that parents transmit to their young people in terms of an attitude towards learning helps with academic success.

Through the High School Review, Answering the Challenge, which we have discussed over the last few hours, there has been a recommendation that we also need to involve the community in a wider way.

One of the recommendations has been for the work education program, Work Experience Program for students, so that students then are able to develop attitudes towards learning and attitudes towards work from a variety of community sources.

Ms. Gray: The sense of belonging then, when the minister refers to teacher-student interaction and successful involvement of students with their own peers, would those specific activities or examples not—oftentimes you would see that occurring in these extracurricular activities or the clubs, et cetera, that occur in the school. Would that be correct?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the sense of belonging, again, can occur through a number of different ways. The extracurricular activities may be a part, but I would add to that that the teacher-student interaction in the academic sense is a very important part of the development of belonging.

The development of belonging also occurs through the co-operative learning models which are often being used in schools through opportunities for peer tutoring, for opportunities of student leadership, with mentorships which are being developed, with the educational community as a whole.

* (1240)

Ms. Gray: Does the minister support the inclusion of extracurricular activities as part of the education programming within schools? Does she feel, and does her department feel, that in fact is a very necessary part of education?

Mrs. Vodrey: We did have this discussion for quite a lengthy time period fairly recently. In that discussion, we talked about the fact that education does occur in many places. It occurs in the areas of,

again, work experience, community involvement. It does occur in the way schools organize their activities as well. Sometimes they organize activities around specific types of learning, or other schools may choose to organize those activities around what they see as extracurricular or cocurricular activities.

Ms. Gray: I know the minister is someone who, in past careers, has certainly been involved in the education system. I have heard the minister speak at organizations and dinners where she speaks about education. Certainly indications are, in my analysis of those speeches, that she is sincere about the importance of education. I would ask the minister, what is her personal opinion? What does she believe about the importance of these extracurricular activities within the school system?

Mrs. Vodrey: My personal views are very much the views that I have been presenting today in saying that I recognize, and my experience tells me, that learning does occur in a number of ways. Learning does occur where there is a positive relationship, No. 1, and where a young person is comfortable in a setting. That is why, when we first began our discussion this afternoon and the questioning of the member, we spoke about the issue of the learning environment being a very important one. So learning occurs in a place where students feel comfortable; learning occurs where there is a positive relationship.

Learning also can occur through a number of other processes. Again, as we have observed, peer tutoring has been a very helpful way for students to do some learning because it involves a student who has a mastery of a subject area or a particular skill area, who becomes involved with a student who does not have that same kind of mastery, and we find that both students learn from that particular approach.

There are a number of ways. When we look at how schools organize activities, whether they are within class activities or whether they are activities that are part of the curriculum—and I point to things such as work experience and work education and mentorships and job shadowing and so on, which often occur within our curriculum—learning does occur in those particular areas as well.

I would say learning occurs in a number of different areas, and I think that students do need the

opportunity to have several areas in which they have a comfort level and can learn.

Ms. Gray: Let me ask the question a different way. Can the minister tell us, does she believe that if a particular school division or school, for whatever reason, decided to eliminate a number of extracurricular activities, be those sports, be those educational field trips, be those drama clubs, be those debating clubs—does she believe that the elimination of those programs or activities would have a negative effect on the education of those students within that particular school or school division?

Mrs. Vodrey: The member seems to be referring to a potential action that is being spoken about in terms of whether or not these will be offered. My opinion is, as I have said in the beginning, I believe that people who work in education are professionals, and I believe that they will be considering as professionals and also considering of the young people that they work with.

Those decisions would be decisions made at a local area. I would say, as I have said from the beginning, that I believe that people who work in education are professional, and I look for them to continue in their professional work with young people.

Ms. Gray: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I am referring to possible actions and not simply by a group of professionals. They could be actions by a school division, which is made up of a group of trustees who are members of a community, who are taxpayers.

The issue at this point in my question is not who is making those decisions for what reasons. The question is: If those decisions are made, what does the minister feel would be the impact, if any, on those students within a particular school if those programs—and I call them programs—educational opportunities are eliminated? That is the question.

Mr. Downey: Sounds hypothetical to me.

Ms. Gray: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, before the minister responds, the Minister of Native and Northern Affairs talks about, the question is hypothetical. Well, my goodness, if these cabinet ministers are not answering those questions before they make policy decisions, goodness help the entire province of Manitoba.

Mrs. McIntosh: I just want to ask a question.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: The honourable minister to respond.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, first of all, in my answer to the member, I spoke about educators. I said teachers are professionals, educators are professionals. There are a number of people who are involved in this area.

I believe they do have a genuine interest in terms of young people. I hope they are able to continue with that genuine interest rather than a kind of an action or a job action. If it is that kind of an action, then I think Manitobans would want to ask why that kind of a job action might be considered. I am saying I believe that in all consideration, educators will be professionals.

In terms of decisions taken by school divisions, the member had mentioned a specific school division earlier today. If she would like to talk about the decisions of that school division and their budget, then I am prepared to talk about that under the schools funding area.

Within that particular school division's budget, they have made their own budget decisions. The member might want to look at the funds which would be available to that school division if they decided to use the funds available or if they made decisions without using the total funding available to that school division.

The member is asking me to comment on a local decision where there are options for that school division. If she would like to speak about that particular school division and their decision, then that is one area we should talk about when we get to the schools funding and look at that division specifically.

Ms. Gray: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I am asking the minister a specific question, and I still would like an answer.

The question is: Can the minister tell us if she believes that should a school division or a school decide that for whatever reasons they are not going to provide extracurricular activities, whether they be sports, educational field trips, drama clubs, public speaking, band, whatever you want to call the programs, does she believe that would have a negative impact on the students attending that particular school? That is the question, and that is the question I would like an answer to.

* (1250)

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, in answering the question, I would say to the school division, how did you arrive at the decision? Did you have other options? I think that is the question that taxpayers within that division would be asking.

Ms. Gray: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, is the minister implying in her question then to the school divisions, that did you have other options, is she implying then that she believes that in fact that type of decision will have a negative impact on the students within that school? I am trying to read between the lines here to get an answer. Perhaps she can clarify.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, what I have said is that school divisions will be making their decisions, and as we look at the decisions that school divisions make, all decisions, taxpayers in their area will have the right to ask questions about those decisions, and I as minister will be watching to see what the decisions are and will be watching to see what the response of parents and taxpayers within a local division are, what the responses are.

But, the member would really like me to comment on, it may be even since she has not been specific this afternoon, a proposal. We do not know that this is going to happen. She would like me to comment on a series of events which have not occurred and for which there would be a number of questions which would require answers regarding how those decisions were arrived at.

Ms. Gray: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I do not see why it is so difficult to ask a minister of the Crown to answer a question in regard to proposals or ideas or possible consequences. I would hope that any minister of the Crown in leading a department, regardless of the department, would be looking at all implications of certain decisions and what the impact of those decisions would be, whether they are making the decisions or whether other areas or groups are making the decisions.

If the minister wants me to be specific, let us look at Agassiz School Division, let us look at River East School Division, decisions made with similar results, decisions made by different groups of people. In Agassiz School Division, the board, the trustees have decided in their wisdom that they will delete transportation for field trips, i.e. the educational opportunities, and sports. So that means either there will be none of those activities or that should students wish to participate in those activities, that they would be responsible for their own

transportation, which means that there will be some students who, obviously, would not be able to participate because of lack of financial or other resources.

Another example is the River East School Division where at this point in time we are hearing from teachers that they are not prepared to continue on with providing support services to the students for extracurricular activities. Those are two examples where there are two groups of decision-makers who have taken different decisions, but the bottom line is it is the students who are being impacted in both cases and students will be denied opportunities for these types of learning. My question, and the minister can refer to these two specific examples, is: does she believe that there will be a negative impact on those students because of the elimination or possible elimination—they have not occurred yet to date—of those particular educational opportunities?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chair, now the member is being specific about the school division, Agassiz School Division, let me tell her that Agassiz School Division had an increase of \$25,000 in the area of transportation. So, if they make the proposed changes which the member is wanting to talk about, and we as Department of Education have not had a formal confirmation that that is the case, then perhaps their taxpayers would like to ask a question based on the funding that they received.

I would also like to tell the member that field trips, which she has consistently spoken about here and in Question Period, were never eligible for transportation funding. So somehow she is trying to draw a line between some decisions being made and the Department of Education and Training. Well, I can tell her that taxpayers elected those trustees to make decisions, and they are making the decisions in that area about how the money will be spent. They did receive increased funding, and that funding was never eligible for field trips.

If the member would like to know a little bit about River East in terms of teacher salary increases, I understand in terms of their bargaining that there was an increase for 1991-92 for teachers of 5.5 percent, and 1992-93 of 5.4 percent.

Ms. Gray: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, somebody was paying to have those students out in Agassiz receive educational opportunities. Someone is paying for that within the school division. The point is, there is

not going to be money available now to do that because the school divisions have not made that decision.

I want to know from the minister—and I do not have the opportunity today to ask every taxpayer out in Agassiz School Division what their feelings are, I am sure they will make them known—but I am asking the minister what does she feel about the decision made by the Agassiz School Division in regard to these? Is she concerned as a minister about these decisions and what the impact will be on the students?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chair, again, as minister I have been very careful not to comment on those particular decisions that are made by school divisions. That is, as I have explained to the member, the role of their taxpayers to comment on the way the money is spent by their local elected officials.

Though the member does not have the opportunity to speak to every taxpayer today, let us see if this is, in fact, what the board continues with, if this is exactly what the board decides to do. Let us look at what the reaction of the taxpayers are to that board. I can tell her, from the point of view of government, we have increased our funding in the area of transportation. If there has been any question of that, let that be clear on the record now.

Ms. Gray: Mr. Deputy Chair, the minister is incorrect. She is making comments on the autonomy and the ability of school divisions to make decisions. She has had a direct impact. She has presented Bill 16 and Bill 22, which is her government saying to the people of Manitoba: This is what we believe in regard to education in Manitoba.

Bill 16 reduces the autonomy of school divisions to make decisions. Bill 22 encourages school divisions, gives them the opportunity to have teachers take unpaid professional development and administrative days. Is the minister going to sit here today and tell me that those particular bills and those policy decisions on behalf of the government of Manitoba are not at all related to decisions and do not indicate a certain policy decision in regard to what they think should happen out there in school divisions? Is she suggesting there is no relationship?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chair, the member wishes to broaden the discussion now to other areas. The

comments that she had asked for were in relation to transportation of students on field trips in one particular school division, and I have given her the information, that information in terms of what our commitment is.

We, as a government, make our commitment to education through the funding formula. We have, through the funding formula, made sure that various divisions have received, in areas where they have felt that there was concern, we have modified the funding formula in order to provide the funds.

Bill 16 is a measure which still allows school divisions to impose a taxation on their local ratepayers. It has simply limited how far and how greatly school divisions may continue to make that taxation in a short term, because we have heard school divisions and we have heard that taxpayers are saying that they cannot continue to take and to pay more and more.

However, Bill 16—and I know when we bring that bill to committee the member will see, and perhaps when we also get to the funding for public schools area—we will see that there has certainly been a level in which school divisions can add to the funding which flows from the government of Manitoba through the special levy by an increase of 2 percent on the special requirement.

We have also allowed for phase-in funding, and we have also allowed for enrollment changes. So I think that we will see that for many school divisions they have been able to, within Bill 16, meet their needs. Some school divisions have not used the total amount available to them even with the restrictions of Bill 16. I do not have in front of me the information as to whether or not that applies to Agassiz School Division, for instance. Though I do have some information that perhaps they did not use the total amount available to them under the terms of Bill 16.

* (1300)

So school divisions do still have a certain amount of funds that they can raise via Bill 16, through their special levy. It puts on a limit or a maximum, and we know that not all school divisions have gone to that maximum.

Then, in terms of Bill 22, the member wants to talk about that. Bill 22 was to allow divisions the ability to maintain their staffs and programs. Bill 22 has given school divisions an opportunity through the

workweek reduction so that then there should be an ability to continue to keep staff and programs.

We said during the funding announcement for the public schools that it was very important that in the education funding area that programs and services to students were maintained.

Ms. Gray: Mr. Deputy Chair, one further question before I turn it over to the member from Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk). I broadened the discussion only because, on a specific question, I could not get an answer.

I will ask it one more time and there is no point in repeating the question 10 times, which I know I have done in different ways. I have attempted to get an answer and have yet to get an answer from this minister that is certainly satisfactory to me, and I would suggest probably to anyone in the education field who ends up reading Hansard.

But one more time, I will ask this minister, can she tell me what her opinion is, what her feeling is, as to if there will be any negative impact on students in the education system should those students be denied opportunities to participate in a variety of extracurricular activities? Does she believe there will be a negative impact to those students?

Mrs. Vodrey: My answer is that, at the moment, we do not know exactly what kinds of actions or job actions may be taken in relation to this particular proposal that the member has brought forward.

So we will have to see what decisions boards make, and whether or not boards have used all of the available opportunities for them in terms of funding. We will also have to look at whether there is any action on behalf of teachers and any job action on behalf of teachers, and we do not know yet whether that will be the case.

I can end this discussion by saying that I would like the best for all students in Manitoba, and that I recognize the boards have to make the best decisions that they are able to make also, and that I look for all of those in education to continue to be professional.

Ms. Gray: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, just one more question as a follow-up. The minister indicates she is not sure what the impacts are. Is she aware of what the impacts will be, if any, on Bill 16 and Bill 22, whether positive impacts or negative? Does she have an analysis or an opinion on the impacts of those particular pieces of legislation?

Mrs. Vodrey: We will be looking to see how school divisions have applied Bill 16, and we will be looking to have the cumulative information on how divisions apply Bill 22, to what extent, if they apply it to the full extent or only partially. All divisions have not reported all of that information.

Then in addition, we have to see exactly, in terms of their employees, what their employees wish to do as a result of the decisions of the board. Again, we will look to employees to be as professional as they can in the interests of all students.

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): I have been listening with interest to the discussion on—
[interjection]

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Order, please. Could I ask the honourable member to bring the mike up, No. 9.

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I have been listening with interest to the discussion on distance education. I am pleased to hear that the minister says it is a high priority on their list, particularly in light of the fact that rural children do face many disadvantages when it comes to costs of getting an education. I am sure the minister is well aware of the economical situation in rural Manitoba, where many families cannot afford to move their children out of home and into the city to get their education.

As I said, I am pleased to hear that it is high on the list, but I am disappointed in this government on the actions that they have taken and the movement that we have seen on the First Year Distance Education Program, particularly as it relates to the Swan River constituency and the community of Swan River.

People—the school board and staff, teachers in that area—have worked very hard in putting proposals together. They were invited by the government to put a proposal in on First Year Distance Education a couple of years ago and, to this date, have seen no progress. It is very disappointing to the people of the area when they had hoped that this year, by this fall, we could see something in place with First Year Distance Education.

Can the minister tell us what progress she sees, or what hope there is for the people of Swan River to see First Year Distance Education offered in the Swan Valley School Division this fall?

Mrs. Vodrey: I know the member is interested in the First Year Distance Education Program, and I can tell her that it is continuing as a pilot for one additional year, pending the recommendations of the University Review.

Because the member is particularly interested in the First Year Distance Education part, first year of university, then it is important for us to look at the results of the University Review because we would like to see what recommendations they bring forward, and we understand that they too are looking at the area of First Year Distance Education.

I can tell the member that because we understood the importance for Swan River, Swan River was represented on the Distance Education Task Force. So we certainly recognize that Swan River has spent time on the issue of distance education and has worked very hard to present information. We have attempted to include them in the process in that way.

* (1310)

Ms. Wowchuk: The minister talks about the University Review; however, there has been a review of the First Year Distance Education Program. As I understand it, that review has been done some time ago, and I believe the minister referred to it earlier.

Why is it taking so long to get that review out to the public? Also, has it been released at all? Has anybody besides people at cabinet seen it, and in that review is there an evaluation being done of the existing projects under the First Year Distance Education Program and is that information available?

I think it would be fair that we should be able to see the progress or the success of the other pilot projects that have been going on so that people can do some comparing on it.

Mrs. Vodrey: The member may be referring to the Distance Education Task Force Report. The Distance Education Task Force Report examined more than simply First Year Distance Education, and, as I said earlier today, I do look forward to releasing that. I expect to be releasing it very shortly, and there will be an opportunity. It will be released to the public, to divisions. The member is certainly able to have a copy of that so that she will be able to look at what has been proposed.

There was also a review done of the First Year Distance Education. That is a review specifically as

opposed to the task force. As a project review, it is in the hands and virtually in the control of the presidents of the universities for Inter-Universities North.

Ms. Wowchuk: That is the review I am referring to, the review of the pilot project. It is my understanding that review was available last December, but it was not distributed.

Mrs. Vodrey: Let me go over it again. That review is not ours. That review belongs to the presidents of the universities, the Inter-Universities North.

Ms. Wowchuk: Then if it belongs to the university, it is reviewing the pilot project that the government has put in. Has the minister seen that review? Can she share her comments on it?

Mrs. Vodrey: The review of the FYDE program was certainly referenced by the task force report, and it was reviewed by the task force extensively.

When that task force report is released, and again I expect that to be very shortly, our government in particular will be looking at all of the recommendations which have been included. There will be information, I am sure, that relates to First Year Distance Education.

Ms. Wowchuk: My understanding is that one of the delays for releasing information on the First Year Distance Education review is that the University of Manitoba and Inter-Universities North are having a disagreement on who should be delivering, and the University of Manitoba seems to be very concerned about Inter-Universities North moving south and feel threatened that this is going to invade their market share.

I think this is rather ridiculous that those people are going to start worrying about whose territory is whose and which market share is whose, and, in the meantime, people who want to establish First Year Distance Education in their community are being held up because the two bodies cannot decide who is going to be delivering the program in that area.

In the minister's opinion, is it accurate that there is disagreement between the University of Manitoba and Inter-Universities North as to who should be delivering these programs?

Mrs. Vodrey: Any disagreements or concerns which may have been expressed, I believe will be dealt with by the University Review. The University Review is looking at issues such as access, and so right now we do have a mechanism in place to look

at what the further issues are in terms of distance education.

Ms. Wowchuk: Can the minister provide us with any information on the pilot projects that are existing in the province on First Year Distance Education or are there any documents which she can provide us with where we can see the numbers of people who are participating in the program, drop-out rates, and an evaluation of the value of those programs being delivered in rural Manitoba?

Mrs. Vodrey: Would the member like to know the overall registration by course number for students in Distance Education? We have information—totally among the sites there were 488 students who started, 284 students actually were registered and worked towards completing the course.

There have been, from the initial registration of 488 in total, a certain number of cancelled registrations, and also a certain number of voluntary withdrawal students as well.

Ms. Wowchuk: I could not hear clearly. Did the minister say that 488 started and 288 ended up so there was a drop-out rate of 200 people? Is that right?

Mrs. Vodrey: Some individuals who had registered withdrew before the course began, and other individuals were voluntary withdrawals during the process of the course.

Ms. Wowchuk: Does the minister have a breakdown of which project had the highest number of dropouts? Which of the projects appeared to be the most successful in retaining the number of students in the program, and which are the poorest? Do you have that kind of breakdown?

Mrs. Vodrey: In terms of the highest withdrawal by course, it is Introduction to Psychology. The area with the highest rate of registrants versus students who complete is the Thompson site.

* (1320)

Ms. Wowchuk: We were talking earlier about the telecommunications and the need to co-ordinate between Education and Manitoba Telephone to put these programs into place. Can the minister tell us, is she aware whether the proper fibre optics are in place in the Swan River area to deal with, first, your Distance Education and also other distance education programs?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chair, we believe that the fibre optics are within Swan River, but all the FYDE

sites are not on fibre optics. So I am informed that to simply bring them in, we would have to have a greater consistency of fibre optic technology across sites.

Ms. Wowchuk: The minister had indicated with First Year by Distance Education, there were people from the Swan River board who were involved on the task force, and I know the person who is involved in that, a very credible person. The other area that there is a tremendous amount of interest in is distance education. Again, people throughout the Swan River constituency recognize the need to bring opportunities for education to children in rural areas where population is declining, and we would like to very much see that throughout the Swan River School Division and Duck Mountain School Division. Is there anyone involved in the committee, the working group, that the minister has on distance education from that part of the province?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chair, on the Distance Education Task Force there was a representative, Grant Patterson, from Bowsman School, and also Cam Mateika who was on the technical advisory committee. That task force has now finished its work, and the reports are now being reviewed by government departments. Also, the report will be sent out to school divisions so that they will have access to the full report.

I can also tell the member that negotiations are underway between Flin Flon, Kelsey, Swan Valley, Dauphin Ochre and Turtle River school divisions to form a distance education consortium supported by fibre optic technology. This initiative will provide a two-way audio-video communication between high schools in all five divisions to support the French Immersion and other senior level instructions as well as the continuing education programming.

Post-secondary institutions such as Assiniboine Community College and Keewatin Community College, Brandon University, the University of Winnipeg may also be brought into this consortium. The project starting time for this network is the fall of '93.

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Deputy Chair, I am pleased to hear that we are going to have those opportunities to have education expanded in those five divisions, but I guess the question I have, are there other divisions as well that are involved?

I represent the Duck Mountain School Division. I also represent Northern Affairs communities, and I

wonder what steps are being taken. The minister talks about a time line where we might be starting in the fall of '93 in those five divisions. What time line can we be looking at where we might see these services offered in other divisions, as I say, Duck Mountain School Division and the Northern Affairs divisions as well?

While I am on that I may as well ask at the same time, is the minister, is this department working along with Indian Affairs so that those schools, as well, will have the opportunity to have distance education brought into them?

I think that is very important because these children also have to have those opportunities. I know the minister will tell me this falls under federal jurisdiction, but I would like to know whether there is any co-ordination being done between the federal and provincial government to be sure that the children in those communities do not lag behind in educational opportunities.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chair, the federal government was sent a copy of the interim business education report when it came out. We do not believe we have had a formal response from the federal government on that interim report. We certainly would be willing to forward a copy of our final report to them.

We have not had a specific formal working relationship in the area of distance education, though we certainly look for their comments to the work that we have done. In terms of a time line, as I have explained earlier, first of all, the report of the Distance Education Task Force will be considered by the advisory committee on Ed Finance and that will be occurring in, I think it is, late June, and then in terms of other specific government policy, I can tell her that there are many departments of government which would be involved in the Distance Education policy and initiatives, so I cannot give her a specific time line on that other than to say that, as I think has been demonstrated through the discussion here today, it certainly has been seen as a priority by our government.

Just to comment further in the area of aboriginal education, there is a current project underway, I understand, to produce an interactive video and print material between Manitoba Education and Training, Frontier School Division and INAF, the Indian and Northern Affairs, the federal government.

Ms. Wowchuk: Did the minister say a video is being produced? Is this classroom material, or what kind of material is this video? What are children going to be learning from this video?

* (1330)

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chair, this is an interactive video. It will focus on the social studies area and it will cover a content area such as government structures, processes in northern communities, band governance, northern community councils and so on.

Ms. Wowchuk: I would look forward to seeing a copy of that video and also look forward to hearing some evaluation of it after it has been presented.

I hope that the government will continue to work along with the federal government to see that we have improvements in the aboriginal areas as well.

I want to get back just to a couple of questions that I have, getting back to Swan River and the First Year Distance Education. The minister is well aware that the division and school board have worked very hard, and they have made many offers to help pick up part of the extra costs by offering space and offering equipment. In fact I believe there is a person on staff who could be the supervisor for that program, but they have hit a block, because this review is not being done.

What steps can the Swan Valley School Division take to assure that that program will be implemented? As I have said, it was the hope of the people of the area, of the school division and of the children in that area who have to go to university this fall, that they would have the opportunity to take courses in the division this fall. Is there any hope? What steps can they take to have the program implemented this fall?

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

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, as we said, there is not a FYDE site yet in Swan Valley. It is a process of decision making that we are now going through. If they are looking for an additional step, if they have not yet made a presentation to the University Review, then a presentation to the University Review would be an important one.

As I said to the member, the whole issue of the expansion of the FYDE sites has been, one, subject to the review of FYDE, but, two, we are also waiting for the results of the University Review. In addition,

we are also looking at the results of our own Distance Education Task Force.

Mr. Plohman: Just on the Task Force Report on Distance Education, a couple of brief questions. Did I understand from the previous questions and answers given here that this matter of the third phase of the report on distance education has now been received by the minister? I think that, earlier in our discussions of Estimates when we began, the minister said she had not received that yet.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, yes, I have received the report, and I will be releasing it very shortly.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, has this also been released to school divisions at this point already?

Mrs. Vodrey: No, it has not been released to school divisions yet, but it will be very shortly.

Mr. Plohman: I understand that the members of the opposition would get their copies at the time it is mailed to schools divisions. Is that a commitment the minister has made?

Mrs. Vodrey: Yes, I will provide the members with a copy.

Mr. Plohman: I thank the minister for that. Also, I wanted to ask her which department and branch staff are co-ordinating the government follow-up to this report. She said many different departments are involved. I would assume that this particular division of the minister's department is the co-ordinating body for dealing with the follow-up to this report.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, I can tell the member that the Program Development and Support Services Division of Education and Training will be taking a lead role, and, as I have also said this morning, we recognize that other departments and ministers will be having a look at the report in terms of looking at how it would impact upon their own departments.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, so what we are dealing with, then, is Education through this division taking the lead. Can the minister just indicate which other departments are involved in this process?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, Education and Training, in terms of taking the lead role, is at the preliminary level of contacts. So far, we have had contacts with Rural Development; Industry, Trade and Tourism; the Department of

Government Services; the Department of Agriculture; the Department of Northern Affairs. We look forward to expanding those links, because as I said this is an initiative which we believe is important to all of government, and there will be many areas of government that we believe will be interested in this particular initiative.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, I did not hear the Manitoba Telephone System. The minister responsible—is that by saying Agriculture? Was she speaking about ministers or was she speaking about departments? If it was departments, then is MTS also involved in it?

Mrs. Vodrey: Yes, the question was departments. The minister responsible for the Department of Agriculture is the Minister responsible for MTS (Mr. Findlay).

Mr. Plohman: Certainly.

Now the minister has raised the issue of the ministers. Of course, I was asking about really departments and agencies. I wanted to know if the minister was speaking about the ministers responsible for each of those areas or whether she was talking about the staff. Really I was asking about departmental involvement and agencies.

I gather the minister has given us a list which may expand. Will there be a formal structure, like a committee set up that will deal with this, or is it just a matter of getting feedback from each of the areas?

Mrs. Vodrey: As I have said during the course of discussion around distance education, we have constant discussion with Manitoba Telephone System. So when the member is looking at in terms of agencies, yes, I think I have made it clear today that we do have constant contact with Manitoba Telephone System. In terms of a structure for us to look at distance education, yes, we will have to look at a formal structure in terms of our movement.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, I just wanted to switch to another area dealing with the Child Care and Development Branch of this particular division. This morning I asked the minister some questions about the staffing ratio. The minister, once again, raised the issues of school divisions providing the service, that service was going to be maintained.

I would like to draw the attention of the minister to the letter from the Flin Flon School Division No. 46 of March 26, 1993, where they have written to the minister explaining that the costs for providing a

clinician in that division would be \$65,000 per clinician as opposed to the \$45,000 that the minister is offering.

* (1340)

I would like to ask the minister, in her response to that letter, whether she disputes those figures or whether she feels that they are realistic in terms of the actual cost? Has she any reason to believe that they are unrealistic? I note, for example, that the minister did say for the first time, and I quote: I acknowledge that the salary cost of a clinician exceeds the \$45,000 grant.

A statement that was quite straightforward—for the first time on asking about this, we received a definitive statement that says, I acknowledge, as minister, that the salary cost of a clinician exceeds the \$45,000 grant. Now that we have that established, the minister acknowledges her grant is not sufficient to cover the costs of a clinician, can the minister indicate to us whether she has any reason at all to dispute the figures that were given by the Flin Flon School Division?

(Mr. Deputy Chairperson in the Chair)

Mrs. Vodrey: In the area of Flin Flon, we did receive a letter from the Flin Flon School Division and subsequently have moved to assist the Flin Flon School Division. We understand that they are reasonably happy with the support that we have been able to provide them. The support is the support that I have been speaking about while we have been talking about clinicians over the course of the Estimates, that the grant is \$45,000 and that we are allowing through supplementary funding up to \$10,000 to assist, which is up to \$55,000. So I understand that that has been of interest and also pleased the Flin Flon School Division.

Mr. Plohman: I understand, though, that the minister said supplementary support at Flin Flon is around 70 percent, so that would be \$7,000 of the \$10,000 would be available. Am I reading that correctly?

Mrs. Vodrey: In total, the Flin Flon School Division will be receiving in the range of \$10,000.

Mr. Plohman: Well, that seems to vary some from the information the minister gave. She mentioned that Flin Flon, and I quote: Flin Flon is a low-assessed school division such that the equalization factor used to calculate '93-94 supplementary support is in excess of 70 percent. I assume 70 percent was used because it is not in

excess of 80 percent. So it must be in the neighbourhood of 70 percent.

Then the letter goes on to say: In order to assist school divisions that will employ their own clinicians for the first time in '93-94, \$55,000 per eligible clinician employed will be added to the '92-93 allowable expenditure. So that is \$10,000 more than the \$45,000, and if the factor is 70 percent, it should be 45 plus seven and it gives us 52. I am just asking if I am understanding that correctly.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the support is on two clinicians. The amount of money is assistance of \$5,300 per clinician for a total supplementary support of \$10,600.

Mr. Plohman: Okay, so it is less than what I thought it was; \$7,000 would have been the figures had I been interpreting it correctly. It would have been \$7,000 per clinician the way I was assuming it, which would have been \$14,000. The minister is saying it is \$10,000, so it is \$4,000 less.

I am assuming this on the basis of the letter that I have from the minister, the copy which she graciously provided to my colleague the member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie).

Mrs. Vodrey: The member obviously did not interpret it appropriately. The total amount is more than \$7,000. It is \$10,600. Flin Flon School Division has expressed the fact that they are satisfied with the assistance that has been provided.

Mr. Plohman: The minister should not put words in my mouth about the interpretation. I was asking her for the interpretation and the clarification. She has now given that; however, the figures I was using was, was it \$7,000 per clinician coming to a total of \$14,000?—and that is why I am saying it is less. It is \$10,000 in total. So, in fact, we have established that there is some supplementary funding there. That is fine. It is less than I thought it was. Now, the precise amount—the precise amount was not known.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the Flin Flon School Division, notwithstanding the fact the minister says she is providing some additional funding, is saying that it is costing them \$65,000 per clinician. The minister is providing around \$50,000. So we are talking \$5,500? So we are talking about a \$15,000 shortfall here.

Does the minister have any reason to dispute the figures that were brought forward by the Flin Flon School Division?

Mrs. Vodrey: First of all, costs will vary in school divisions as they hire their clinicians. Costs vary according to the clinician's training and also according to the clinician's experience.

We have moved to assist school divisions this year, and again, those needs vary where there is a need at all. I can tell the member that in the following year when we have calculated the total amount, the total amount will be eligible for supplementary funding.

Mr. Plohman: On a percentage basis, I take it, depending on whether they are a low-assessed or high-assessed division, is that correct?

Mrs. Vodrey: Yes, that is correct. That was the meaning of the supplemental.

Mr. Plohman: It is interesting that the minister has not commented on the costs associated in this particular division. The minister has no reason to dispute the \$65,000 figure. Is that correct?

Mrs. Vodrey: The \$65,000 estimate is based on a Class 7 clinician. We have not had an indication that they wish to hire a Class 7 clinician, and that, as I have said, the salary requirements will vary based on the classification of the clinician and also the years of experience.

Mr. Plohman: In that case, could the minister indicate how many of the clinicians that will be laid off effective June 30 are in the Class 7 category?

* (1350)

Mrs. Vodrey: We do not have the exact number of clinicians who are Class 7 because clinicians have not indicated totally to us where they wish to go and become employed. We might estimate that of all the clinicians, there may be at the most two who fall into the Class 7 category. I understand that in the Flin Flon situation there was an offer made to a Class 7 clinician who turned it down.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the Flin Flon superintendent also explains how a different method of sharing with, for example, Snow Lake would allow them to have more of the costs covered by making this an unconditional grant. Does the minister have any comments about her position on that aspect of it considering that there are these rather significant additional costs to school divisions?

In this particular case, we have established that if it is a Class 7 clinician that is required or the one that they hire, or the two that they hire, that we are

dealing with almost \$15,000 per clinician additional cost to the school division because of the way the present system has been drawn up with regard to conditional grants versus unconditional. So they had asked in their letter to the minister whether she would consider making these unconditional so they would be better able to afford the hiring of these people.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the example given by the member with Snow Lake, I can tell him that Snow Lake has entered into a satisfactory arrangement with Frontier School Division, so that is not an issue.

In terms of unconditional grants or block grants, the grants are tied to the service, and by giving a block grant we would not have been able to look exactly at the level of service.

Mr. Plohman: Well, clearly they were not proposing that the money be used for anything else but that service. They said the government could stipulate that all expenditures in this category—and I take this right from their letter—must be in the delivery of the intended services, so they are not intending to use this money for anything else.

Is the minister saying that she is going to require a certain level of service but not prepared to fund it fully? Is that really what she is saying?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I understand in the situation discussed in Flin Flon—and the member says the division did not want to use it for anything else, well, I think divisions do make decisions; they are autonomous decisions. My understanding is they did want to use some of that money not for direct servicing and not for the direct work of the clinician, that, in fact, with the money, they would perhaps have hired fewer people.

Our view is that the funds should go to provide the service, so that is why we provide the \$45,000 grant for clinician services. Also, if money is required for that clinician service beyond, it would be covered in supplementary.

Mr. Plohman: The minister should say partially covered in supplementary, not covered. Is that correct?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the nature of the supplementary funding is that it covers a portion of the cost. However, as I have said, in the year following this, we will look at covering the full cost.

I would also say to the member that 19 school divisions have been operating in this way quite successfully, and so other school divisions now that are going to be employing their clinicians directly, we believe will also be able to be successful in this way.

Mr. Plohman: It is an interesting comment by the minister that she is going to look at providing the full funding for the following year—that would be '94-95. There is a supplementary system here; it does not cover it all. But the minister will find out exactly what the costs are as a result of whom divisions hire this year.

* (1400)

Is the minister saying that based on that, she intends at the present time to develop a supplementary system that would cover all the costs of the clinician based on the current formula of one for every 700 students—every eligible clinician based on the current formula? Is that correct?

Mrs. Vodrey: We are talking about covering the eligible costs.

Mr. Plohman: Well, is the minister saying that some of the 65,000, for example, since I used that example—some of those costs are not eligible and if so what portion would not be eligible?

Mrs. Vodrey: The costs in Supplementary are eligible for support, but then the formula applies on a formula basis of how much is eligible for that division for supplementary support.

Mr. Plohman: The minister should go—you know, I do not want to push this too long because it is just one particular division, but it is important. There is a concept here now that the minister has introduced, and I recall her words, that look at covering the full costs in the following year. We will say the full eligible cost. So I am just trying to determine what the difference would be from what is eligible this year and what the formula allows for as compared to what the minister is talking about for next year. What is the difference?

Mrs. Vodrey: The supplementary costs are always determined based on the previous year. So this being the first year for these divisions, we started with a threshold amount of money and have allowed that in this year. Next year we will have an opportunity to look at what the supplementary cost and what the supplemental support was for those school divisions to then make it eligible for the following year.

Mr. Plohman: Okay. Well, then taking it one step further and my example is, assuming that the \$65,000 are actual costs, which they predict they are, would they be all covered by way of the minister's new formula for next year?

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, just to clarify further. If there are certain costs that are not eligible for supplemental in this \$65,000 estimate, then please tell me what they are.

Mrs. Vodrey: I can see how the member could be confused with a number of issues. I have explained to him the costs are eligible for support, but what the member has to look at is how the formula applies per division to cover the level of eligible support. By the way, I would also like to say around the \$65,000 amount of money—I have explained that the \$65,000 is a Class 7 clinician. We do not know that this is going to be a Class 7 clinician, and in fact we do not have that many Class 7 clinicians in Manitoba.

Mr. Plohman: Well, the minister admitted earlier, though, that there was an offer made to a Class 7 clinician, so the example was realistic, and that is what we are really dealing with here is a concrete example. Just to further clarify this, the minister is saying, then, that perhaps the formula, the equalization factor that is available this year, may be changed next year so that it would apply differently.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chair, no, the member is not correct, but I would say that the advisory committee on Ed Finance does always consider the issues that are before school divisions. I have made no commitment nor asked them specifically to look at changing. What I have said to the member is that supplemental funding in its normal course is based on the expenses of the previous year. Therefore, next year, in the second year, we will know what the real costs have been, and then we will be able to look at providing the funding for the supplemental funding. This year we had to look at a cost which we saw as a base cost or a threshold cost. We had to arrive at a number which we wished to assist divisions, and that is what we have done.

Mr. Plohman: So then actually for this transitional year, if we want to call it that, in most cases, with a base being used, divisions are probably not going to be eligible for as much supplementary funding as they would be once they have proven their costs. The minister can indicate whether the base would

have been realistic in what was assumed would be the cost, or is it an average? How was it arrived at?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, this is our best estimate of the cost. We took into consideration issues such as salaries and travel costs. Again, I would remind the member that they will not be the same for each division and the supplemental funding will not be the same for each division.

Mr. Plohman: So it is possible then that next year, when the minister talked about covering all of the costs on a formula basis, some divisions could actually get less. If they spent less than was projected, they could actually get less money next year.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, where divisions' costs are lower, then we would be covering the eligible costs. So where costs are lower, then yes, they would perhaps get less.

Mr. Plohman: Okay, I understand that. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chairperson. I would like to ask a couple of other questions regarding clinicians. I have received a fax from a clinician who has raised a concern about the principles and issues that were raised previously with the minister. I do not know that they were clarified.

I want to ask just as to the clause that was put in by the Civil Service Commission and communicated through the human resources staff that because you have—and I quote from the letter that was sent to me. This was written in a letter from Mr. Gillespie to the clinician. She quotes, because you have more than 10 years of service, you are eligible for enhanced severance upon permanent layoff except in the following case: if you are re-employed by a school division to which Manitoba Education and Training now provides additional grants for the provision of clinician services.

Then in the same letter she says, I do not feel that this is fair as it is my understanding if I went to work in a hospital setting I would qualify for the enhanced severance and I should not be penalized if I obtain employment with a school division.

Does she have the information wrong here or is this absolutely correct that hospitals are treated differently than schools? If they are treated differently, is it based on grants that are provided for clinicians? Do hospitals through health care also receive funding for clinicians?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, we did discuss this earlier. The person in question—and I

do not have the letter in front of me that the member has the advantage of—and I am assuming that within the letter, the person is a certified school clinician. The certification for school clinicians does speak about specific work which is done within a school. Therefore, should the member become rehired by a school division, she would then continue the same work that she had been doing previously. Should the person in question become hired by a hospital or by a university or by some other area in which she might apply her skills, she would not then be doing the specific work of a school clinician. Therefore, the distinction is around the work and the specific type of work that individual would be doing.

As a clinician myself who has worked in a number of settings, including a hospital, a university and a school, I can tell you the work is different.

* (1410)

Mr. Plohman: Well, yes, it may be different. The work may be different, but is it fair when you consider that the employer is not the same? The minister surely recognizes that if employed by a school division, that is not the same as an employee of the government in the civil service. It is a different employer; therefore, applying this requirement for no severance pay under those conditions is discriminatory.

Mrs. Vodrey: In terms of the issue of compensation, I can tell the member, she most certainly does get severance. She does not get the enhanced severance, and that is the issue. So please do not let it go on the record that the individual does not receive severance. She does.

Then, following that, she then becomes employed in a job, perhaps in exactly the same job as she did before. It might be in exactly the same school division with exactly the same clients. So that individual, by virtue of the decisions that had been made, then under this current circumstance, working again in a school using the terms of a school clinician, would not be eligible for the enhanced severance.

The individual may also—and again, I do not have the advantage of the letter, I do not know the type of clinician, I do not know the years of training of the clinician and the years of experience of the clinician, because the member has not shared the letter with me—but that individual may in fact earn a higher salary.

Mr. Plohman: Yes, that may be possible. That is not really—the question is how the former employees of the government are being treated, and whether they are being treated equitably? Certain employees after 10 years receive enhanced severance pay because they are leaving this employer and they are going to a division—it might be a different school division than they were in before, if they do in fact go to a school division.

So it is a different employer again, even than they were working with as an employee of the government. So they could be working in different situations—

Point of Order

Mr. Downey: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, are we not discussing the expenditures of the Department of Education and monies that will be spent in the province on behalf of the province, not on what will happen to employees who have been with the government of Manitoba?

So I would ask, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, that you call the member to order and deal with the specific subject which we are dealing with. One can speculate all they like what will happen to other individuals. If the school divisions want to hire them, they will.

An Honourable Member: This is not a point of order.

Mr. Downey: Yes, it is. We want to deal with the subject matter that is before us.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Order, please. The honourable minister did not have a point of order. It is a dispute over the facts.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, before I was so rudely interrupted by the Minister for Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey), I was making the point that this branch of government has, either initiated by themselves or with the consent of the Civil Service Commission, made certain decisions with regard to former employees of this branch.

They are now going to be, hopefully—

An Honourable Member: We wish them well.

Mr. Plohman: Well, they would like your callous attitude. The Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey) is not being particularly helpful here for his colleague when he talks flippantly about wishing

them well as they go, when we are talking about her colleague.

I want to get back to this point because I believe it is somewhat discriminatory treatment of former employees. I made my point with the minister about that. I do not think it is particularly fair that people are treated differently depending on which employer they go to.

The minister has to recognize as well that school divisions are not viewed as one employer either. When teachers move from one school division to another they lose due process and tenure—or the seniority and due process when they move to another employer. It is not transferable completely.

Under those circumstances it is something that the minister has to recognize. These are all different employers. They are independent employers. Therefore, staff that are moving to those should not be penalized because the minister or her staff have not made a determination that they are going to be doing the same kind of work. They are not working for this employer any longer, so why are they being treated differently when they leave?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I remind the member that the individuals in question all received a severance package. His point now is around an enhanced package. We know that this individual had the opportunity also to become re-employed in government. That was also an option. Now the individual is looking perhaps to be re-employed elsewhere. It might be with a school division. If, in fact, it is with a school division, that person will be doing the work of a school clinician. The work will be the same. As I said, it might even be with exactly the same clients in exactly the same school division, exactly the same work that the individual was doing before. In fact, the pay scale may vary upward.

I do not have the benefit of the letter in front of me. I do not have the benefit of knowing who the individual is specifically. As I said, there is a severance package which the individual is entitled to. The individual will make some decisions now about whether that person wishes to remain in government, wishes to become employed by a school division or by another agency or hospital.

Point of Order

Mr. Downey: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, on a point of order, has the member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) tabled the letter that he has been referring to? Will

he table the letter, because it is within the rules, when a letter is being referred to, to table the letter? Table the letter, please.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: The honourable member is using a point of order to direct a question to the honourable member for Dauphin.

The honourable member for Dauphin has not directly quoted from the letter.

Mr. Downey: Yes, he has. He has referred to it. Mr. Deputy Chairperson, he has made all kinds of references to it and should table the letter. The rules of the committee are to table the letter.

* * *

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I would want to ask the minister about another branch of the particular Program Development and Support Services division.

I will respond to the members opposite who have raised the issue, first of all, just for clarification. I would respond to the points of order—[interjection] No, I am not, and I do not care—

Point of Order

Mr. Downey: On a point of order, I would ask that you review Hansard to see specifically as to whether or not there has been reference made to a letter which, under the rules of the committee, should be tabled. I would ask that you do that, Mr. Deputy Chairperson.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: On the point of order raised by the honourable Minister of Northern Affairs, it is up to the member if he wants to table said letter. It is not in the rules. I will research the fact, though, and bring to the committee—I will review the matter and bring back to the committee in the House, the matter that the honourable minister is putting to my attention.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, just to further clarify as you are looking at this, in the Legislature, in the Chamber and during Question Period when people are referring to documents, quite often they are tabled. [interjection] During Question Period. During committee, documents are not all tabled because if that was the case we could ask the minister to table her briefing book and all the other things that she reads from. [interjection] Yes, she reads from them and I just point out the absurdity of it, so I want to move on to another point

here. [interjection] The whole bunch of them are absurd.

* * *

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I want to ask the minister about the Native Education branch. The Native Education branch has been mentioned as an area of priority and one that the minister has talked about, action that took place. Particularly I want to ask her about the office in Dauphin that was established.

The government has been failing in its decentralization efforts throughout the province and Dauphin has been one of the victims of decentralization. As a matter of fact, we see more jobs being decentralized out of Dauphin than into Dauphin.

*(1420)

However, there has been one minor exception to this with a few employees in the Native Education branch in Dauphin, one minor exception to a huge failure across the board in so many other areas in withdrawal of employees. We have one situation here which has developed with regard to the Native Education branch, and I want to ask the minister how many employees are currently working at that branch in Dauphin and what their positions are, what their work involves.

Mrs. Vodrey: In the Dauphin office, there are four positions, and they are currently being filled by a Community Liaison position filled by Lillian la Fuente, an English Language position filled by Betty-Ann McIvor, an Administrative Support staff by Barbara Sutherland, and there is one vacancy of those positions in counselling and career development that we look to fill as soon as possible.

In terms of the work that those individuals do, the Community Liaison parent involvement program responsibilities are—through this area, the Native Education branch was instrumental in establishing a Parkland aboriginal parents association. That membership includes representatives from Dauphin-Ochre, Swan River, Duck Mountain, Pine Creek, Frontier, the Dauphin Friendship Centre, West Region Tribal Council. Their activities included fall conferences in '91-92, focusing on parents as partners and parent empowerment. The '93 conference will highlight parents and youth.

The Native Education branch also participates in the Dauphin-Ochre Native Education committee. Its

purpose is to help parents and educators work together to address native students' concerns. The committee organized a successful community barbecue on May 12, '93, which involved trustees, administrators, teachers, students and parents.

The career development and counselling position, as I said, is vacant due to a staff retirement, and we look to fill that as quickly as possible. Its role is the establishment of a Parklands counsellors' network to provide support to counsellors from divisions with native students.

In the English Language Development program position, the individual evaluates proposals and monitors the implementation of school division programs funded under the English language enrichment for native students support program, identifies and/or co-ordinates development of English language arts materials for and about native people, and provides pre-service and in-service sessions for teachers and administrators and community members related to English language development.

Mr. Plohman: I thank the minister for that. Can she indicate which one of those positions is not filled at the present time and how long it has been vacant?

Mrs. Vodrey: The vacant position is the counselling and career development position, and it has been vacant since December '92 due to the retirement of the individual. We will be looking to fill that position as soon as possible. We will be looking to bulletin the position.

Mr. Plohman: Will this position be advertised externally or bulletined within the civil service only?

Mrs. Vodrey: We look to have an external bulletin.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, to the minister: When were the other three positions filled, and when was this established precisely, what month and year?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the individual who has now retired transferred from Winnipeg to fill that position. The other individuals, Community Liaison, English Language and administrative staff support were all filled January 1, '91, and filled by competition.

Mr. Plohman: The minister says, filled by competition. Was this competition one that was approved by the Civil Service, under Civil Service hiring procedures, or was this one of those that was

done prior to the removal of a hiring authority from the department?

Mrs. Vodrey: That position was filled by open competition and I am sorry, I do not have the details of whether this was before or after there was a change in our hiring authority. That question was not covered when our Human Resources staff were here to give us the details.

Mr. Plohman: Well, the minister cannot hide behind whether it was covered or not. I am asking her the question now and it is under this particular branch and it involves employees in this branch.

So the minister knows what the next step is, to undertake to get that information for the next sitting of the Legislature if the minister is not aware at the present time whether hiring authority was still with the department at the time these members were hired.

Mrs. Vodrey: I am certainly informed that we followed the Civil Service guidelines whether it was before or after there was a change in our hiring authority. So if the member has a question around that, then I would like him to put it.

Mr. Plohman: I certainly am aware of the Community Liaison Officer's involvement in the political process in the area, Lillian De la Fuente, and I want to know whether she was hired under proper jurisdiction of the Civil Service Commission. That is what I am asking about.

Now, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the minister says, yes, while people are nodding, staff are nodding, yet she could not tell me whether this happened before authority was in place or not. We know that there were some variations from proper procedure; that is why hiring authority was removed at one time. It may not have been this particular case. It may have been other cases. We heard about the—[interjection] Well, this may have been one too. I am not satisfied at the present time whether in fact the situation was clear at that time.

This minister knows that she does not have all the facts in front of her with regard to the process at this time. She said she does not know whether it was before or after that hiring authority was removed. On that basis, I think it is incumbent upon the minister to undertake to get a full report on the circumstances surrounding the hiring and the hiring authority at that time prior to the next sitting so that we can discuss this more fully at the next sitting.

She knows where I am coming from—

* (1430)

Point of Order

Mrs. Vodrey: On a point of order, I certainly did tell the member that the Civil Service guidelines and rules were followed. In terms of that competition, the Civil Service rules were followed.

But the member would like to know if our hiring authority—there had been a change in our hiring authority exactly at that time. Then I am prepared to certainly look into that and bring back the information for the member so he will have full information.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Order, please. The honourable minister does not have a point of order. It is a dispute over the facts.

* * *

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: As previously agreed, the hour being 2:30, committee rise.

HEALTH

Madam Chairperson (Louise Dacquay): Order, please. Will the Committee of Supply please come to order. This section of the Committee of Supply is dealing with the Estimates for the Department of Health. Does the minister wish to make an opening statement?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): If that would be in accordance with my honourable friends and my critics.

I am very pleased to present today the working Estimates of the Manitoba Ministry of Health for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1994. I will be asking this committee to support my request of \$1,841,360,900 of spending.

In this challenging period, I am especially pleased to pay tribute to the many dedicated workers throughout the health care system. The thousands of dedicated people within the system are to be commended for their willingness to put foremost the well-being of the Manitobans whom they serve. I want to especially commend those committed professionals who have continued to give their time, effort and creative ideas to facilitate the process of change that the health system is experiencing as we work together to preserve and protect medicare.

I know I can count on them and all other dedicated members of the system to continue to support the reform needed to maintain and enhance our system

as the best in Canada, and one of the best, if not the best, in the world.

Also, Madam Chairperson, my thanks are extended to the community groups, professional associations, universities, voluntary agencies, and individuals with an interest in the health of Manitoba, whose counsel continues to make contributions to decision making as we strengthen the partnerships which are a key feature of my ministry's activities.

Madam Chairperson, since I became Minister of Health in 1988, I have announced a number of significant initiatives, such as the development of goals for health and health care; Health Advisory Network; establishment of Manitoba's own bone marrow transplant program at the Health Sciences Centre; reform of the mental health system; establishment of a quick-response team to investigate emerging issues in health services; the Health Services Development Fund; Health Human Resource Planning, including among other initiatives, a national nursing symposium, the first ever, I might add, sponsored in Canada; a physician human resource strategy in conjunction with the other provinces and the federal government; two new state-of-the-art linear accelerators for the treatment of Manitobans suffering from cancer, under the auspices and the operation of the Manitoba Cancer Treatment and Research Foundation; \$2 million joint provincial-federal heart health project, in partnership with the Heart and Stroke Foundation and the Faculty of Medicine, the University of Manitoba; strategic Health Research and Development Fund; the introduction of Healthy Public Policy and the focus on population health; the implementation of the Manitoba Centre for Health Policy and Evaluation; the substance abuse strategy, including establishing a women's centre for substance abuse; the Urban Hospital Council and the Rural Health Advisory Council; the strengthening of the Continuing Care service program; \$19.1 million for alternative community-based mental health services reflecting important first evidence of our intention and commitment to provide appropriate alternatives to institutional care before beds are taken out of the system; and a larger number of other programs, policy, legislative and organizational changes.

Madam Chairperson, I am reading this list into the record because I want to give a flavour of the range and kinds of issues that we have tackled over the five-year period since I became Minister of Health.

This is not an all-inclusive list by any means, and if members opposite wish, I would be happy to provide them with any additional details they may require.

But, Madam Chairperson, I would prefer to use this time to focus on the key issue before us, because nothing short of the preservation and protection of medicare is at stake. As long as I am Minister of Health, the health status of Manitobans and the interests of patients are my first and foremost concern. I firmly believe that the preservation of medicare is fundamental to preserving the health status of Manitobans and protecting patient interests.

I do not think that there are very many Manitobans who do not want medicare preserved. Survey after survey has shown that Canadians are more satisfied with the fundamentals of their health care than citizens of any other country in the world with theirs.

One of the main reasons for the universal recognition that we have one of the finest systems in the world is the fundamental principles upon which it is based. The first four principles, universality, comprehensiveness, portability and public administration were features of medicare almost since its inception. The fifth principle of accessibility was added in 1984 to clarify the question of user fees.

We are in full agreement with this principle because we are on record as being opposed to user fees. They do nothing to improve the management of the system and they may, in some circumstances, jeopardize access for certain individuals to their needed health care services.

I believe it is time to think about a sixth principle of medicare, that is effectiveness. By effectiveness I mean that health services should be provided based on the principle that they do good for the patient, and that they do it in a more cost-effective way than alternative services.

In responding to the call for a more effective system, each province is currently undertaking significant and rapid changes in reform. It might be appropriate at this juncture to ask why, and in part, Madam Chairperson, the answer deserves a short revisit as to how medicare had its beginnings in Canada.

The Medical Care Act was approved in Parliament in 1966 and came into effect on July 1, 1967, Canada's 100th birthday. It ensured physician

billings and hospital costs. These were cost-shared 50-50 with the federal government by the provinces.

As a result, the spending signals were clearly to establish a doctor driven hospital base system. Today in Manitoba, 88 percent of our spending is physician institutional with the remaining 12 percent spent on community-based services and prevention wellness programming. Again, this situation is not unique to Manitoba and would be typically reflected in other provinces as well.

Two questions might be asked. Is this the most cost-effective spending pattern; and secondly, can it be sustained in the current fiscal environment?

The answer to the first question is complex but, in part, can be responded to by an analysis and comparison of our national spending patterns on health care with other industrialized nations and countries. Today, on a per capita basis, Canada is the second highest health service spender in the world, second only to the United States.

However, two key indicators show that people in Sweden, France and Japan enjoy better health while spending significantly less than Canadians. Clearly, more health spending does not mean improved health, more effective health services or higher quality care.

Just as the level of spending per person seems to bear little direct relationship to the levels of health status in the population in general, the numbers of hospital beds or physicians do not necessarily translate into better health, the benchmarks we have traditionally used. The number of beds and doctors available in our system are not measures of health. They are measures of spending.

That is because many of the determinants of health lie outside the health care system. This would clearly demonstrate why our spending priorities need to be rethought.

Other nations who are competitors in the global market spend less and achieve better outcomes in terms of population health. The challenge then becomes twofold: first, to shift our spending from institutions to community, from treating to preventing, from medical repair to promotion of wellness.

This is the clear mandate of The Health Action Plan and of the plans in most other provinces. To shift from institutional spending means the downsizing of the hospital sector—beds are closed.

Again, this is happening right across Canada. Resources are redirected and reinvested in alternate services that meet needs. These initiatives are the right thing to do within the health spending portfolio, but they are not the entire solution to preserve and protect Manitobans for when they need it.

Governments must understand that spending on health care is only one of a number of determinants of health. The other determinants of health include environmental factors, socioeconomic factors, the productivity and wealth of society as a whole, the individual genetic endowment and lifestyle.

* (1110)

The most obvious casualty of these past spending trends, in concentrating our resource commitment to spending in the formal health care system, has been the lack of investment in tools to make the nation able to better compete in an increasingly competitive idea-driven global economy.

Resource spent on health care is resource that has not been invested, for instance, in the research and development needed to create new products, new market objectives in a global economy.

When medicare was initiated, it was assumed that basic services would be provided, medically necessary services, services to protect the life and health of individuals, but what was missing was a requirement to demonstrate on the basis of scientific evidence that the services would be appropriate in terms of patient outcome and cost-effectiveness.

What is missing is a requirement to demonstrate improvements in health status for individuals and for the population. As a result, the demands on the system and the cost of services have skyrocketed with little evidence that they have contributed to the health status of Manitobans.

Many services were added without the kind of evaluation necessary to demonstrate that they were effective or cost-effective in preserving people's health.

Some experts, such as Dr. John Wennberg, Dr. Fraser Mustard and Dr. Robert Evans, contend that overmedicalization that has occurred in Canada with the associated invasive procedures has sometimes resulted in increased risks for patients.

Now, I know that Manitoba's medical practitioners are amongst the finest in the world, and I know that

they would not knowingly put people at risk and that they are committed to providing quality health services for Manitobans. That is why I am confident that the majority of the stakeholders in the system, including physicians, will continue to co-operate with Health Reform.

Madam Chairperson, there are those who ask: Do we need health care reform? To put it bluntly, if we wish to preserve the fundamentals of medicare, urgent reform is necessary.

Over the past 10 years, Manitoba's spending on health services has increased by over 180 percent, and that is not just the result of inflation. The consumer price index, the major inflation in Canada, has increased less than 75 percent over that same period, and Manitoba's population increased by only about 6 percent over that 10-year period.

Can we as a province of one million afford these kinds of spending trends? The result of this kind of uncontrolled growth has been a health cost crisis that is endangering the very future of medicare in Manitoba.

The second question, though, that must be posed: Is the challenge unique to Manitoba? As I said earlier, every province and territory is facing the same or greater challenges. Provincial governments across Canada are struggling with what is widely viewed as a health cost crisis.

No province and no part of Canada is immune to the health cost crisis. Across Canada, provincial governments of all political parties are wrestling with the danger that escalating health costs may make Canada's health care system unaffordable.

From Newfoundland to British Columbia, hospitals are being downsized, beds are being closed. There are, unfortunately, job dislocations and layoffs. All provinces are struggling to find more cost-effective ways of meeting health care needs, and many of the approaches are similar province by province regardless of political governance.

The health cost crisis is truly a national problem, and no government in Canada has any alternative but to strive for improved management of health services as the only means of ensuring that we will be able to continue to afford our national health care system.

But if medicare had run on the basis of the principle of effectiveness in terms of health status outcome, from the outset, services would have been developed on the basis of scientific evidence in

terms of appropriate, needed, effective services. In other words, the system would have been better managed.

Let me give just one example of how the system could have been made more appropriate and cost-effective. This January, the Manitoba Centre for Health Policy and Evaluation released a study entitled *An Assessment of How Efficiently Manitoba's Major Hospitals Discharged Their Patients*, commonly known as the Efficiency Study.

Let me quote from the conclusions of this study. Quote: We estimate that a significant portion of the days currently invested in treating acute care patients could be eliminated without decreasing access to hospital care.

A second quote, beginning: The hospital system appears to have the capacity to handle more patients or to absorb a sizable number of bed closures without rationing access to hospital care. The hospitals and the government have tended to assume that every bed closed should be replaced by another service, possibly less intense and less expensive, but nevertheless a replacement. These data suggest that at least some of the bed closures could be accommodated simply through more efficient treatment of patients in available beds. End of quote.

In other words, Madam Chairperson, there have been more beds in our system than were actually needed. That is, when variations of length of stay are taken into account we have excess bed capacity. We also have an overreliance on technology.

I am not pointing the finger of blame. In past the data and the scientific evidence to build the most effective system has been either unavailable or inaccessible. That is why when we embarked on the process of health reform, one of the first things we did was to establish the Manitoba Centre for Health Policy and Evaluation to give us the kind of scientific data on objective evidence we would need to rebalance our system and make it more effective.

That is also why we have obtained the advice and input from some of the leading scientists, researchers and experts in health services in North America, people with international reputations like Dr. Geoffrey Anderson from the University of British Columbia; Dr. Fraser Mustard and Dr. Robert Evans from the Canadian Institute for Advanced Research; Dr. John Wennburg and Dr. Elliot Fisher from the

Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Centre; Dr. Pran Manga from the University of Ottawa; Dr. Philip Lee from the University of California; Dr. David Naylor from the Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre; Dr. Morris Barer from the Centre of Health Service and Policy Research, University of British Columbia; and many others.

In May of 1992 I announced Quality Health for Manitobans - The Action Plan, which has been called by national and international experts as the best blueprint for preserving medicare in Canada. One of the reasons it has been called that is because it is based on the data from Manitoba Centre for Health Policy and Evaluation and on the best advice and research from experts like those I have just listed, in addition to input from a large number of stakeholders and Manitobans from all walks of life through literally several years of consultation.

This blueprint lays out our vision for the future. It lays out the challenges before us, and it provides an action plan to meet those challenges and to achieve our vision. The changes that are outlined in The Action Plan have already begun to be implemented and are challenging our institutions, our professional disciplines and government. These challenges are also providing opportunities for all Manitobans to work towards maintaining and preserving our medicare system.

I will say more about that in a moment, but first let me put that in a broader context. We are just coming out of a serious international recession, and most analysts predict that the recovery in Canada will be slow with ongoing economic restructuring and fiscal difficulties as continuing features of the recovery.

The experts agree that long-term prosperity means that Canada must become more competitive, and it is generally acknowledged that our health and social programs have the potential for putting us in the leading edge, especially if we can improve effectiveness while constraining costs.

I want to give you an example. Lee Iacocca, when he took on the chairmanship of Chrysler Corporation some number of years ago, stated that there are more health care costs than steel in a car manufactured in the United States.

American manufacturers of automobiles typically spend over \$1,100 dollars on health insurance per employee compared to \$100 on every car manufactured in Japan. No matter how effective the

U.S. employee is on the assembly line, no matter how productive, compared to their Japanese counterparts, the car produced in the United States is \$1,000 more expensive to produce in the global market from health costs alone.

A reformed health care system would make it less difficult for us as Canadians to address other issues such as deficits or other social programs like education and training or infrastructure development necessary for economic renewal.

As investment in infrastructure, increased health expenditures are not the only nor the best public investment in terms of improving the health status of the population. As you are aware, the determinants of health have more to do with socioeconomic factors, environmental factors and the prosperity of nations and people than the amount spent on health care. For example, that is why Healthy Public Policy has become such an important feature of my ministry and such a key component of health reform.

* (1120)

We have to find better ways and more effective ways to provide health services to Manitobans. We have to manage the changes in our health services system in a way that will contribute to improved health for all Manitobans. Restructuring and rebalancing our services, which can include bed redirections and closures but which must include looking at the system as a whole, must be undertaken with the underpinning of services provided to meet the needs in a cost-effective way.

Over the past five years, since I have become Manitoba's Minister of Health, I have been working to find the answers to that challenge. I have sought advice from every part of the health services community in Manitoba: from physicians, nurses and other health professionals; from advocacy groups like the Canadian Mental Health Association and seniors associations across the province. Throughout these consultations, I not only asked the question, how can we keep costs from escalating, but I have also asked the question, how can we improve health services and the health of Manitobans?

The second point I made throughout these consultations was that I do not believe that the government or any single group can answer the challenge alone. It is not only a government problem. It is not only a doctors' or a nurses' or a

hospitals' problem. It is a problem that affects and challenges everyone in Manitoba. There have been some disagreements. Some in the health services system have been tempted to focus on protecting their own turf rather than finding the better ways of providing health services that Manitobans need.

We face difficult adjustments as people learn to look at the whole health system rather than focusing on their own institution or their own field of practice. That is understandable. Change is difficult, and the temptation to blame the messenger is always strong. We have been accused of ignoring patient care, but there is not one shred of evidence to support that view. We have been accused of bringing in outsiders to help with health reform, but at the same time we have heard that we are not getting enough input and advice. We have been accused of closing beds without providing alternative services, but \$19.1 million in alternate funding for Mental Health is evidence of our commitment to providing alternative services before restructuring institutional services and closing those psychiatric beds.

Madam Chairperson, there comes a time when it is necessary to ask if the motives of some of these critics are more to protect the status quo than to protect the integrity of the health care system. With the interests of patients and the health of Manitobans as the first and foremost consideration, I know that the shift in thinking toward the new reality is difficult.

There has never been a recession in health services in this country since before the Second World War. Health system stakeholders are not used to thinking in terms of scarce resources or the fair distribution of resources to the most appropriate and effective sectors. Health system stakeholders have become accustomed to spending increases which have often been double the rate of inflation. In the past the issue of fair distribution of resources among all sectors had not been a traditional concern that had to be addressed.

Today's challenges require that spending choices be analyzed between competing demands, between departments, as well as within a department. Madam Chairperson, in this province of one million people, the ability of our population to continue to sustain uncontrolled growth in the health sector is limited. We cannot afford to jeopardize our economic recovery by continuing to redirect resources to an unproductive, nonwealth-creating,

consumption-oriented sector, particularly when there is little evidence that the health status of the population is benefiting from those significant expenditures.

We owe it to ourselves and to the next generation to effectively and prudently manage the system. That is why there is so much agreement that regardless of the personal preference of some of my critics, the status quo cannot be sustained. Everyone agrees that we are facing enormous challenges to preserve and protect medicare. Everyone who has looked at the evidence agrees that the system requires reform and restructuring. Everyone agrees that the Manitoba approach of careful and considered planning, consultation and involvement of all stakeholders is preferable to the blunt instrument of budget that has been the response of some of the provinces to the challenge. Everyone agrees that it is time to act.

It was almost exactly one year ago that I tabled Quality Health for Manitobans - The Action Plan. Since that time, we have met our commitment to carefully consult and to begin the implementation of the strategies outlined in the document. We recognized and we said at the time of the implementation of The Action Plan that there would be challenges and difficulties. There is no book that we or anyone else can consult in implementing health reform. A change of this magnitude has not been ever before undertaken. We are, if you will, writing the book as we go along.

What is unique in Manitoba is that we are inviting all the stakeholders to write the book with us. Literally hundreds of people have had input into Quality Health for Manitobans - The Action Plan. The principles and concepts of the reform as outlined in The Action Plan are the basis on which the book is written.

Madam Chairperson, the invitation to write the book with us does not imply empty obstruction just to maintain the status quo. It does not imply circumvention of the principles and concepts outlined in The Action Plan that so many have contributed to. It does not imply the protection of self-interest, and most importantly, it does not imply the right to ignore the interest of patients or the health status of Manitobans.

Madam Chair, I have demonstrated that I am committed to listening to legitimate critique of our reform plans, and we are justified by the evidence.

I have made changes accordingly. I will continue to listen, but I also will continue to act. The implementation of the mental health reform component of The Action Plan serves as a good example of my commitment to listen and to act.

The mental health component of our blueprint for action is an excellent example of how we are going about reforming the health care system to preserve and protect medicare. We began by ensuring that we would have the right kind of organizational structure to give all the stakeholders, including the full range of service providers and especially consumers, the opportunity to be full partners in the process.

Four years ago we established the mental health reform partnership with the establishment of regional mental health councils. We did not just listen, we also acted. Currently, significant reform is well underway in all regions in the province, shifting services from institutions to community. Shifting from institution to community-based mental health services will enable care and treatment closer to home and will give patients a broader range of services from which to choose. Ensuring the best care, services and support for Manitobans who suffer from mental illness is the single most important goal of mental health reform.

Madam Chairperson, the mental health reform process that I have just outlined serves as a good example of the approach we are taking with the entire process of health reform. The challenges before us, real as they are, are also opportunities. Even though the fiscal challenges are not diminishing—in some ways they have even gotten more severe—I have not deterred from my vision of a reformed health care system.

My vision for the reformed health care system involves a broad range of consumer choices, services closer to home, where Manitobans live and work. The restructuring will also involve a broad spectrum of services ranging from Healthy Public Policy, through prevention and treatment, to rehabilitation and palliation. It will involve a better managed and co-ordinated system with rebalancing towards more appropriate community rather than institutional care. The basis of the health care system of the future will be evident of outcome and effectiveness in terms of the health status improvement of Manitobans. When institutional care is supported by the evidence, we will support it, but hospitals should be seen as the last resort, not as

the first line of response. Experts tell us that community-based services are preferable in most instances.

Madam Chairperson, let me emphasize the importance of the shift towards an evidence-based system. For example, that is why we are committed to implementing plastic card health technology into the health care system. As we move into the next phase of health reform, I invite all of you to come along on the vision for the future in which we see a better managed, more appropriate system serving the real health needs of a vibrant and healthy Manitoba.

I invite you to resist the temptation to a vision that would see attempts to maintain the status quo leading to greater and greater fiscal and economic damage in Manitoba, to a time when, like New Zealand, we would be no longer able to sustain our universal system. I invite you to resist the temptation to a vision that would see the blunt instrument of budget as the only policy option open to government. More importantly, I invite you to resist the temptation for narrow self-interest that would attack reform without evidence and without alternatives and without vision.

Madam Chairperson, Manitobans are among the most creative and innovative people in the world, and we are facing the most difficult challenges since the Second World War or since the '30s, but I am confident that with the help of all Manitobans we will realize our vision. The Manitoba Health Services system will be the leading system in Canada, perhaps the world. Even more importantly, the health and prosperity of Manitobans will be second to none. Thank you.

Mr. Gulzar Cheema (The Maples): Madam Chairperson, I just wanted to speak and I approached the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak), because of some urgent commitment I have to leave after twelve o'clock. So I just wanted to take some time.

* (1130)

I was carefully listening to the minister's words, and I have done that for the last six years. Almost six budgets we have gone through. During this process, it has been a very learning experience because we all do not know all the things about health care. It is a very tough portfolio and you have to learn. It takes time to understand the concept and also develop in your own mind the long-term

policies. I think that can reflect on the own political party's philosophy if you wanted to put both things together.

It is a long process, and it initially was not very productive because you come to the House and the only thing you know and you have been taught and you are told that you have to oppose, oppose, oppose, but quickly you learn that opposing is not the answer. You have to provide some alternates. We have grown up in that area, and I will read my remarks.

I think it is very important that what has happened in Manitoba for the last six years, almost six years now, is a very significant step whether this minister is in charge today or somebody else will be in charge tomorrow, but the important thing is the process of reform must continue. It is very, risky, very slippery for political parties. As I have told many times, what is happening today in the health care reform, the good effects, the political effects of the wisdom of the day are not going to show up in the next campaign. It is not possible. It is very risky. So you are taking a major risk in terms of the critical opportunity, but that is what is required. You have to take a risk so that you can preserve something for the next eight or 10 years or probably longer than that.

I was going through some of the historical events when the medicare was brought in, and I was so impressed that the initial part of the health care was that in 1966 and 1984 they wanted to make it one of the main social policies which has to be most nonpolitical. In fact, this became the most political issue because it is so important to all of us, each one of us, either our families or members or yourself, we use the system. It is an important part of a human being to have access to health care services.

So it became very sentimental and very political. That is why I think we lost touch. The planning which started in 1966 was based on many things which did not happen. It was based on the population that we could have 36 million people by now, and the system was set up to meet the needs of 36 million people. The physician manpower was set up to meet those needs. The hospitals were based on those needs. All the technology was basing towards that kind of a population.

That did not happen because everybody came and they did their job for four years, and they were gone, and most of the ministers of Health who sit in

this country do not have a life span of more than two years. That is the political reality.

The only Minister of Health was the previous member for St. Boniface, and he was probably the longest-serving Minister of Health. And now the present Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) is the longest-serving Minister of Health in this country today.

I think that has to continue because we cannot change ministries in the Department of Health. It does not work because you cannot provide the continued—people have to understand. Then you rely upon the advice. You may be getting the best advice, but if you do not know what you are doing you are really causing many problems.

So I think that is one thing that we are very, very mindful of, that the government has to continue from that point of view, not for reporting the next morning's poll or anything because eventually people will appreciate.

The question was asked of me many times in the meetings, do we have a disaster? I said no. I mean things are not right, but it is not really getting out of hand. Basically, when you are changing the whole structure there are going to be some problems, there are going to be some growing pains, and we all have to bear with that. I think that is the message the people of Manitoba are really getting, and they are really grasping that part, because for them, they have to understand this is not a political issue.

If any one of us goes outside and tells this government or the NDP or us, any party is going to kill the medicare, they are fooling themselves. They are not. Everyone is concerned about the accessibility and the basic principles, but the question here is when we all agree on the basic principles you have to have a path.

I think there is a problem how you are going to show your path to develop a health care reform, and that is why when the health care reform package came in 1991, the package, as we said, the same thing was said by the previous ministers of Health in a broader principle. All the studies which have taken place as of 1973, they are all put together in a good package which was workable, which is still workable. The basic principles everyone agreed on, because that was not the minister's own philosophy or anybody else's philosophy. It is basically a collection of ideas. That is why on May 12, that evening, if you watched the news—I am sure as

politicians you all watch the news—there was not even a single comment which was negative. That shows you that there is a willingness to listen and work together on the health care reform package.

The package has two years of life. One year is already gone. We did not think it was going to be possible within two years because it is a major plan but, within one year, that has to be evaluated.

I mean, the whole issue of these Health Estimates for me is more a policy now rather than going after one dollar here and one dollar there. That does not work in health care. You have to have a long-term plan and how you are going to fit the whole thing into the health sector as an industry, as a service and also as the taxpayers' major expense. You have to combine all of those three things to come up with a package which will meet the needs of people in the long run. I think that is what the taxpayers are asking from all of us.

I think that is why when the health care reform package came here, within three months almost every province is doing the same thing; whether they are Liberals in Newfoundland or they are New Democrats in British Columbia, they all want to do the same thing.

To achieve the same objective that we have here you have to have a really good framework, you have to have a good knowledge, and you have to have political will.

I think the combination is there to do all those things, and I think that is why it is so important for us to make sure that the health care reform package, The Health Action Plan should succeed. I think it is incumbent upon each one of us to make sure it succeeds. That does not mean that we have to be fearful that if we are not opposing we are not getting media attention. It does not work any more. I do not think it has worked for the last two years. We get the same coverage as the other party but it does not mean that we are criticizing all the time.

People are asking how you are going to do it in a different way. We are telling them, The Health Action Plan is a plan, a collection of 20 years of study, a collection of the previous governments ideas, a collection of the present government's ideas. It is not a political ideology. I think that is the message I want to convey. It is not a political ideology.

It is basically a concept which is ever changing but you have to have a broad mind to accept those changes, but within the five basic principles, do not

just follow the principles in terms of the dollars and cents. Follow the principle in terms of the service and try to manage it effectively. I think that is the new word the minister has said. It is the sixth word, effectiveness, of the health care system.

Every province is doing the same thing. They are scrambling because, if anyone does not get access in time, it is cause for concern, but in Manitoba we do not see anybody—I do not want to put, somebody has died, but somebody who was unable to get the services was blaming the government, present or past. They have not because there are so many organizations, individuals, health care providers on the way so each and every person has a responsibility.

What happens with the responsibility if somebody is failing it at step 1? They just blame step 10 without realizing and that is what, I think, we have to do in this House and the members. I have to do it, and my party has to do it. Make sure you do not simply derail the process because something has gone wrong somewhere, one or two or three steps. You have to make sure that you follow the steps from one to 10, to make sure each and every person in the health care sector has a responsibility.

* (1140)

Basically, it is the taxpayers' dollars, the taxpayers' money, and there is the basic trust which people have put upon you. You are spending \$1.83 billion, one of the major spenders in our province. It is 33 percent of the budget, and we should be very, very careful.

Madam Chairperson, I think, in the long run, it is going to be very, very productive. When the ministers or the governments are going to be judged, say, in five years' time, ten years' time, that will be very clearly shown how the health care plan was functioning in Manitoba.

If you go across the province and meet with the organization and the hospital boards and the various stakeholders, how can they say, individually, everything is fine? But, when something goes wrong, they like the principle, but everybody is fighting for the turf. That is slowly going away. I am not saying it has totally gone away, but that is slowly going away. As I said on May 12 last year, there was not a single organization in Manitoba who said they are opposing The Health Action Plan. Some of the people even put in writing, major organizations; I think that was very positive.

Those things are really generating a lot of debate, a very healthy debate. That will help us to develop a policy which anybody can take that policy and simply run with that policy and try to make sure you are serving all 1.1 million, not somebody who really voted for you, whether it is 24 persons or 22 or whatever numbers you want to put on that.

Madam Chairperson, I think those are very important from the evolution of the health care sector, how it is evolving, how this is maturing, and we all have to mature from that process. So that is why I said from the beginning, we have matured, and in our own way we are still learning many things.

Many things are changing. Even as a patient, they have to adjust the new realities of life. The health care providers have adjusted, but if one of the complements of the health care sector, whether it is the health care provider or the health care recipient, is not going to be mindful of the changes, then we will have a problem.

It does not matter how good the intentions are, how good the government wants to do it, eventually you have to have everybody working together and be open and put everything on the table and not to worry about if somebody is going to criticize and get a headline tomorrow. Ultimately, they are all going to have access to the health care services.

As I said, there are five basic principles, everyone agrees in this province. Everyone says, we do not want overbilling; we do not want to have user fees; we do not want to have extraordinary delays in surgical procedures, and many things, but when you are agreeing on all of those things, there has to be quite some plan.

That is why we are asking the minister that the process should continue in a more open fashion and get patients involved, the consumers involved. When they know what is at stake, they will be very, very helpful. I do not think anybody is going to oppose a good plan.

It is not as if you are looking after one industry of 400 people, you are looking after 1.1 million people. You are taking care of \$1.8 billion. The health care sector employs a lot of people in this province. A lot of people work for the health care provider, the hospital and every other staff. So you have to get involved with everyone, and you have to go beyond some of the active organizations. You have to go to the membership and ask them what they are thinking, because some of the collective groups, the

people who are in charge, may have their own political views or their own political agenda or their own benefit. But, if you go to somebody outside their circle and get them involved, I think that will be very, very helpful.

Based on that principle, we are asking the minister that we should look at a health care assembly concept. I will explain to you, there could be much criticism about that because that is what we want them to tell us, how we can evolve this health care assembly concept in the long run.

I will give you an example. What will happen tomorrow if the present Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) is not the Minister of Health? Who is going to continue some of the things that have happened already? You have a change in the deputy minister, you have a change in the ADMs, so you have five people who are gone. Who is going to continue that? Who is going to monitor the whole thing?

So, if you have a health care assembly, the membership can be decided by the government, how many numbers you want and give them the direction, ask them to have open criticism. But, if you put every participant at the same table and tell them it is \$1.8 billion, tell us how to spend. I think they will think twice, because then they are facing each other in for the same dollar and the same health care sector.

So I think that concept can be evolved. There are many things. Some people told us the Manitoba Health Services Commission board was developed initially on that concept, but then it became political and it became very consolidated. I do not know about that, but I think that, if we have an assembly mechanism, that will provide continuity.

At least there has to be accountability in terms of the process which has to continue in the long run. If you give them a four-year mandate, like some of the committees we have—we have Manitoba Hydro coming in front of the committee—why can we not have a committee where they can come and the minister can ask them and we can ask them some questions, how this thing can continue?

That concept, I think, can work. There could be some problems in terms of the number, who should be there and what is the restriction of the numbers, how that could function, what will be the leader's obligation. Those things can be worked out, but I think you have to have a body that will provide not only one part of the health care but the overall health

care system. That way one can get rid of some of the advisory bodies, all of those things. We do not need them after you have a health care assembly.

A health care assembly, then, can be told to look at all of the issues. That way they cannot blame the government all of the time, because if they are representing the views of the organization, then they have accountability to their own organization also.

Those are the basic things I just want to convey in these opening remarks. I will have questions at least for 40 hours, and we will go into more policy issues and how that can help achieve the improved quality, maintain the present and try to have more effectiveness in health care in the long run. But I will say that without any strings attached that we like the health care action plan. The basic principles are excellent. It is a two-year plan. It is a major, major step forward. It is very risky politically, but it is the right thing to do, and eventually Manitobans will judge in the long run that this was a good thing and they will appreciate that. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Madam Chairperson: Does the critic for the official opposition, the honourable member for Kildonan, wish to make an opening statement?

Mr. Dave Chomlak (Kildonan): My remarks will be relatively brief, I anticipate, since I will be dealing with some notes that I have and dealing with some of the comments that I have heard by both the minister and the member for The Maples (Mr. Cheema).

I was pleased to hear that the Premier had recently made comments in the United States about the value of the Canadian health care system. I think it goes even deeper than that. I think our health care system has now become institutionalized in the heart and soul of Canada to the extent that we use our health care system as a means of differentiating ourselves from other nations and other countries. We use it as an identifiable feature as that which is distinctively Canadian.

* (1150)

I find that very significant that that includes the concept of co-operation, the concept of universality, the concept of working together to achieve a better society. Those are all very, very laudable and valid goals. I think they are all aspects of our health care system that we as Canadians utilize to distinguish ourselves. I think it is very important. I think it is also part of the ongoing debate as to the whole question

of where we are going as an economy and as a society in general. As much as I would like to discuss those general issues, I will confine my remarks to basically those in the health care system.

I listened with a good deal of attention to my good friend, the member for The Maples, and I respect his comments and his advice on many occasions. I look forward to his continuing tenure in this House for as long as that may be, and I respect that. Although I must disagree with some of his comments with respect to the entire process of health care reform and the politicalization or the nonpoliticalization of the—it is too cute and convenient to whenever a critical issue comes up to say, well, a political party is making politics of that. In fact, one of our duties in the opposition is to raise valid criticisms.

Let me illustrate a classic example. In this budget that we are now reviewing, in terms of these Supplementary Estimates, the minister has imposed a user fee on ostomy supplies. After 20 or 30 years of the home care supply system the minister has seen fit in this budget to introduce a user fee. The effects, generally, on 1,800 Manitobans who, for example, have colostomies or ostomy supplies is quite profound. Many of them are elderly. Many of them are on fixed incomes.

It is incumbent upon us in the opposition to point out to the minister the unfairness of the introduction of these user fees. It is our duty to point out to the minister, on behalf of these people and Manitobans in general, what the economics and social effect of this user fee will be, particularly in light of the comments the minister made earlier and in light of the comments the minister made on page V of the May Action Plan report. Quote: User fees do nothing to encourage effective utilization of health services, and they may serve as a barrier to needed services for some people.

Well, one of our roles as the opposition is to point out these issues and, if that is construed as being political, then so be it because, if I did not raise those issues, if we did not bring those issues to the attention of the public of Manitoba, we would not be doing our job. We are elected to bring those issues to the attention of the minister and try to change those decisions that are made, in our opinion, wrongly, and I think in the judgment of most Manitobans, wrongly.

With respect to the principles of medicare and reform, again, the minister quite accurately pointed

out that all provinces are going through some form of reform. Most provinces have had a form of royal commission and/or studies, with the exception of Manitoba, that has gone about it somewhat differently.

As the member for The Maples (Mr. Cheema) has pointed out, almost all groups and everyone generally agrees with the concepts in the reform plan but, again, let me point out a deficiency, let me point out a major deficiency that we see and we recognize in this health reform plan.

I attended several sessions conducted by various members of the minister's health reform, Bernard Blais and others, to try to get a handle, when I was appointed critic, on what was happening as health reform and I took notes. On several occasions I asked in Question Period of the minister to comment as to whether or not those notes of the comments of those officials in his department who were implementing the plan, whether or not those in fact were accurate, and the minister made politics of it. So we are in a position of not knowing at this point what is government policy and what is not government policy.

Let me illustrate. All will agree that we should be moving away from institutionalized based care. It has been mentioned so often that it goes without saying. Community services are obviously the option, less expensive community services. Why is it, one year into the plan, when beds have been cut, I heard the ADM say that the department is now, the reform agency of the government is now only beginning to think of the community services they are going to put in place, with the exception of mental health, which I will get to.

Well, Madam Chairperson, that flies in the face of what is in the plan. Either you are going to have community services in place or you are not, or, if you are going to put them in place, you should have them in place prior to a shift of services from institutional based care.

That is obviously not the case. Either that is not the case or the ADM got it wrong, and the minister refused to confirm it in the House for us, so consequently, as elected members of this Assembly, we were not able to get that information to our constituents. Therefore, when constituents phone me, when the public phone us and ask for confirmation as to what government policy is or why their in-law or their parent or their brother or their

sister has been forced out of a hospital bed and has no home care, et cetera, we have a justifiable complaint. I think that is part of the reason that the perception is quite clear in the public of Manitoba that the minister's reform plan is not working. It is (a) a failure to communicate and (b) it is a failure to put in place appropriate community-based services prior to the closing of those institutionalized based services.

The member for The Maples (Mr. Cheema) made comment about the history of our health care system, and I note that when the system was brought in by the federal government, transitional funding was brought in. Transitional funding was brought in to allow for shift. We have not seen that under this major change.

Now, I do not know if it was the minister or the member for The Maples who said it is the most significant shift since the 1930s, or at least since World War II. If that is the case, then one would assume that some kind of transitional funding or some kind of transitional plan would be put in place to allow for that shift to take place. That has not taken place.

Let me use another example to illustrate. The pediatric bed closings—we were contacted by members of the public, parents, saying, what is happening? Are the beds closing or are the beds not closing? Is inpatient surgery closing or is outpatient surgery closing or are both closing, Madam Chairperson?

The minister's deputy minister had told the parents one thing. The head of Health Reform had told the parents another thing. We raised the question in the House, and of course, the minister basically refused to give us an answer. So we were faced with the situation of not knowing what was going on.

I cited an interim report of the Urban Hospital committee that said that at least the St. Boniface beds should stay open and that outpatient surgery should remain at the community hospitals. The minister said he had a subsequent report that he threw on his desk that said that that was not the case. I would like to have had a copy of that report. I would have liked to have seen what the recommendations were.

I would like to have had those recommendations vetted and discussed with the patients and with the caregivers involved prior to the implementation. A

recommended course of action to the minister was, perhaps you should have a transitional period during which you would keep some beds open at St. Boniface Hospital and the community hospitals to see how the transition works. If it works and functions, then proceed on the basis that you are proceeding on.

But, of course, our concerns fell on deaf ears, and there was no response. Where is the constructive communication? Where is the response, and where is the leadership when the leadership fails to heed advice of any kind? In fact, advice is generally seen as criticism. That is very unfortunate, very, very unfortunate, Madam Chairperson, that when a government gets into a mold—I have seen it happen on many occasions—of only seeing the message in negative terms, then they are in serious trouble, very serious trouble, and that is unfortunate.

Philosophically and principally, I think that what is happening, the minister spent a good deal of time in his comments talking about the funding and the money portion of the concerns regarding health care, and I think that is probably accurate and probably reflects where the government is going with respect to its health care package.

I believe that the government's concept of medicare is radically different or more fundamentally different than most Manitobans'. I think that the government's concept of medicare is basically that it is there for catastrophic occasions, that medicare should be a safety net for catastrophic occasions and that the base of medicare should be winnowed and whittled and whittled down until it forms a very small base. That is my belief of where the government is heading, and I will give examples as to why I believe that.

So the vision, as outlined in the reform package, sounds well, particularly when reference is made to the five fundamental principles of medicare, but the vision itself of this particular government, I believe, is a narrower vision and envisions a medicare base that is much smaller than the one that Canadians and Manitobans have come to conventionally believe is the case, Madam Chairperson.

* (1200)

Let me use an example, again, an illustrative example, and that is the Children's Dental Program that used to be a part of medicare in this province. It was recognized as part of the provision of services by the Minister of Health, by the Department of

Health. Now, the minister has stated on many occasions publicly that it was a very effective program. The minister has stated that it is a preventative program. The minister stated that it is delivered on a community-based level, and that is interesting, because it meets most, if not all, of the requirements of the minister's health care reform package. It meets all those requirements and the minister has acknowledged that. But he acknowledged that the program was cut, and he said this at public meetings, only because of financial reasons. He has yet to cite any other reasons other than financial reasons that it got hacked and slashed in the budget.

Why is that? It was offered up because I suspect that the government sat around the table and said, well, look this is not really part of our basic medicare package and we can afford to let this go, even though it meets all of the requirements of our reform package. Further, it appears, certainly from a public meeting that I attended with the minister and certainly from his answers in the House, and I have no other basis on which to make an opinion, that no objective analysis was done of this program. Not a scintilla of evidence has been offered by this minister either for or against why the program was cut other than to say we could not afford it, Madam Chairperson.

As a result, when reasoned analysis presented to the minister indicated that, for example, for the government to save \$11 million over three years through the loss of this program, those same parents will be out of pocket \$22 million, the minister dismisses it. How does he dismiss it? He dismisses it rhetorically. Does he offer any evidence, does he offer one scintilla, one shred of evidence contrary, Madam Chairperson? No, he does not. He does not offer any, because he has no analysis. If he has analysis, he should table it, but he does not.

So I return back to the point I commenced on, and that is basically that the government's philosophical approach to medicare is radically different than I think most Manitobans' and certainly radically different than that by members of this side of the House.

I touched earlier on the whole issue of user fees that have been introduced by the government. The minister likes to call user fees contributions, Madam Chairperson. He calls them contributions, a euphemism for user fees. I do not know who he is trying to fool, but he calls them contributions. His

own briefing notes with respect to the air ambulance Northern Patient Transportation program calls them user fees. He introduced them on ostomy and other home care supplies. He calls them contributions. The fact remains they are user fees.

They run totally contrary to the stated purpose. The minister this very morning said he is opposed to user fees, and yet in this budget he has introduced user fees, and in the budgets previous he has introduced user fees. How do we as members of the opposition, or how do members of the public attach any credibility to any statements where the minister says one thing and does exactly the opposite? Why can he not at least stand up and say, yes, we have determined that we have to introduce user fees on home care supplies? Now we will not agree with him on that, but at least he would be intellectually accurate.

At this point he is not, because he has introduced user fees under the guise of so-called contributions. I hope he is taking all those calls that he is getting and letters that we are getting from those users, and I will continue to pass them on to his office, because it is quite distressful to hear on a daily basis from these people, many on fixed incomes and senior citizens, who are now forced to pay user fees on the basis—and I might add, a grave concern of ours is that the entire home care supply program may be quashed by this government.

The minister did say in the House that the program was not going to be cut. I would like some assurances that the program as it exists will not be cut and that all of those who receive home care supplies will continue to do so through that program without user fees.

A more difficult issue in terms of health care, Madam Chairperson, is the whole question of responsibility and leadership and who has the responsibility and who has the leadership in this government for the health care policy as it exists. There is a concept in law called piercing the corporate veil, and that is, in law we have the concept that there is a veil that sits in front of a corporation, and courts and legal agencies are loath to go behind the corporate veil, that is to go beyond the boards of directors to the shareholders, for example, to make them responsible for their actions, and that is a principle in law.

There is also a political device that offloads responsibility onto organizations and onto groups

and onto institutions and bodies in order to insulate ministers from being responsible for the decisions that are taken on a daily basis. The minister smiles because he knows that is, in fact, true, that the minister has offloaded responsibilities onto institutions and has conveniently shunted them aside by creating studies and organizations and effectively refuses to answer questions and refuses to take responsibility for his actions. Time and time again in this Chamber we see that case. That has happened in the health care field in spades, and I think the minister has actually refined it to an art form in terms of not taking responsibility for his actions and offloading responsibility for his actions.

Let me give some illustrations. Again, when we asked questions in this House with respect to the children's pediatric program, what was the minister's response? The minister's response was, phone Dr. Aggie Bishop. The minister made the decision. I attended a health care forum when Bernard Blais, the minister's chief reform bureaucrat, said, all bed closure decisions are made by the minister. I will repeat that in case the minister did not hear it, because he said, all bed closure decisions are made by the minister.

The minister refused to acknowledge that. He is nodding in the affirmative now. Ergo, if the minister is nodding in the affirmative and therefore agreeing that all bed closures are ultimately made by him, I acknowledge that and I appreciate that he has acknowledged that he makes those decisions. Therefore, he is responsible for the ramifications and the actions, not those hospital executives out there. They are not responsible for those decisions. It is the minister's responsibility and he ought to accept responsibility for when the services are there and he ought to accept responsibility when the services are not there.

Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Natural Resources): You have got it wrong. You should blame your deputy for everything.

Mr. Chomlak: The member for Lakeside makes comment to the fact that I have it wrong.

Mr. Enns: You stay around here long enough, you learn how to do that.

Mr. Chomlak: The member for Lakeside makes a good point. I have been an observer of this Chamber for, I hate to say it, but 25 years. I recognize that is one technique. But I do recognize his colleague the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) has taken it to a new

art form and has dumped into various levels. It is a Byzantine labyrinth out there where decisions are sequestered in one corner or another and it is very, very difficult—

Mr. Enns: Let us get back to that corporate veil that he shrouded himself in.

Mr. Chomlak: The member for Lakeside likes the concept of a corporate veil. I think it is apropos. I think the corporate veil is appropriate.

Last year in the Estimates process, Madam Chairperson, the minister said, and I quote on page 1502, the best health is a secure job. We agree with that, and I do not want to get into an economic debate about the failings of this government to provide secure employment in this province, that can wait for another occasion, but I want to dwell for a second on the minister's comments because one of the greatest concerns that we have about what is going on in the health care system, aside from those I have already illustrated, is the lack of security by those caregivers involved in the system. The feeling of helplessness, the feeling of hopelessness that is experienced by those caregivers in the health care field now is absolutely appalling.

* (1210)

It is very, very difficult for those people, and we are talking about thousands and thousands of primary direct caregivers, to adequately provide the kind of care that is necessary in our health care system. It is necessary for the healing process to occur.

It is very difficult for them to carry out their jobs effectively when the government fails to provide information, when the government fails to answer questions, when the government fails to outline what its plan is, when the government fails to put in place any kind of transitional funding or job retraining programs. The uncertainty and the lack of information in this system is, and I cannot think of a better term, appalling. It is the most striking feature that I have encountered in the field since I became Health critic as a result of my meetings with all of those in the health care system. It is almost to the point of no return.

It is ironic that in the context of speaking about preventative health care and maintaining good health that the minister last year would say that the best health is a secure job, that all of those involved generally in the system for whom the minister is responsible feel very, very insecure. It creates even

more difficulties in the health care field, in particular, when they cannot adequately and properly carry out the caregiving job that they are required to do.

The minister talked about the hundreds and hundreds of people that he has talked to with respect to health care reform and feedback, et cetera. From my perspective, I think, most of the discussion regarding health care reform has been one way. It has been from the minister down. It has been from the bureaucratic level down— [interjection] The minister comments he is struck by the term "the corporate veil" again, that it is no inconsistency to be behind a corporate veil and to hide behind decision making but at the same time to not listen to what is coming up from the bottom up and at the same time to direct those for whom you are responsible to do your bidding without taking responsibility for the bidding.

I see the minister and the member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns) both nod in the affirmative, and they certainly recognize the concept.

I could use numerous illustrations. I have numerous illustrations of every comment, in fact, that I am making. I will just use one example of the lack of communication.

The minister indicated, again, with the pediatric closings, that MMA, for example, had been consulted. I have a letter on my desk from the MMA that says they were not consulted on those changes. Again, it is a perfect example of the lack of information and the difficulties that are occurring in the health care reform field when the minister indicates that the affected agencies and bodies have been communicated with and they in fact indicate they have not been communicated with.

In fact, when one talks about the pediatrics—I will give the department credit. The minister's deputy minister did speak with some of the individuals involved when they phoned his office. Bernard Blais, the head of Health Reform also spoke with some of those others. The problem was, they were getting different information from both of them. Even when information was being communicated to patients and those parents of patients, Madam Chairperson, they could not get it right. When they did provide the information, they did not get it right.

The minister also radically altered the Pharmacare program as we know it in this province last, I believe, July when they changed the entire approach and methodology to how drugs would be

listed on the formulary. The concept, as I understood it, was at one time, generally, if it was approved by Health and Welfare Canada or the requisite agency, then it automatically went on our formulary or a variation of that. Now that is not the case. Far less drugs are on the formulary now. As well, a number of drugs were delisted that, to the government's credit, were relisted, put back on the formulary in January and February.

It is noteworthy that when I raised the question again in the House about the lack of communication, the minister talked about a pharmacist or some other individual representative coming up to him in B.C. and saying they wish their minister was as forthright as this minister, yet I read a quote from the registrar or the secretary of the Pharmaceutical Association who talked about the incredible lack of consultation by this government and the chaos that resulted as a result of the implementation of the new changes by the very individuals who are responsible for it.

There is another illustration of the inability or the unwillingness on the part of this government to communicate with basic caregivers, never mind, Madam Chairperson, the general public.

I note that I have been given time. I do not anticipate I will be getting leave on this. I will quickly wrap up my comments because we have much discussion to continue with yet.

The mental health reform is obviously the government's prototype of where it is going to move in some health reform. Of all of the things government has done in health, obviously mental health is the furthest advanced and probably the best thought out. There are some serious difficulties in that particular process, but at least the government is a little further advanced in that particular process.

We have offered, and I hope the government will support us in terms of our health reform, an accountability act that will provide for some accountability and responsibility on the part of the minister and the government with respect to health reform and will provide the public with an opportunity to deal with many of the issues. Perhaps we can reverse this trend of the government corporate veil being dropped down, this curtain being dropped down on the public with one-way communications. The analogy that it actually brings to mind is the Wizard of Oz, but I will stay off of that analogy.

I know the minister is very, very concerned about hearing comments about his hiring of the highest-paid consultant probably in the history of this province, and that is just in Canadian dollars. We will be asking the minister many questions about that particular process and about the whole question of—and I see that my time is up, regrettably.

An Honourable Member: Leave.

Madam Chairperson: Leave?

Mr. Chomiak: The minister has provided me with leave.

Madam Chairperson: The minister has indicated—is it the will of the committee to grant leave for the honourable member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) to continue his opening remarks? [agreed]

Mr. Chomiak: I thank you, Madam Chairperson. Through you, I thank the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard), the member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns), my colleagues.

I know that all members are anticipating my return to my comments so, without further ado, I will continue down the path and allow the minister to continue taking notes as we discuss my brief comments in the opening of these debates during the Estimates process.

* (1220)

I actually do not anticipate going on too much longer, Madam Chairperson, because I do want to cover considerable territory and ground in this area. Most of my comments have been reflected before in the House, but I do appreciate the opportunity of touching on a few other areas in general.

It is our view, Madam Chairperson, that the government and the minister realized they were in serious trouble with respect to their health reform package and brought in outside help to try to salvage the package when they realized that it just was not flying and when they realized that they were in serious trouble.

That help was brought in the form of a U.S. based consultant who has now revised all of her charts and put little maple leaves on the overhead projectors, et cetera, and who has come in now to rationalize this system and who talks about, again, as consultants have a tendency to do, and I have had considerable dealings with consultants, a process and talks about putting in place a reformed health care system that will meet all of the criteria outlined

by the minister in his health care package but which we have serious misgivings about. We are very thankful that the minister actually tabled the contract. It is certainly my opinion and it is my opinion that the contract would not have been tabled had we not been so vociferous in our discussion in the House and had we not been so on top of the situation to force the minister to table the contract and allow us to look at it in detail.

Some of our concerns with respect to the consultant concern—and I just might add as an adjunct, I had mentioned this before in the House that bringing in a U.S. consultant who has an entirely different view of the health care system and the Canadian health care system as reflected earlier in my comments creates at the very beginning a difficult situation.

We have seen examples, and I have been told, and this is hearsay, that when this consultant met with individuals at a particular hospital, she was unaware of the cultural make-up or unconcerned about the cultural make-up of that particular institution or, more accurately, I should say the linguistic make-up and the linguistic nature of that particular institution. When asked by assembled nurses at a discussion, she was unaware and unconcerned, perhaps both, about the effects of Bill 22 on the profession when, in fact, the effects of Bill 22 on nurses and on health caregivers is quite profound given what is happening in our health care system. Those are just two illustrations of the problem.

The numerous concerns that we have with respect to the contract concern the whole definition of what is TQM, the whole question as to what the end goal of the consultant is. One of my lingering concerns is the whole question of home care and the \$150,000 portion of the study that is going to deal with home care. Is that a study of a study or is it an actual analysis? I almost found it boilerplate kind of terminology when I reviewed the contract to see that the U.S. health care consultant was going to conduct a study of the health care field, have focus groups and meet with those that are involved in the system and, thirdly, provide a road map as to where we should be going on home care.

Those are standard consultant kind of terminology and reflect no understanding of the Manitoba system and the unique nature of our home care system and, more importantly, how that home care system has to fit in with the changes that are

occurring, institutionalized based care of the health care system.

The minister nods in the affirmative, and I am going to diverge for a minute, because it brings to mind another point and another comment that occurred when I attended another health care reform meeting, and I have attended many. The director of gerontology indicated that people would be moved from hospitals who were "medically unstable." Now I asked the minister about that and the minister huffed and puffed and talked about my being inaccurate, but in fact that is what she said.

My question to the minister then and my question to the minister now will be: If that is the case, and it is clearly the case that is happening, what systems are in place to deal with those medically unstable people? I could cite several examples of individuals who have contacted me, who by my layperson's viewpoint have not been adequately dealt with in their medical condition.

When you look at the number of people who have been moved out of institutions, and you look at the number of people who have been sent home or not admitted to hospital, it begs the question, are the resources now in place to deal with those particular individuals, particularly when in my own constituency, the constituency I represent, I have on numerous occasions encountered individuals who have not received the kind of care they, to my mind as a layperson, should have received and yet they were not "medically unstable." What happens when those people are in the system and they are already in the system? We are very concerned about what is happening in the home care field and what kind of care is going to be provided.

We are also concerned about the lack of co-ordination of services by this ministry together with the other ministries of government. I cite the example again of the nurses from what used to be the Shriners Hospital—the name escapes me at this point—that was effectively shut down and turned into a day facility.

An Honourable Member: The Children's Rehab Hospital.

Mr. Chomiak: The Children's Rehab Hospital was effectively shut down and the nurses, to their credit, launched an integrated program in the community to provide teachers' aides and others with assistance in providing medical services to those children.

Just let me set the context of this, Madam Chairperson, because this is significant, I believe. That is, we have a situation where the College of Physicians and Surgeons, I believe, are auditing Winnipeg School Division No. 1 to see what kind of medical services are being provided by teachers and teachers' aides. We have concerns expressed by teachers and teachers' aides as to whether or not they should be providing medical services.

These individual nurses put together a prototype program that was pioneered in British Columbia to provide instruction in teaching these teachers' aides and teachers to provide those medical services to those students. These nurses provided a very effective program, and the numbers escape me at this point, but it was relatively inexpensive. It was four nurses each on half time that went around and provided this service.

This program, as I understand it, was cut and the minister said in several weeks he would be putting in place a program that would accommodate and deal with that. I do not believe at this point, and it is now June 3, that a program has been put in place. We raised this issue in March, early March, I believe. The effect of this has been students do not get the service, more nurses are out of a job, there is a potentially medically serious situation that can occur and fourthly, if the minister wants to now implement the program, he has to reinvent the wheel. That is not a timely response from this department nor from the other departments. It has been a sore point of ours for some time with respect to services.

* (1230)

The minister always talks about old-think and old talk, and the pigeonholing of services by this government is classic old-think and classic old style. Unless the government wakes up to its responsibilities in an interdepartmental approach, then services will continue to deteriorate as they have under this government in the health care field and all fields affecting individuals.

Now that task is easier said than done, and I recognize that, but the minister had on his plate a perfect example. All he had to say was, look at the program, and say, yes, we will expand it, or alternatively, put in another program, or even a third option, come up with some other program as he promised in this House.

None of that occurred, Madam Chairperson. The program, as I understand it, died. The minister has

not provided an alternative, and we do not know what is happening in this area. That is another example of the failure of this government to grasp some of the issues that were occurring in the health care field and in the field in general.

There is no transitional funding, no transitional mechanisms in place to deal with the loss of jobs that are inevitably occurring as a result of this government and this approach to health care. I indicated earlier that the significant changes would certainly warrant this kind of transitional funding, but it is not in place.

Instead we see funding, for example, lottery funding, that is going into the system now going to pay for the consultant who will then tell the government, I presume, which people to cut and which people not to cut.

The other concern is the lack of accountability control over that process. It has now been several months. The plan is behind time. What is that consultant doing? What is the time line? Have they been met? We will be asking those questions, and the minister, I hope, will be prepared to answer them as we go throughout this process.

We are also looking for an accounting from the minister as to what is happening in terms of the rural health care reform. Again, we heard a report in the media that rural health care reform is off target. That would not surprise us given that virtually no target had been met by the government other than the bed closures.

The minister said in this House, and I will take him at his word, that the rural health care reform is on target, as indicated in his May 1992 Action Plan. We would like some details on that because we hear, and I do not know if the government or the minister hears, concerns expressed by rural Manitoba.

Frankly, I have stated that if the government implements the kind of process in rural Manitoba that it has done in urban Winnipeg, then they would be better off without this kind of reform. That is reform without services in place, without consultation with the public and without any means by which caregivers—nurses, doctors, aides and others—can contribute to the process.

The member for The Maples (Mr. Cheema) took great pains to talk about how unpolitical this process had supposedly been. Yet the government reacts to every suggestion of this as if it is an adversarial system, as if any suggestion by those involved in the

system, and we use nurses as an example, that their suggestions are somehow anti-reform or antigovernment. You know, I suppose it is reasonable for people to assume that in the public because there have not been a lot of positive statements out there concerning this government, but if the government were more open-minded, I think we could go a lot further in terms of the process. So we will be concerned about what is happening in rural Manitoba with respect to health care reform.

Having completed those brief opening remarks— [interjection] Semibrief, as the member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett) reminds—I look forward now to an opportunity to deal with some of the specific questions concerning health care as we go through the Estimates process. Thank you.

Madam Chairperson: I would remind the committee members that debate on item 1.(a) is deferred to the completion of all other resolutions.

Would the minister's staff please enter the Chamber.

Mr. Orchard: Madam Chairperson, my staff is entering, and I just am going to excuse myself for a minute and a half, with leave of the committee.

Madam Chairperson: You want a five-minute break? Okay. Is that the will of the committee?

The committee recessed at 12:36 p.m.

After Recess

The committee resumed at 12:42 p.m.

Madam Chairperson: Would the Committee of Supply please come to order. Would the minister's staff please enter the Chamber.

Mr. Orchard: Madam Chair, I might take the opportunity to introduce the staff who have just joined me. My Deputy Minister, Mr. Frank Maynard; Assistant Deputy Minister in charge of Health Reform, Mr. Bernard Blais; Assistant Deputy Minister of Finance, Mr. Fred Anderson; Director of Policy and Planning, Denis Roch.

Mr. Chomlak: Madam Chairperson, just at the onset, I wonder if the minister might provide me with some direction. I believe that the member for The Maples (Mr. Cheema) indicated he would be proceeding to ask questions in terms of the health reform package, and I am wondering, at this particular appropriation 1.(b) if the minister finds it

convenient, given his staff, that we deal with that extensively at this point or at some later point. You know, it is of no consequence to myself, but I am just looking for direction from the minister.

Mr. Orchard: Madam Chair, this is as good a spot as any to deal with the health reform process. There is only one precondition I would ask my honourable friend if he might consider abiding by, the critic for the second opposition party will not be here this afternoon and, should we pass any lines, that we have the opportunity to go back so he can pose questions Monday if we pass anything. I would like to do that in courtesy to the second opposition.

Mr. Chomlak: Madam Chairperson, yes, I am in complete agreement as well in fact. I am not clear now; I anticipated he would be back, which is one of the reasons why I am assuming we will be dealing with health reform at this point but, certainly, I will agree with that.

I am looking at a chart entitled Implementing The Action Plan Organization Structure. Underneath that is a Deputy Minister, Implementation Steering Committee, Expanded Implementation Committee, Co-ordinating Committee, Policy Support and Linkages. I believe it is a standard package that is provided by the health reform people to various groups. Is the minister or his staff relatively familiar with this chart?

Mr. Orchard: Madam Chair, from the distance I have to admit to my honourable friend that at the ripe age that I am my eyes are not as good as they used to be and I am not sure what my honourable friend has in his hand that I am confirming or acknowledging existence of.

We have, in terms of our reform presentations, a package that is made available I believe at the meetings. If that is part of the package, then, yes.

Mr. Chomlak: Madam Chairperson, I am going to be asking specific questions on this particular plan. I am just quickly looking for a duplicate copy so I can provide it to the minister so that we are speaking off of the same sheet. While I look through my notes for a duplicate copy I would like to ask the minister, who comprises the implementation steering committee, if it is still in existence?

Mr. Orchard: Madam Chair, there is a core group of senior staff and then, depending on the issue that is being considered for implementation, we have in effect a rotational membership of expertise in given areas that can be added to the staff.

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

So depending on a given topic the membership has consistency but it also has variability.

Mr. Chomlak: I then take it from the minister's reply—I am sending him over a copy, an extra that I have, of the particular sheet so we can be working off of the same sheet.

The implementation steering committee is a body comprised of members of the minister's department. On occasion it is augmented by experts from the various fields that are dealing with the minister. Is that correct?

Mr. Orchard: The implementation steering committee has a core of senior management people, ADM director, and depending on the issue may bring in other individuals within the ministry if they have expertise that is needed in coming to recommendations on the given program area. That membership can be external to the ministry as well.

Mr. Chomlak: I take it, therefore, that recommendations come from the implementation steering committee to the deputy minister and then are forwarded to the minister for final decision making. The question, I take it, that recommendations come from the implementation steering committee through the deputy minister to the minister's desk?

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Acting Chairperson, that is correct.

* (1250)

Mr. Chomlak: The Rural Health Advisory Council is attached to this flow chart as an adjunct on this chart under Policy Support and Linkages. I would therefore assume that with respect to rural health decision making, a recommendation would come from the Health Advisory Council to the implementation steering committee and up through the deputy minister to the minister. Correct?

Mr. Orchard: My honourable friend indicates that in terms of the lateral attachment of Policy Support and Linkages, the chart my honourable friend gave me has provincial committee, Centre for Health Policy and Evaluation task forces, consultants and ongoing reviews.

Mr. Chomlak: Yes, that is what I have. One of the other groups on there is the Rural Health Advisory Council. Is that not the case? It is also an adjunct that provides Policy Support and Linkages.

Mr. Orchard: The rural reform advisory committee reports to myself through my deputy minister.

Mr. Chomlak: So the Rural Health Advisory Council reports directly to the minister. Can the minister give us a status report as to what the status of that council is in its recommendations at this point?

Mr. Orchard: I presume my honourable friend is wanting to have clarification around a recent CBC Radio report in which the reporter indicated that it would be 12- to 24-month delay in rural reform implementation. Is that where my honourable friend is eventually going to get to? Because if that is where my honourable friend is eventually going to get to, I want to indicate to my honourable friend, in part or whole, although one can never know how quite these reports come to the conclusion they do, but my honourable friend might be aware that starting, well, it varied, but ostensibly, say, starting in January, a lot of our rural care providers, boards, institutions started a collaboration project within communities, between communities, in terms of developing plans where they might find opportunities for affiliation, collaboration of service delivery.

There was a process of providing those plans to the rural reform advisory committee by March 31, and we provided an extension of about a month or so. We provided a modest extension because some of the individual groups indicated they were having difficulty meeting the March 31 deadline.

Our plan of action from square one in terms of receipt of those plans was to give them review and provide advice back to those organizations as to what worked, what did not work in terms of the department's overview, which I think my honourable friend can appreciate, maybe take, say, a somewhat larger perspective than he might expect to emanate from an individual community or couple of communities, neighbouring communities. In receiving those reports and doing a review, advice was sent back, I think, pretty generally to all proponents that they should take the opportunity over the next number of months to revisit and try to attempt a larger collaboration in terms of efforts between maybe a wider area of communities.

We expected that the first consultations would not be the final acceptable proposals from communities or to communities. So, in asking for more or a larger picture collaboration to be part of a subsequent submission, we were not moving significantly away

from what we envisioned to be the plan of action, and the development of a plan of action, but it was interpreted that this was a delay of 12 to 24 months in terms of health care reform in rural Manitoba.

I think that emanated from an interview with one of our senior departmental officials wherein there is a difference between the process of developing and accepting plans and seeing them finally implemented. I think quite possibly there was some confusion that, when you expect this to be implemented, about two years down the road is not an unusual expectation to have some of these collaborations in place and working, as opposed to a conceptual framework to develop those changes happening in a much shorter time frame. So I indicate to my honourable friend that, although there was the impression left by the news report, in this case it was CBC Radio, there was an almost two-year delay to be expected in rural health reform initiatives. That is not the case. The process is ongoing and will be a process of, I would be I think quite legitimate to speculate, continuing consultation back and forth between the rural advisory committee and the proposing groups of communities and facilities who see opportunity in collaboration of service provision.

Mr. Chomlak: The minister indicated that generally the proposals went back from the advisory committee to the communities, and he can correct me if I am misquoting him. The proposals went back from the advisory committee to the communities asking for "larger districts."

Can the minister maybe elaborate as to what he means by that or is he generally talking in terms—well, I will let the minister elaborate.

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Acting Chairperson, I do not think that needs any elaboration. I think that was the essence of the message and communication back.

Mr. Chomlak: Can I take it from that response, therefore, that most communities were—there was, as I understand it, a 10,000-person catchment area generally given as guidelines. Can I assume from that that the communities came back with smaller proposed areas that did not meet that or has the department changed the parameters?

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Acting Chairperson, my honourable friend might well know that the suggestion of 10,000 population served was suggested as a minimum opportunity for collaboration between communities. On the upper

limit, there was none. I think it is fair to say that most come in close to the 10,000, but there were areas significantly larger providing opportunity for all to revisit in terms of a larger area of collaboration.

Mr. Chomlak: Can the minister briefly outline what were the primary two or three problems that were encountered by the advisory committee in terms of the larger catchment areas? Is there any kind of consistency that the minister can outline for us in terms of difficulties that were encountered that required not a revisit but a readjustment?

Mr. Orchard: I think the rural advisory committee saw an opportunity for building upon a base of collaboration that was identified and making it a wider base of collaboration and invited the communities to so participate and develop.

* (1300)

Mr. Chomlak: How will the implementation steering committee interact with the advisory council report?

Mr. Orchard: To analyze proposals, to make sure they have integrity in terms of service delivery, that they offer workable collaboration, that they deal with program achievement that is not going to add to costs but contain costs and often reduce costs—there are opportunities. Many communities have already exercised those opportunities for cost saving, particularly administrative levels. Other communities have not. The steering and implementation committee will analyze each proposal and judge it to its merits. Hopefully, I will receive recommendations to approve, from the implementation steering committee, programs that make sense as we did with the consolidation of pediatrics at Children's Hospital. It was a consolidation that made program sense.

Mr. Chomlak: Mr. Acting Chair, so the minister stated, the Rural Health Advisory Council will report directly either to himself or through the deputy minister. The minister can correct me if I am wrong. The implementation steering committee will look at each proposal of the Rural Health Advisory committee in terms of program, sense of co-ordination, et cetera, and then make recommendations to the minister on top of that.

I am trying to understand the process. The minister can enlighten me, and we can cut through all of this if I do not understand it, but is that not the way it is going to work?

Mr. Orchard: In terms of expediting changes in the way health care services are delivered in rural

Manitoba, the proposals will be vetted through departmental experts to assure they have program sense, they have integrity, they are geographically able to be achieved.

Again, I harken back to my honourable friend's first question in which I indicated there is a core group of staff, but there is also, where appropriate for the given programs, the appropriate expertise within the department that can be part of that committee on issues where they have expertise within the ministry to report.

The reporting structure is, we analyze the integrity of the recommendations to suggest greater opportunity where they see greater opportunity to then, when satisfied that the program as proposed can work, makes sense, achieves objectives, recommend it through the deputy minister to myself for implementation, if it makes sense.

It seems to me, from my honourable friend's wrinkled brow, that he seems to think there is some trouble with using expertise in the ministry to vet plans, or no. I cannot quite understand my honourable friend's concern over process here because what we are trying to do is accede to my honourable friend's considerable caution at one stage in his opening remarks, where he wanted a greater amount of input into decision making.

Mr. Chomlak: Mr. Acting Chair, the minister indicated earlier in his comments that the Rural Health Advisory Council was reporting directly to the minister. Is he now saying the Rural Health Advisory Council is not reporting directly to the minister?

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Acting Chairperson, not that I want to get into he said, you said, but I believe I indicated to my honourable friend, the deputy minister will provide all recommendations from all of the committees and all the suggestions that change, and it is through the deputy minister that all the changes are reported to me.

I do not believe that I indicated to my honourable friend that the rural reform committee reports directly to me.

Mr. Chomlak: Mr. Acting Chairperson, well, I stand to be corrected, and I will review Hansard. I had just assumed that earlier in his comments the minister had said, when I had mentioned initially the Rural Health Advisory Council, the minister had indicated that it was not an adjunct to the implementation steering committee that was reporting directly to the minister or the deputy minister. But I will take those

comments of the minister at face value and what he said at this point. Can the minister outline for me who specifically, and will he table the names of those individuals who are ongoing members of the implementation steering committee?

Mr. Orchard: Yes.

Mr. Chomlak: Will those be tabled at this point or at the next sitting of this committee?

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Bernard Blais, Ms. Betty Havens, Mr. Reg Toews, Mr. Frank DeCock, Ms. Sue Hicks, Mr. Fred Anderson, Mr. Dennis Roch, Ms. Marge Watts.

Mr. Chomlak: Can the minister advise as to what the status is of the provincial Imaging Advisory Committee?

Mr. Orchard: The provincial imaging committee may well have a preliminary report ready within two to three months.

Mr. Chomlak: Could the minister advise us what the status is of the Manitoba emergency services task force report?

Mr. Orchard: Probably we will have that report within four weeks.

Mr. Chomlak: Could the minister advise whether the chairperson, Mr. Moe Lerner, is working full time on that particular report?

Mr. Orchard: I am advised that is correct.

Mr. Chomlak: Can the minister advise what the status is of the provincial surgical services committee?

* (1310)

Mr. Orchard: Given, Mr. Acting Chairperson, that there are a number of individual programs under review, I am advised that the range of report to government will be approximately two months to six months.

Mr. Chomlak: Mr. Acting Chairperson, can the minister advise us to the status of the provincial intensive care services committee?

Mr. Orchard: That committee is not as far advanced, and it is expected that possibly by the end of the calendar year we might have recommendations from them.

Mr. Chomlak: Mr. Acting Chairperson, returning to the provincial surgical services committee report, which the minister has indicated anticipates a response in two to six months, the terms of reference were fairly extensive on that particular

committee report. They were to construct a provincial picture for surgical services; to inventory and feed into the process evaluation from external sources; to develop a communications strategy, to identify issues which require resolution; to recommend a strategic planning framework for surgical services for the province; to recommend direction for urban distribution, setting of major surgical programs, feasibility of establishing a multiorgan transplant movement, examination of alternate care delivery models and consideration of the degree to which medical education requirements shape surgical programs.

Has that mandate changed dramatically than what I have briefly outlined?

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Acting Chairperson, the outline may be brief, but my honourable friend would surely concede that the mandate is quite extensive and is consistent.

Mr. Chomlak: Can the minister indicate when he anticipates that Frank Manning will be reporting on the obstetrical issue?

Mr. Orchard: Probably by mid-July.

Mr. Chomlak: Mr. Acting Chairperson, can the minister indicate when he will be making announcements with respect to the ophthalmology program?

Mr. Orchard: I think quite possibly this month.

Mr. Chomlak: Mr. Acting Chairperson, the ophthalmology working group was of the impression from discussions—and the minister can correct me if I am wrong—that they had or individuals had with the minister and deputy minister that a response would be anticipated by June 8. Has that time frame now been backed up?

Mr. Orchard: Yes.

Mr. Chomlak: Will the minister be reviewing the recommendations with the ophthalmology working group prior to the announcement?

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Acting Chairperson, not that I want, because we are having such a nice friendly start with the Estimates. One of the reasons why we are somewhat beyond the target is contrary to my honourable friend's presentation in his opening remarks. It is because of more extensive consultation and more extensive seeking of opinion from professionals and others that we are unable to meet the deadline. The deadline actually was, I think, mid-May so that we are trying to assure

ourselves that we have met legitimate concerns and have put to rest concerns which may have more to do with personal preferences than science and medical outcome.

Mr. Chomlak: Mr. Acting Chairperson, could the minister perhaps outline what some of those concerns are that he thinks do not adequately address the issue and are other than scientific?

Mr. Orchard: That process is under discussion.

Mr. Chomlak: Can the minister indicate whether the issue of the use of CT scanner equipment for doctors involved is one of those issues that is under discussion and what the status of that might be?

Mr. Orchard: That is part of the discussion.

Mr. Chomlak: At a function I attended about a month ago in which there were representatives from all walks of the medical and caregiving community, there was an assumption that the decision with respect to ophthalmology had already been made and that it was final, and that it was a very strong assumption. Does the minister have any idea how that particular—I will suggest it was stronger than a rumour—was perhaps circulating at that particular function. It was made with respect to ophthalmology, as has been concluded by most people out in the medical community from at least what I could gather.

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Acting Chairperson, I believe I indicated to my honourable friend that would hopefully be made this month.

Mr. Chomlak: Can the minister please outline for us what the status is of the Urban Hospital Council?

Mr. Orchard: It is still functioning and in a broader mandate.

Mr. Chomlak: Can the minister table the terms of reference of that mandate?

Mr. Orchard: We can provide that mandate.

Mr. Chomlak: Can the minister indicate when he anticipates—now the minister indicated he would be receiving the Manning report mid-July, I believe, or the end of July, mid-July. Can the minister indicate whether or not the report will be made public at that time?

Mr. Orchard: I apologize to my honourable friend, I missed the question.

* (1320)

Mr. Chomlak: When Frank Manning makes his report to the minister by mid-July, can we assume that the report will be made public at that time?

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Acting Chairperson, when we hopefully are able to make the announcement around obstetrics in the city of Winnipeg, we will provide as much supportive information as possible to allow one to judge—I am looking for the right word, I am trying to avoid this corporate veil—that the right knowledge was used to make the decision.

Mr. Chomlak: Perhaps I can assist the minister. Perhaps the minister could just make the report public when it is presented to him. Is the minister considering that option?

Mr. Orchard: We are willing to consider all options.

Mr. Chomlak: When the Manning report is made, I assume it will be going to the deputy minister, who will then make recommendations, I assume, to the minister. How will the implementation steering committee become involved, and at what point will the implementation steering committee become involved in that process?

Mr. Orchard: In reviewing the report with any recommendations that might be attached thereto to determining the appropriateness of those recommendations, confirming them, modifying them, changing them and assuring that what is recommended to the deputy and to myself will effectively provide the service that is under review.

Mr. Chomlak: Their exist working groups. Does the minister have a listing of what the various working groups are? Can he provide us with a listing of those various working groups?

Mr. Orchard: We can pull that together for my honourable friend.

Mr. Chomlak: I assume that we will receive them next session or perhaps later in this session. We will have an opportunity to further explore those issues when we receive receipt of those documents, notwithstanding we may have passed this item in terms of the appropriation number.

Mr. Orchard: I am at the will of the committing.

Mr. Chomlak: Are there any outstanding reports from the Urban Hospital Council?

Mr. Orchard: I am having a little trouble with my honourable friends' phraseology. Is my honourable friend asking, has the Urban Hospital Council made a report to the ministry recommending a given change or a given consolidation or a given initiative

that we have not announced publicly, an implementation plan? Is that what my honourable friend is asking?

Mr. Chomlak: Yes.

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Acting Chairperson, not to me.

Mr. Chomlak: Can the minister indicate when he anticipates receiving a report from the Urban Hospital Council?

Mr. Orchard: On what?

Mr. Chomlak: On outstanding issues.

Mr. Orchard: When they have completed the report and can advance it to the ministry.

Mr. Chomlak: Mr. Acting Chairperson, can the minister give us a status update as to the status of the work being undertaken by APM associates and Ms. Connie Curran?

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Acting Chairperson, I think we are almost on track in terms—slightly delayed from the six- to eight-week initial contract delivery, where we will have the opportunity in the near future, this month, to sign off and finalize the deliverables on the major portion of the contract.

Mr. Chomlak: Mr. Acting Chairperson, can the minister give an update as to the status of the working group dealing with rural hospital bed reallocations?

Mr. Orchard: That is an ongoing process of investigation.

Mr. Chomlak: I assume all of the working groups, therefore, that is, the urban bed closure working group and the other working groups, have any of them completed their tasks?

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Acting Chairperson, I know it was a slip of the tongue by my honourable friend, but there is no urban bed closure committee.

Mr. Chomlak: Mr. Acting Chairperson, who comprises the co-ordinating committee that reports on this flow chart to the implementation steering committee?

(Madam Chairperson in the Chair)

Mr. Orchard: Ms. Heather Kapusky, Ms. Phyllis MacDonald, Ms. Val Mann, Ms. Connie Becker and Ms. Marge Watts.

Mr. Chomlak: Madam Chairperson, could the minister identify their job titles?

Mr. Orchard: Madam Chair, we will provide those to my honourable friend.

Mr. Chomlak: I return to an earlier question. Can the minister advise what the status is of the 200 urban bed working group, who roughly comprises that group, and what the status is of their ongoing discussions?

Mr. Orchard: Madam Chair, there is no working group specifically assigned to that task. That task is part of the consideration in terms of surgical program reviews.

Mr. Chomlak: Is the minister saying today that there does not exist or never did exist a 200 rural bed working group, a 200 urban bed working group and a financial working group?

* (1330)

Mr. Orchard: Madam Chair, the 240 beds that my honourable friend refers to are the teaching hospital beds, I presume. [interjection] What 240 beds is my honourable friend referring to if it is not that? Those were identified in The Health Action Plan, and as we speak I think they have been retired from service. At the two teaching hospitals there were no specific groups that were assigned to that task. It varied program by program with expertise from the hospitals as well as the ministry and the community and the community hospitals which were involved in the transfer of some of the patient services, and it was part of the management structure in part or in whole by the Urban Hospital Council, and by varying ongoing working relations between institutions and the ministry.

Mr. Chomlak: Can the minister outline for me what is the role of the co-ordinating committee that reports to the implementation steering committee?

Mr. Orchard: Madam Chair, to receive, analyze and comment on proposals.

Mr. Chomlak: Proposals from whom, Madam Chairperson?

Mr. Orchard: From working group through working group through working group as we have discussed earlier on.

Mr. Chomlak: Well, the minister has indicated that working groups report to the co-ordinating committee, report to the implementation steering committee, et cetera. I am looking at a flow chart that indicates that and on this flow chart is identified the 240 bed working group, the 200 rural bed working group, the 200 urban bed working group and the financial working group that the minister says do not exist. So I am a bit confused as to whom these

working groups that do not exist, where these working groups are, and why I am looking at a chart that has them specifically named and why the minister denies that they are in existence.

Mr. Orchard: I agree with my honourable friend.

Mr. Chomlak: Is the minister agreeing that his explanation is chaotic and does not make sense?

Mr. Orchard: No, Madam Chair. I am agreeing that my honourable friend is confused.

Mr. Chomlak: Can the minister outline who these working groups are that report to the co-ordinating committee that the minister said happens?

Mr. Orchard: We discussed them this morning and this afternoon, Madam Chair.

Mr. Chomlak: I will ask the minister again if he will indicate whether or not there was or is a 240 bed working group, a 200 rural bed working group, a 200 urban bed working group and a financial working group that reported or report to the co-ordinating committee?

Mr. Orchard: Madam Chair, those tasks and analyzing those proposed redirection and/or closure of beds are part of a number of working groups/task forces that are examining varying program areas that my honourable friend has asked already today, when are they reporting, et cetera. Those are the areas from which will flow the recommendations potentially which will impact on the number of beds dedicated to a service, where those beds may well be and how the program of utilization of those beds will be effectively undertaken.

Mr. Chomlak: The minister will table a list of those working groups together with their mandates for us, I assume?

Mr. Orchard: I believe I answered that question once already, Madam Chair.

Mr. Chomlak: Can the minister outline for us the number of staff from the Department of Health that have been seconded to work with APM and associates and/or Connie Curran and/or any of their other corporate entities that are presently carrying on work in the Province of Manitoba at the bequest of the minister in conjunction with the two larger teaching hospitals and/or related organizations?

Mr. Orchard: Five to the two teaching hospitals.

Mr. Chomlak: I am sorry, can the minister repeat that answer? I did not catch it.

Mr. Orchard: Five.

Mr. Chomlak: The minister indicated five. Can I assume from that answer that five full-time staff positions have been seconded to the teaching hospitals to work together with the consultant?

Mr. Orchard: Five departmental staff are working with the implementation of recommendations at the two teaching hospitals as a result of the Connie Curran engagement by the hospitals to undertake a review of their operational structure.

Mr. Enns: That is pretty clear, Dave.

Mr. Chomlak: The member for Lakeside gets it. Can the minister table the names of those staff and their job titles?

Mr. Orchard: Yes, Madam Chair.

Mr. Chomlak: How does the senior ADM of Health Reform figure into this schematic scheme that I earlier provided to the minister? Where does the senior administrator of Health Reform figure into that particular flow chart that I provided to the minister?

Mr. Orchard: I think I indicated to my honourable friend, on the implementation steering committee.

Mr. Chomlak: So to understand it, in terms of operations, the Health Reform team's responsibilities and their reporting function to the minister is through the implementation steering committee.

Mr. Orchard: No, Madam Chair.

Mr. Chomlak: Could the minister outline and elaborate what their reporting structure is, what their flow structure is, and how they interact with both the deputy minister, the minister, and the implementation steering committee and the various bodies that comprise the minister's health reform package?

Mr. Orchard: Madam Chair, we have already answered that. My honourable friend, if he looks at the flow chart, sees the implementation steering committee reporting to the deputy minister. The deputy minister's responsibility is to report to the minister. That is a relationship that is there in reform, was there before reform for other initiatives of the department. The deputy minister reports to the minister in the Ministry of Health. I believe, and I will stand corrected, that that has been the working relationship between the deputy minister and the minister in the Ministry of Health for some number of years.

* (1340)

I believe, and I will stand corrected if I am wrong, it is the reporting relationship in almost every other, if not all other, ministries.

The deputy minister reports to the minister, and you can see from the chart that the deputy minister receives reports from the steering committee, which has had advice that they can receive from provincial committees, the Manitoba Centre for Health Policy and Evaluation and other experts.

The co-ordinating committee receives the task force reports, does the analysis, does the research into them for consideration by the implementation steering committee in terms of recommendations which are passed to the deputy minister and ultimately end up being recommended to me, the minister.

That is why, even though my honourable friend thought this was very confusing in his opening remarks, where he said that the assistant deputy minister responsible for reform indicated that the minister makes all the decisions on bed closures, that is correct.

That seems to fit to a significant degree with my honourable friend's stated desire in alleging a corporate veil, I believe were the words, that I am trying to avoid responsibility.

That is why the assistant deputy minister indicated, and everyone in the ministry would indicate the same if so posed a similar question, that I am ultimately responsible for the decision of the department and of the Ministry of Health, including if and when we close beds, if and when we consolidate services.

I as minister am responsible for making the final decision. How we arrive at that decision engages again, contrary to my honourable friend's remarks in his opening statement, a significant amount of input.

We have spent, Madam Chair, the last hour, in very brief answer, dealing with, what, a number of working groups and committees comprised of individuals outside the department, inside the department that are dealing with issues and trying to provide government with the best policy options to maintain and preserve and protect medicare.

That is quite contrary to what my honourable friend stated in his opening remarks where we do not consult.

We have just spent one hour and five minutes talking in very precise answers, short answers, factual answers to my honourable friend on all of the committees that, of course, he then in his penchant says we are not consulting, we are not seeking advice. The process is as we have described now on two or three different occasions.

Now, I realize my honourable friend is newly the critic, and I have not had the opportunity to deal with my honourable friend in this kind of a relationship, but I want to remind my honourable friend that if he is hoping in some fashion to receive a different answer if he poses the question in 21 different ways, he will not. That was the approach taken by his predecessor, and I think it was 38 hours later or 40 hours later, we passed our first line in Estimates.

I am at my honourable friend's disposal to provide as much information as I can to my honourable friend, and we will attempt to do that in as expeditious a fashion as possible, but already in the first hour and five minutes of these Estimates, my honourable friend has asked the same question on three different occasions to which he has received the same answer. It may not be the answer he wants or expects or would like to have, but unfortunately I cannot help him in any other fashion.

Now, is my honourable friend still confused? Because if he is, I can try to help him understand the process of collaboration, a seeking advice, a seeking input from a diversity of Manitobans as has been the hallmark of this whole health reform process in the province of Manitoba.

Mr. Chomiak: Madam Chairperson, well, we have just seen an example of why we have problems in the Department of Health. One day in the House the minister says: No, outpatient surgery will not be consolidated at the Health Sciences Centre; and the same day, an associate deputy minister of the minister's department sends a letter to those same organizations saying that, yes, it will be consolidated.

I provided the minister with a flow chart that showed the implementation steering committee reported directly to the deputy minister. I am looking at another flow chart provided by the minister's own department which shows the implementation steering committee reports to the senior ADM, Health Reform. Two different flow charts to the same department and the same minister, and the minister is wondering why there is confusion. The parents

are wondering why when they phone the deputy minister they get one answer, and when they phone the associate deputy minister they get another answer—two different flow charts, two different flows of information. It is no wonder, Madam Chairperson, that the minister has to get very defensive and try to defend his reforms and go on that process when, in fact, he is not even clear what their procedures are in his own department.

If he is clear, perhaps he could elaborate on that process. Why do I have a document dated November 2, 1992, which shows the implementation steering committee reports to senior ADM, Health Reform, and the document I have provided to the minister shows it reports directly to the deputy minister. This was no trick that I was trying to trap the minister in. It is simply a point of clarification, information, to try to determine why there is so much confusion out there.

But the response of the minister have served to clarify for us as to why there is confusion in the department, as to why parents phone the deputy minister and get one answer and they phone the ADM and get another answer. Can the minister clarify whether or not the implementation steering committee reports through the senior ADM, Health Reform, or whether it does not? And which flow chart is right?

Mr. Orchard: My honourable friend must appreciate that "reform" by its very definition means change. My honourable friend seems unwilling to recognize that there is change. Now, my honourable friend has often mentioned about confusion around the consolidation of pediatrics at the Children's Hospital. [interjection] Yes, there was.

There was a recommendation that I accepted that was unanimously agreed to by the Urban Hospital Council to consolidate all pediatric inpatient services. That included not-for-admission surgeries as well.

Now, Madam Chairperson, what caused the greatest amount of confusion? I know my honourable friend is quite sensitive on this issue, because my honourable friend did exactly as the second opposition critic has advised him not to, and that is to attempt to politicize the process of health care reform. My honourable friend in an interview on CKND-TV indicated that the emergency departments of all hospitals except Children's would not accept children emergencies.

Madam Chairperson, that was wrong. My honourable friend was absolutely dead wrong. When I mentioned that in the House about a day after, you would not believe the scramble in the New Democratic caucus room to get the transcript from that news broadcast to see what their critic had actually said, because I give some credibility to the research staff in the New Democratic caucus. They recognized the danger that the statement by the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak), as Health critic, with some credibility presumably in making these statements, they recognized the danger that that false statement could have placed children in who, if they believed what the member for Kildonan had erroneously stated, they might have by-passed an emergency on the way to Children's Hospital and compromised the health of their child.

Madam Chair, my honourable friend has never admitted that he was in error in making that statement and has not acknowledged that that could have compromised children, but I want to tell my honourable friend the effect of that statement made by himself on the news on CKND television news.

It caused a number of things. First of all, a flood of phone calls which is even still trickling on into my office, wanting to know if children will receive emergency services at the hospitals because of that statement. It has caused parents who have heard that statement and nothing to the contrary to go directly to Children's Hospital Emergency, when they do not have to. They can receive care in other emergencies.

* (1350)

If my honourable friend thinks that that serves the public of Manitoba, my honourable friend is wrong. My honourable friend, I do not like to use phraseology, but he could well be dead wrong. My honourable friend attempts to create an atmosphere of confusion in the reporting process of health care reform within the ministry and using the advice that we are trying to bring around very complex and difficult issues into some sort of a condemnation about process. That is fine. I am willing to take any number of hours my honourable friend wants to take in terms of talking about the process.

I will tell my honourable friend that the process may well change internally as we gain more experience, as we find out what works, what does not work, so that a flow chart may well modify. I suppose I should put on the bottom of flow charts

"this is subject to change," because that is what reform is all about.

We can talk about process, and I will deal as much as I can and provide as much information around process to my honourable friend that I can. But I would hope that at some point in time we talk principle and we talk policy and we talk direction, because I was intrigued with my honourable friend's opening remarks wherein—and I think I should find it because it was actually the first time I have heard my honourable friend so admit.

My honourable friend said—and I may have the words slightly different, it will be in Hansard—it goes without saying that we should be moving away from institutional care.

That was an amazing statement from my honourable friend, because observers of Question Period will see my honourable friend of late preambuling his questions in terms of closed hospital beds, et cetera. Well, if that is the theatre or the theatrics my honourable friend wants to put out in Question Period, my honourable friend is either being somewhat dishonest with Manitobans there in the preamble or somewhat dishonest today in his opening remarks where he says without saying we should be moving away from institutional care.

I am greatly looking forward to the opportunity, in addition to dealing with process, to deal with policy. Because I want to know from my honourable friend where he thinks our policies have changed, our policies of reforms, the direction we are taking are wrong. I want those discussions sincerely to be held because my honourable friend may, as has happened with the opposition critic from the second official opposition, be able to provide myself and my staff and the ministry and the system better advice on certain areas.

So I encourage my honourable friend to, once he gets finished with the process, engage in the larger debate of policy and direction so that we might all benefit from his wisdom and from his ideas as representing the New Democrats in this province because New Democrats definitely have ideas around health care. They have them in Ontario, Saskatchewan, New Brunswick, and I would be naive to assume that my honourable friends, just because they are in opposition in Manitoba, do not have ideas around policy and health care.

I really want to encourage my honourable friend as the new critic to engage in that kind of open policy

debate, because all of us will benefit from the direction that he may well want to provide in terms of policy, and certainly we would get a sense and a flavour as to really how much sincerity there is behind the statement made in his opening remarks that it goes without saying we should be moving away from institutional care. So let us deal with my honourable friend's organizational questions and then move posthaste into a general policy debate around reform.

Because my honourable friend will have noted in my opening remarks I posed a number of questions in terms of whether we can continue to fund the system as it has been funded in the past, whether we need to undertake reform, whether the process is unique to Manitoba, what is the end goal of reform, whether we should be talking about effectiveness in health care service delivery, whether we should be engaging expertise inside and outside the province. I would like to get a check list from my honourable friend as to who he likes, who he does not like and why. I mean, it is simply not good enough to not like someone because of where they happen to live. There has to be a little more integrity to one's dislikes. There has to be a little more principle and reason behind them rather than just simply a raw opportunity for opposition.

So if my honourable friend has a few more questions on process, I would be pleased to try to answer them either immediately or as soon as we can provide that information, and maybe we will have an opportunity before we conclude this afternoon to talk about the principle and the philosophy and the policy of health care reform. So my honourable friend might give us the benefit of what policy portions they agree with and why, and what they do not and why, and what they would suggest as alternatives.

Mr. Chomlak: Can the minister outline whether there are any outstanding reports from the Health Advisory Network and what they are?

Mr. Orchard: I believe there is one.

Mr. Chomlak: Can the minister indicate what that report is?

Mr. Orchard: If my memory serves me correctly, I believe it is the investigation around extended treatment beds in rural Manitoba.

Mr. Chomlak: Can the minister indicate when he anticipates that report will be forwarded?

Mr. Orchard: Yes, I will.

Mr. Chomlak: Will that report be tabled and can the minister indicate when approximately that will occur?

Mr. Orchard: Yes, I will try to provide that information.

Mr. Chomlak: Can the minister indicate when he anticipates when that report will be available?

Mr. Orchard: Madam Chair, I will provide that information to my honourable friend.

Mr. Chomlak: Can the minister indicate what the process is for the health reform team, the ADM that does not appear on the flow chart, what the process is for the public to receive one of the road shows—and that is not meant to debase—how the public goes about receiving the guidance and the advice of the ADM on health care reform in terms of one of the presentations. What is the process that it goes through? Is there a certain number, is there certain groups? If, for example, members in the constituency that I represent wanted to hear a presentation, would they have access to it, et cetera? What is the process that it is going through in terms of providing the public with that information concerning health care reform?

Mr. Orchard: Madam Chair, as my honourable friend might appreciate a flexible decision in terms of the presentation, my senior departmental staff, myself, have received innumerable invitations. We have attempted to comply and agree to most of those invitations, but I know that I have not always been able to attend every meeting that I have been invited to. As minister, I am sure that there would be instances where an invitation has not been able to be accommodated within the health reform implementation steering committee. But I want to indicate to my honourable friend that it is a significant number of meetings that we have held both inside and outside the city of Winnipeg with any number and variety of sponsor groups.

What I will try to do, I had a list of some six or seven or eight weeks ago as to how many presentations were made to whom over the last number of months, we will attempt to provide an updated copy of that so my honourable friend gets a sense of how extensive the presentation opportunities have been in terms of health reform in the last eight or 10 months.

* (1400)

Mr. Chomlak: Madam Chairperson, yes, I would appreciate a copy of that. At the same time, I am

wondering if the minister could also table, together with a copy of that, the list of recommendations that have been brought forward by the public with respect to health reform, and the status of those particular recommendations as a result of the consultative process that the minister indicated they have been through.

Mr. Orchard: Madam Chairperson, there have been questions more than suggestions at a number of the public meetings where questions have been posed on the basis of what was perceived to be going on. I know in some of the presentations, and I will not speak for my senior staff, I have had to deal with a pretty substantial amount of partial information in terms of the community understanding of health care reform. The one I have already dealt with, I will not deal with again.

I have been questioned on a number of occasions about emergency services for children in Winnipeg following my honourable friend's incorrect statements on the CKND-TV news, but let me give you some other examples that have come in terms of questions.

There has been the simple question, why did we downsize our teaching hospitals? When the explanation was given for instance that, yes, we downsized and retired from service a number of beds at the two teaching hospitals, which we have already discussed in part today, a lot of those questioners are quite astounded to learn for the first time that there were 60 new long-term care beds built by this government, commissioned at Concordia Hospital, for instance. They are equally astonished to hear that there was a significant expansion of capacity at Deer Lodge Hospital, for instance, to accept and care in a very fine fashion for long-term care patients.

In response to that question, they were also astonished to find there was an expansion in bed capacity at Municipal Hospitals, even though those announcements were linked directly in The Health Action Plan because the tendency is, and I understand the tendency, I suppose if my honourable friend, and I am only speculating here, but if my honourable friend were making a presentation to a constituency annual meeting of the New Democratic Party, I think my honourable friend would decry 240 beds being closed at St. Boniface and the Health Sciences Centre.

I am quite sure that my honourable friend would never tell that audience; but on the other hand, there are 60 beds being opened at Concordia and I do not know the exact number, but 70, 64 beds at Deer Lodge and 25 or 30, or whatever the number is, at Municipal. The point I am making, my honourable friend would only present one half of the information.

One of the things that is even more astounding, when I have the opportunity to present and to answer questions of the public on health reform, is they are absolutely astounded about the number of additional personal care home beds that have been brought into service in the five years that we have been government in the province of Manitoba. I know honourable friend will ask for detail on that when we get to that particular appropriation in the Estimates. But they are even more astounded to learn that, as we speak, there are 240 additional personal care home beds being built in the city of Winnipeg to serve long-term care needs.

That is why when I opened my remarks, I gave a brief overview of a number of expansions that we have been able to fund in the last five years that I have been Minister of Health. I put those in, Madam Chairperson, very selfishly, because the language that is occasionally used by my honourable friend and others is always talking about cutbacks. That is the only language that ever seems to emanate in terms of prefacing questions. I have consistently tried to indicate that in the six budgets that we have brought before the House to ask approval of, there has been a 38 percent increase in funding by this government to health care.

The Home Care program has doubled, a number of areas have increased very significantly, and all of this while our population has remained relatively static, growing slightly, and all of this while we are shifting the focus of health care, particularly in the last year with the retirement of service of beds from the two teaching hospitals and their replacement in physical new capacity in several other locations.

Mr. Chomlak: Madam Chairperson, it is too bad, therefore, that the minister has not kept a list of recommendations and suggestions from these numerous public meetings that have been held around the province, from the very people that are affected on a daily basis by these so-called reforms. The minister indicated they do not keep a record of what suggestions are made.

The minister indicated, as was indicated in my opening remarks, it is a one-way communication. They answer questions. The minister answers questions. The minister hears what the minister wants to hear. Then he responds, and no better example exists than his response to that last question. I will not belabour that point. It is very sad and it is indicative of the problem in this government that they do not maintain a list, the minister obviously indicates they have not. They do not maintain a list of suggestions that come from the public in these numerous meetings.

I am sure the minister will table a document indicating the number of meetings and the number of people that they have talked to and there will not be one suggestion, clearly from the minister's response because he ducked the question, there will not be one single conclusion, one single recommendation that came from the public that the minister even considered.

That is part of the problem when you are behind a curtain of secrecy, behind a veil and a curtain, and you dictate downward as to what shall occur in the health care system, and that is part of the difficulty, clearly. I am very sorry to hear that the minister has no list of those recommendations.

I suggest, I am making another positive suggestion, that perhaps the minister should consider having staff go and provide for suggestions and provide for recommendations from the public, because if the minister could screw up the courage to go out and meet with the public on a regular basis, he would find that the public are very concerned about his health reforms and feel that they do not have adequate information and feel that the government is not listening and feel that this process is not effective and that the cuts to the beds and the dramatic cutbacks to hospital budgets last year and this year, the clawbacks that took place, the lack of information, are all contributing to confusion with the public and affect not only the credibility of this government and this minister but the government and all politicians in general. That is very unfortunate, indeed, that that should occur.

* (1410)

So I hope the minister, even though he has not to this point listened to the public, I hope he will at least commence listening, and perhaps he could start by helping for speedy passage of our private member's resolution dealing with responsibility and

accountability in health reform. Perhaps by doing that we could begin the process to begin listening to the public to get the reform process back on the rails again.

Can the minister table the report that was unanimously recommended, that the pediatric services all be consolidated at Children's Hospital, that he referred to in his comments?

Mr. Orchard: Madam Chairperson, it was a unanimous recommendation by the Health Advisory Network to consolidate to Children's Hospital.

Madam Chair, I know my honourable friend is skilled in phraseology. As a trained lawyer he will attempt to put conclusions on the record that would not necessarily lead one to conclude that they had integrity and truth, and he has done it just now.

I indicated to my honourable friend that at the presentations, the majority of experience I have had is there has been very direct questions as to why certain things have been done. When the answers were given, there was satisfaction with the process of health care reform. Madam Chair, at no time in my answer to my honourable friend did I say that we did not accept suggestions from the general public, but my honourable friend chose to so indicate in his subsequent statements.

Let me give you an example of some of the suggestions that I have received. It has been suggested to me that we increase the Continuing Care Program. That is why I mentioned in my answer to my honourable friend that we have doubled the budget, and this year again the budget for Home Care is up. That was a positive response to a suggestion of increased home care made by citizens from time to time at meetings. At other meetings there has been the suggestion that support services for seniors work and work well, and the program should be expanded. We have acceded to that, not in all cases yet but we will. So, you know, for my honourable friend to say that we do not accept suggestions from the general public, my honourable friend is factually inaccurate. My honourable friend is also ignorant of the fact that the Health Advisory Network in undertaking a number of studies on issues affecting the health care system engaged in a number of those task forces, public consultation, received suggestions, briefs from the public, incorporated those briefs into their reports.

I recognize my honourable friend would never want to recognize that that was public input, public

suggestion, incorporation of those into reports. My honourable friend is going to quickly conclude, well, how do we know that because you have not table any but one of the Health Advisory Network task force reports? That might be a reasonable concern my honourable friend has.

Would my honourable friend accept that a significant amount of the advice from the Health Advisory Network reports were incorporated into The Health Action Plan on the basis of public input? Of course, my honourable friend would not want to accept that because that would not fit with this public perception that my honourable friend is trying to create, as his predecessors have, that this is a secretive process of change, that there is this corporate veil. Was that the phraseology? This corporate veil?

An Honourable Member: Veil, corporate veil.

Mr. Orchard: Corporate veil. [interjection] Public consultation, yes. There has been a significant number of areas of program where there have been public meetings held, et cetera. My honourable friend in his opening remarks even acknowledged that he has attended a lot of these reform meetings. Now, if there was this great aura of secrecy around the process, how would my honourable friend have been able to state in his opening remarks that he has attended a number of public meetings on health reform?

An Honourable Member: . . . secret.

Mr. Orchard: Yes, my honourable friend, the member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Pallister) concludes that must mean they were held in secret, but yet it was such a well-kept secret that the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) was welcome to attend.

You see, Madam Chair, where we get into this silliness that the NDP periodically try to portray? But I am really intrigued with my honourable friend because my honourable friend is wanting to have some extensive mechanism for public input. Well, that is a pretty good idea, and as a matter of fact, the public provides to me over five years as individuals, as citizens, letters wherein they suggest varying options for change in health care and how we deliver the system. I want to tell my honourable friend that we have incorporated some of those changes that have come from the public at large in terms of policy and program.

Now my honourable friend says that this should be a more formal process, that the public should be able to make these suggestions, which is quite an interesting and intriguing concept my honourable friend puts out because—and I know my honourable friend will correct me if I am wrong, but I distinctly recall in his opening remarks that my honourable friend is death against Total Quality Management as a management process or a continuous quality improvement.

I have a real problem with my honourable friend wanting the public to have input on decision makers and how my honourable friend squares that with his party's opposition to Total Quality Management, which is a technique wherein all caregivers have an opportunity for decision-making input in their workplace.

On the one hand, my honourable friend wants the public to have input on decision making and will criticize the government for moving with our institutions towards management processes centred upon Total Quality Management, which brings that openness of input into decision making to the people involved in delivering care in our institutions.

How in the world can my honourable friend stand up with intellectual honesty and ask for public input and officially have a policy of the New Democratic Party to deny that same input to care workers by being opposed to Total Quality Management?

Again, I digress slightly, Madam Chair, but it is yet another one of those enigmas wrapped up in a conundrum that we are so used to hearing from New Democrats in opposition.

New Democrats in opposition are opposed to TQM. When Bob Rae's government of Ontario is moving with implementation of Total Quality Management in health care, how can my honourable friend square that philosophically? Even within party ranks, how can he square their opposition in Manitoba with initiatives by other provinces in government?

The simple conclusion one has to reach is that the New Democrats have two sets of policy: one for opposition that may spring them into government, and then a complete 180-degree about-face with all of those policy pronouncements that got them to government and start making real decisions when they are in government, real decisions that are good

for the management of government-provided programming and services, including health care.

* (1420)

We have eight minutes left before we conclude this afternoon. Maybe my honourable friend could give me some clarity around the confusion that he has put on the record. He wants public input and is critical there is not enough of it, but wants to deny worker input into decision making by being opposed to Total Quality Management as a management practice in institutions. Can my honourable friend give me just a little bit of clarity in terms of where he really stands?

Mr. Chomiak: Madam Chairperson, I could assume from the minister's tirade that the answer to my question is no, they have not been keeping recommendations and conclusions from the public meetings that have been held. It has been simply, as stated earlier by the minister, a top-down, pontifical approach where the minister pontificates and the rest of the public goes along with it. Clearly, they are not listening to recommendations. As I indicated earlier, despite the minister trying to move off of the topic and trying to get out from this very difficult and messy situation by playing word games, by moving the topic away from the essence of the argument, the minister simply should be forthright enough to say, no, we are not listening to the public; we have not kept a record at those public meetings of what suggestions and recommendations have come forward—and simply go on, admit that you have not, consider it perhaps in the future but admit that you have not in the past, and we will go on from here.

But the minister attempts to draw the debate out, attempts to move the debate off of the essence of the issue. He knows that his government and his party and his position are hurting very badly by virtue of this policy. He knows that if he were to spend any time on the doorstep or any time talking to the public—and even the Premier (Mr. Filmon) does that. I have had occasions where constituents have phoned me and the Premier has actually phoned them back on the matters of concern.

If he would talk to these people, he would perhaps see some of the concerns that have been raised and perhaps might change his policy. But he seems unwilling, or perhaps unable, to do so, and it is regrettable for the process. Anyone observing these debates or taking the time to read the Hansard will

quite clearly see that the minister refused to answer the question, and simply by virtue of that, said no, we do not do that—by attempting to squirrel away from the issue of noninvolvement from the public with concern to his process, particularly because he is going to table a document outlining for us the number of meetings, the number of people talked to, but as indicated it will not contain the recommendations that have come, or even the suggestions that have come from the public, together with those tabled documents.

My question for the minister is, can he outline for us what public meetings are going to take place with respect to the health reform process in the next 30 to 60 days?

Mr. Orchard: Madam Chairperson, I know the process in Estimates, and it appears it is going to repeat itself, that despite the fact that I tell my honourable friend there were public hearings starting with the Health Advisory Network Task Force reports where the public came and made presentation, I know my honourable friend will simply let that go in one ear and out the other and say, well, you never listen to the public.

My honourable friend will choose to not acknowledge that I have received suggestions and we have acceded to them from the public, and we have incorporated them where they are practical and workable in departmental policy where there has been public input. My honourable friend will not concede that in some areas there have been public meetings, and I guess one of them that maybe my honourable friend never got a chance to attend, even though my honourable friend indicated earlier on that he attended public meetings, was on health reform.

Did my honourable friend get a chance to attend any of the public meetings on emergency services?—I do not think so. But my honourable friend, I give him an answer about the extent of public input, briefs presented at task force, consultations done with the public, and my honourable friend stands up and concludes as straight-faced as you could ever believe, what he wanted to conclude, even though it was not accurate and was incorrect, that there is no public consultation, no public input. My honourable friend sits and smiles about it right now, because he knows that is the typical game of a New Democrat, and no matter what you reply and how you indicate there is public input, briefs accepted, et cetera, et cetera,

that does not matter to my honourable friend, because my honourable friend wants to persist in this being a very closed process of change, when it is in fact the most open process of change that has ever happened in the history of the province of Manitoba.

My honourable friend, of course, will not want to acknowledge that mental health advisory councils in the regions, who are citizens at large, consumers and family members of consumers, have helped to create mental health reform. That is public input. My honourable friend, of course, will never acknowledge that. He will continue to persist in his misleading information that there is no public input. So again, you know, we will spend our time with, as long as necessary, me explaining to my honourable friend where there has been public input, where there have been recommendations accepted and advanced that have been from the public. My honourable friend will persist in saying there is no public input in this process. It will not be accurate, but no one ever said that the process my honourable friend engages in compels him to accurately communicate facts. That does not suit the purpose of trying to skulk into government, if that is the right way to put it. It is probably parliamentary, but it is not too nice to use that kind of language.

You will note, Madam Chair, because I know that you have been paying very close attention to this debate, that my honourable friend skirted the issue of how he wants public input into health reform, but does not want worker input into decision making in institutions by being opposed in policy and in New Democratic Party philosophy to Total Quality Management or continuous quality improvement management techniques in the workplace. If ever there is a group which is ideologically bent in where they are going, who want no distractions from anyone, except their very close associates of similar belief, it is New Democrats—not Liberals, not Progressive Conservatives, but New Democrats.

Now, I do not want to revisit much history, but it might be appropriate for my honourable friend to revisit 1987. My honourable friend might want to consult with Mr. Parasiuk, for instance, who is now in British Columbia, as to how much public consultation the New Democrats undertook and how much advance knowledge they laid out in The Health Action Plan and how much tabling of direction in terms of changes in the health care service they provided to the public at large in

announcing the closure of 112 beds unilaterally in the system. If my honourable friend wants to get into semantic debate about who is consulted, who has laid out agenda, who has provided the public with more information on the challenges of change in delivering health care services, I will take my honourable friend on any time of the day.

* (1430)

I know my honourable friend will be compelled to revert back to the standard NDP response that there is no consultation, when it has been wider than anything in the history of the province of Manitoba. It has invited more input from all walks of life, all professional disciplines. My honourable friend will not accept that. That is fair. I will accept my honourable friend's entrenched position. But maybe my honourable friend could go back to recent history and show the process engaged by the Howard Pawley government, for instance, just on one narrow and specific issue of closing 112 beds in Brandon and Winnipeg, and show to us the ideal process of undertaking that closure of beds with public consultation, seeking input from the public, seeking input from professionals, seeking input from boards, seeking input from all Manitobans, getting their suggestions and compiling them in to come to the conclusion that you should close 112 beds.

If my honourable friend would be so kind as to share with me that broad consultation with the public that led to that policy decision in 1987 by Howard Pawley and the NDP, I would be glad to put a side-by-side comparison of our process of informing the public of the goals, the challenges, and the agenda.

We can put that out and we can let the public decide. We could even let my honourable friend decide which process has more integrity, more input, more consistency, more opportunity for knowledge and background and input than ever before in the history of the province of Manitoba.

I realize my honourable friend will not want to do that, and I know why. It is because under the NDP and under Howard Pawley and under Wilson Parasiuk as Minister of Health there was absolutely no consultation at all with anyone. It was a unilateral top-down imposed decision by the then Minister of Health and the government of Howard Pawley.

There was absolutely no public input, any consultation with professionals. It was unilateral. It was arbitrary. It was the genuine corporate veil of

decision making that my honourable friend accuses me of. Now I know where he got, sort of, the phraseology from. It was from Howard Pawley and Wilson Parasiuk.

Now I am sorry, but we have chosen not to operate in that fashion in this government. I will not revert to any suggestions to vary from it that my honourable friend may come up with from his experience in recent history of Howard Pawley's New Democratic administration.

Madam Chairperson: Order, please. As previously agreed, the hour being 2:30, committee rise.

Call in the Speaker.

IN SESSION

Madam Deputy Speaker (Louise Dacquay): As previously agreed, the hour being past 2:30, this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. Monday next.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, June 3, 1993

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