



Fourth Session - Thirty-Fifth Legislature

of the

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS
(HANSARD)**

42 Elizabeth II

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Speaker*



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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
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, Clif	Interlake	NDP
EVANS, Leonard S.	Brandon East	NDP
FILMON, Gary, Hon.	Tuxedo	PC
FINDLAY, Glen, Hon.	Springfield	PC
FRIESEN, Jean	Wolseley	NDP
GAUDRY, Neil	St. Boniface	Liberal
GILLESHAMMER, Harold, Hon.	Minnedosa	PC
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
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	NDP
MANNES, Clayton, Hon.	Morris	PC
MARTINDALE, Doug	Burrows	NDP
McALPINE, Gerry	Sturgeon Creek	PC
McCRAE, James, Hon.	Brandon West	PC
McINTOSH, Linda, Hon.	Assiniboia	PC
MITCHELSON, Bonnie, Hon.	River East	PC
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>	Rossmore	
<i>Vacant</i>	Rupertsland	
<i>Vacant</i>	The Maples	

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, June 17, 1993

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYERS

Speaker's Statement

Mr. Speaker: Prior to Routine Proceedings, I have a statement for the House.

I must inform the House that Gulzar Singh Cheema, the honourable member for The Maples, has resigned his seat in the House effective June 17, 1993. I am therefore tabling his resignation and my letter to the Lieutenant-Governor-in-Council advising of the vacancy thus created in the membership of the House.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Mr. Jack Penner (Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Economic Development): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the Fifth Report of the Committee on Economic Development.

Mr. Clerk (William Remnant): Your Standing Committee on Economic Development presents the following as its Fifth Report.

Your committee met on Wednesday, June 2, at 8 p.m. in Room 255, Thursday, June 3, at 11 a.m. in Room 254 and Tuesday, June 15, 1993, at 7 p.m. in Room 255 of the Legislative Building to consider bills referred.

At the June 15, 1993, 7 p.m. meeting your committee elected Mr. Penner as Chairperson.

Your committee heard representation on bills as follows:

Bill 4— The Retail Businesses Sunday Shopping (Temporary Amendments) Act; Loi sur l'ouverture des commerces de détail les jours fériés— modifications temporaires

Brent Stewart - Morden and District Chamber of Commerce

John Krahn - Mayor of Winkler

Roger Emery - Winnipeg Canadian Tire Dealers

Vern Dyck and Peter Kaufman - Canadian Federation of Independent Grocers (CFIG)

Harold Jantz - Private Citizen

Paul McKinnon - Henderson and McIvor Foods Ltd.

Sandy Hopkins - Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce

Don MacKinnon - Westfair Foods

Norman Leach - Manitoba Chamber of Commerce

Alfred Schellenberg - Independent Jewellers

Joe Borowski - Private Citizen

Charles Finnbogason - Bramalea Limited

Written Submissions:

Mr. and Mrs. Marion - Private Citizens

Stan Phillips - Stan's IGA (Brandon)

Elizabeth Sellick - President, Manitoba Association of Rights and Liberties

Toby Oswald - Canada Safeway Limited

Bill 23—The Retail Businesses Holiday Closing Amendment, Employment Standards Amendment and Payment of Wages Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les jours fériés dans le commerce de détail, la Loi sur les normes d'emploi et la Loi sur le paiement des salaires

Dale Botting - Canadian Federation of Independent Business

Susan Hart-Kulbaba - President, Manitoba Federation of Labour

Charles Finnbogason - Bramalea Limited

Joan Sellar and Paul Moist - CUPE, Manitoba

Robert Ziegler - United Food and Commercial Workers

Art Kerr - Manitoba Association of Shopping Centres

Rev. Cliff McMillan - Winnipeg Presbytery of the United Church of Canada and The Association of Christian Churches in Manitoba

Written Submissions:

Neil Stewart - Roblin and District Chamber of Commerce

George Gershman - President, Tourism Association of Winnipeg

N. Blundel - District Manager for Zellers Inc., Hudson's Bay Company

Your committee has considered:

Bill 4— The Retail Businesses Sunday Shopping (Temporary Amendments) Act; Loi sur l'ouverture des commerces de détail les jours fériés— modifications temporaires

and has agreed to report the same without amendment.

Your committee has also considered:

Bill 23—The Retail Businesses Holiday Closing Amendment, Employment Standards Amendment and Payment of Wages Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les jours fériés dans le commerce de détail, la Loi sur les normes d'emploi et la Loi sur le paiement des salaires

and has agreed to report the same with the following amendment:

MOTION:

THAT Bill 23 be amended

(a) in the heading of section 19, by striking out "Coming into force" and substituting "Coming into force: Part 2"; and

(b) by adding the following after section 19:

Coming into force: Part 3

20 Part 3 of this Act comes into force on the day it receives royal assent.

All of which is respectfully submitted.

Mr. Penner: I move, seconded by the honourable member for La Verendrye (Mr. Sveinson), that the report of the committee be now received.

Motion agreed to.

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: Prior to Oral Questions, may I direct the attention of honourable members to the gallery, where we have with us this afternoon from the John Henderson Junior High School fifty Grade 9 students under the direction of Ms. Sandra

Drzystek. This school is located in the constituency of Rossmere.

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

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

**Manitoba Hydro
RCMP Investigation**

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of our caucus, we would certainly wish the former member for The Maples and his family well in their future in British Columbia.

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Deputy Premier and Minister responsible for Manitoba Hydro.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday we were informed that the RCMP and staff from the federal Department of Environment, utilizing a search warrant, visited upon the Manitoba Hydro offices. I would like the minister to advise us on the circumstances and what documents they were attempting to obtain in the visit to Manitoba Hydro.

Hon. James Downey (Minister responsible for The Manitoba Hydro Act): Mr. Speaker, at the outset, I would like to, as well, on behalf of the government and the Premier (Mr. Filmon) and our party, acknowledge the contribution of the former member for The Maples. He will certainly be missed in this House. He contributed in a very positive way, and I compliment him on his contribution.

Mr. Speaker, the member raises an issue which deals with a Crown corporation which I am responsible for. Details of that at an appropriate time when available, I would be prepared to provide.

* (1335)

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, can the minister confirm that the federal Department of Environment and the federal RCMP are investigating a spill at Great Falls in February, under the federal Fisheries Act? Can the minister confirm or advise the House what documents the RCMP and the federal department had to obtain from the provincial government by means, potentially, of a police investigation?

Mr. Downey: Mr. Speaker, the member raises against the issue that deals with a Crown

corporation, of which he is asking for detailed documents—

Mr. Doer: I am not asking for them.

Mr. Downey: Well, I misunderstood the question then. I thought he was asking for—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Point of Order

Mr. Doer: I asked what documents the federal government was seeking in their investigation. Perhaps the minister would take that—

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

Mr. Downey: Again, Mr. Speaker, he asks what documents the federal government are seeking at this particular time.

I would, as I said earlier, after an appropriate time, be prepared to respond to that question after I have an opportunity—and if it is a federal inquiry, then that is the individual whom those pieces of information would have to come from.

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, I would ask the Minister responsible for Hydro and the Deputy Premier of the government to please find out what the situation is in Manitoba Hydro. Please find out what the situation is of why a federal department has to go in to a provincial Crown corporation in this way, and please advise the House and the people of Manitoba of the circumstances? Would the Deputy Premier please give us that undertaking that he will advise the people of Manitoba what the situation is?

We are asking questions in the House today. We do not have, certainly, all the answers. We are not the government responsible for this Crown corporation. The minister is.

We would like to know the reasons for the investigation, the circumstances around it. We would like this minister to assure us that this department and this Crown corporation will participate fully and co-operate fully with the federal Department of Fisheries and the RCMP.

Mr. Downey: Mr. Speaker, to the best of my knowledge, I would see no reason why there would not be full co-operation from Manitoba Hydro.

I am quite prepared to provide appropriate documentation or information that would become

available if it is appropriate to in fact make it available to the public.

Youth Violence Reduction Strategy

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): I have a new question, Mr. Speaker, on another topic.

I certainly think that the public interest is served with full disclosure on this matter.

Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Justice or the Deputy Premier: We were advised yesterday there has been a 20 percent increase in alleged assaults with juveniles in the city of Winnipeg. I am sure all of us in this Chamber are receiving considerable feedback from their constituents all across the province dealing with the increased or the perceived increase in assaults and juvenile crime.

I would like to ask the government: Given the fact there has been a 37 percent increase since 1988 in these same kind of alleged assaults, what is the rationale for these increases? What is the strategy of the provincial government to deal with what I am sure all members would agree is a very disturbing and alarming increase in alleged juvenile assaults?

Hon. James Downey (Deputy Premier): Mr. Speaker, violence of any kind is unacceptable. I think every member of this House would agree that is totally unacceptable.

As far as the details of the question, I will take it as notice for the Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae).

Impact of Program Reductions

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, as a former volunteer member of the Boys and Girls Club, I was quite surprised to hear yesterday that the executive director of the Boys and Girls Club feels the increase in the assaults in the city of Winnipeg is due to an increase in poverty. He was very clear about his perception, working on the streets, that the increase in poverty is leading to the increase in juvenile assaults.

I would like to ask the government: Is there any co-ordination between the Department of Finance, the Department of Family Services, the Department of Education and the Premier's Office in terms of what the impact of the cutbacks the provincial government has implemented is? Have any of these cutbacks resulted in the 20 percent increase

in juvenile assaults in the city of Winnipeg through their provincial budget?

Hon. James Downey (Deputy Premier): Mr. Speaker, it is a very simplistic way for the member of the opposition to try and turn an issue into a political issue which would be to his advantage.

If he wants to do that, I think we should go back and start—if we are talking about impact on young people—with the massive debt he and his colleagues, when they were in government, piled on the backs of young people and people who are going to have to pay the future taxes. That is what deficits are, Mr. Speaker. That is what deficit is, is taxes that have to be paid by young people in the future.

As was said yesterday by the Premier (Mr. Filmon), the increase in the interest charge on that debt from when he was in government, when he took over government in 1981, was something like \$90 million and has currently gone to \$550 million, which last year was paid for by the taxpayers of Manitoba. Unconscionable—expenditures of money in Saudi Arabia on telephone systems, building of bridges without a road to them. That kind of irresponsible spending has caused the difficulties for the future of young people of this province.

* (1340)

Mr. Doer: I would ask the Deputy Premier to publicly apologize to Mike Owen, whom I quoted, who is the executive director of the Boys and Girls Club of Winnipeg. For the Deputy Premier to call Mr. Owen simplistic, a person who is working on the streets, who is working directly with these kids, I think the Deputy Premier owes him an apology.

Let me quote you somebody else who is more in contact with the real world than the Deputy Premier opposite. I would like to quote the director of Rossbrook House, Sister Lesley Zacouman: If society continues to cut off the options, these people will go to the streets.

Mr. Speaker, again, an experienced person working directly with kids in the inner city. What options has this government cut off that is forcing kids to go on the streets? What are the real impacts of some of the draconian measures made by this government in terms of an increase in juvenile crime and an increase in terms of safety that our citizens are feeling on the streets of Winnipeg?

Mr. Downey: Mr. Speaker, I did not make any inference to the fact that anyone else was simplistic other than the Leader of the Opposition in what he was trying to do politically.

I have lots of respect, Mr. Speaker, and this government has lots of respect for the work that is done at Rossbrook House. In fact, I have been there with many of my colleagues, attending functions and being with those young people, to show that we are interested and to try to make sure there is a clear understanding of some of the needs.

But I will try to respond so people can understand. We have some \$400 million less to provide education, to provide family services, to provide health care, to provide all those needs the Leader of the Opposition refers to, because we send that money to the banks of New York and all those moneylenders he borrowed the money from.

We, by law, are obligated to pay that debt before we do one bit of education or one of those other support programs. So let it be he who looks in the mirror and takes the credit and the blame for those individuals who are having difficulty, because there is not enough money to provide for all those things that have been done in the past.

Assiniboine River Diversion CEC Chairperson

Mr. Paul Edwards (Leader of the Second Opposition): I, too, want to start my comments this afternoon by recognizing the great contribution by the former member for The Maples to this House, to his caucus, his constituents, and, as well, to his community.

Mr. Speaker, I want to just add that I personally will, I think, mostly miss the former member for The Maples as a great friend. He and his family were friends to me and my family and to many in this House, and we will miss them dearly. We wish them well in British Columbia.

My question is for the Minister of Environment.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Dale Stewart is currently the chairperson of the five-person panel which is reviewing the Assiniboine River diversion project. Mr. Stewart is the same person who until September of 1991 was the Deputy Minister of Natural Resources.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Natural Resources and the department have made no secret down

through the years, at least since this government took office, of their support for this project. That support has been reflected on numerous occasions in this House, and indeed is reflected in the comments and the brief they put forward to that very same commission which Mr. Stewart is now the chairperson of.

My question for the Minister of Environment: Does he think it is appropriate that the same individual who was the deputy minister of the department, which had consistently shown support for this project, is now the most influential person, the chairperson on the commission which is reviewing it?

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment): Mr. Speaker, I have every confidence in Mr. Stewart's ability and capabilities and his willingness to serve this province and work with the commission on the very troubling problems that we put before the commission.

If the member has some concern that he believes is real, let him put it on the table.

* (1345)

Mr. Edwards: I just have put it on the table, and that concern is that the Hespeler report which came out in 1987—and Mr. Stewart was the acting deputy minister at that time—proposes as a first phase, diversion from Assiniboine River water down south—down through the years, including the current report which went before the commission. This week, there is an absolute unequivocal support for this project. There is talk about mitigative needs, but there is support for the project. That is from the Department of Natural Resources. This gentleman was the deputy minister throughout most of the period of time that the department was reviewing that project.

Mr. Speaker, my question for the minister is not directed to the integrity of Mr. Stewart. If this government does not understand the appearance of conflict and the need for government to be circumspect and vigilant in protecting against conflict of interest, then they do not understand the nature of the appearance of conflict. It is real and it is there.

Why is this man still chairing that commission?

Mr. Cummings: Mr. Speaker, he is not in the courtroom. He is dealing with a quality civil servant who served that party faithfully, worked after this organization came into government. He is a civil

servant of the highest quality whom I trust implicitly with this responsibility.

For him to stand in his place and besmirch the career of a longstanding quality civil servant is unacceptable, and I challenge him to repeat that outside of the House.

Mr. Edwards: He is so willingly blind to the conflict of interest which is being created by him, Mr. Speaker, he has put Mr. Stewart in that compromising position. It is not a position he should have put him in.

Mr. Speaker, the question for this minister is why is the person who headed the department which was the proponent of this project, why is that same gentleman the decision maker on this very same project?

Mr. Cummings: Mr. Speaker, already the member is putting misinformation on the record. The proponent is the Pembina Valley Task Force.

The Pembina Valley Task Force is the proponent. Let him get his facts straight, and let him quit attacking a quality civil servant.

Point of Order

Mr. Edwards: Mr. Speaker, the minister has very clearly indicated that I put misinformation on the record, and I want to clarify that point—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable Leader of the Second Opposition did not have a point of order. He clearly said that at the outset. There is no point of order.

Hayrides Safety Regulations

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Mr. Speaker, it is important that people from rural and urban settings learn about each other's way of life. Yesterday we had a group of young urban children who were doing just that, but unfortunately, it ended in a serious accident when the wagon they were riding in upset.

I want to ask the acting Premier if his government is undertaking a review of this incident, and which departments will be involved to see that safety regulations were being followed?

Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Highways and Transportation): Mr. Speaker, let me first of all express sincere regrets and sympathy for the young children who were hurt in a freak accident

yesterday at Birds Hill Park, but I want to indicate to the House and to members here that the same rules apply to people who drive horses on the roads as they do with vehicles.

We have hundreds of rules and regulations basically developed to try and protect the public from injury and from harm, and we apply those rules. At the present time in this particular case, the RCMP are investigating the situation, and once we have that report, we are prepared to deal with it further.

* (1350)

Hayrides Safety Regulations

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Since this is considered an amusement ride, a ride for entertainment, and there are regulations for other amusement operations, I want to ask the Minister of Labour whether these types of rides, hayrides, fall under The Amusements Act and whether there are regulations to control these kinds of operations, and whether they were being implemented.

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, the definition of amusement is primarily dealing with the mechanical side which our department inspects, as I am sure the member can appreciate, but we certainly will be awaiting the results of the RCMP report, and if there are some recommendations coming forward that there is an area in the safety scheme that needs to be filled, then we will consider that.

At this time, it is premature to make that analysis until we have received the report from the RCMP.

Hayrides Safety Regulations

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Can the Minister of Labour (Mr. Praznik) or the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay) tell us what steps will be taken to see that regulations are followed under The Amusements Act or the veterinarians act and to see that the regulations on all of these types of operations across the province are being followed?—because there have been concerns raised about this operation and other operations about the safety factors.

How are we going to know that all of these regulations are being followed across the province, and what regulations are being followed?

Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Highways and Transportation): Mr. Speaker, there are many people who enjoy riding, wagon-drawn rides. It is a novelty, part of our heritage, I suppose. I can recall as a youngster driving horses, and that was a means of making a living at that time.

Mr. Speaker, both the Minister of Labour (Mr. Praznik) and myself have given the undertaking that once we have the report from the RCMP, we will review it. If there are any discrepancies, anything that should be addressed, we will do that.

However, I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that irrespective of how many rules and regulations we apply through my department on the highways or in the other departments, from time to time you do have accidents.

However, we are not taking this lightly. As soon as we have the final police report, we will review it, myself along with my colleagues the Minister of Education (Mrs. Vodrey) and the Minister of Labour, and if something has to be changed, we will do that.

Workforce 2000 Program Justification

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): Mr. Speaker, looking at recipients of the Workforce 2000 private training incentives, it is often difficult to see where some of these grants fit with the economic strategies for the province.

So I want to ask the Minister of Education why she considers it more important for the economic future of Manitoba to train better cashiers for private golf courses, as she is under Workforce 2000, than it is to maintain access to education for those whom the province has cut out of education and Student Social Allowances and the ACCESS programs.

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Education and Training): Those companies, business, industry, labour groups who wish to take advantage of Workforce 2000, wish to participate—and I will remind the member that they also put money on the table—they go through a series of criteria, and then the program is monitored. There are also checks of the program as it goes along. There is a process of monitoring.

I would also remind the member that this Workforce 2000 recommended by STAC as a model to involve the sharing between government,

business, industry and labour has been a model across Canada, and I repeat the number. It has to date trained more than 54,000 Manitobans.

* (1355)

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Speaker, but the issue is training for what? It was the choices and the alternatives I was asking the minister about.

Equality of Access

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): My supplemental question for the minister is, what steps has she taken to ensure that in the companies which have received Workforce 2000 money, there is equality of access to that training and that trainees are not selected on the basis of age or gender or even the amorphous attitude?

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Education and Training): Again, Workforce 2000 operates with many sectors in Manitoba, the agricultural sector, the construction sector, the manufacturing sector, wholesale and retail trade sector, transportation and communications sector, finance, insurance and realty sector, community business and personal services sector.

We work and we monitor in each one of those. Each one of those areas that wishes to participate in the program is required to comply with the criteria, and then there is a monitoring process ongoing and following.

Ms. Friesen: But yet again, the minister read a list that was put in front of her.

My question was, is there equality of access to training programs in Workforce 2000? Is that a criteria for the grant?

Mrs. Vodrey: We are coming to the line of Workforce 2000 in the Estimates of the Department of Education. We will be able to review those criteria in detail.

However, I would like to table a report. The member has just been so critical of Workforce 2000. I thought she would be interested in a letter we have from the Carpenters and Joiners of America who said that this important project would not have been possible without the generous support and time resources and advice and consultation—a letter of support for Workforce 2000.

Assiniboine River Diversion Water Flow Levels

Mr. Paul Edwards (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Natural Resources.

The people of Portage la Prairie and Winnipeg have consistently been told by this minister and members of this government, and indeed the proponents of the Assiniboine River water diversion project not to worry about any decreases in water flow on the Assiniboine River. Why?—because it was going to be supplemented from water from the Shellmouth Dam. That has been shouted across this floor, and that has been stated on numerous occasions. The water was to be replenished.

Now we have the Ministry of Natural Resources' brief which indicates at page 6 that: On the Assiniboine River, impacts would be variable depending on location and flow conditions. Flows east of Portage would be 20 cubic feet per second lower.

That is apparently acceptable as a matter of course as a result of that project.

My question for the minister: Why is it now acceptable that there be less water for the people of Portage la Prairie and indeed down river in Winnipeg, when for years they have been told the water would be replenished? What is it, Mr. Speaker?

Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Natural Resources): Mr. Speaker, members know that as a rule I am not bashful in making my views known from time to time on this or any other subject, but I want to make it absolutely clear that it would be inappropriate for me to on a daily basis comment on what is happening at the Clean Environment Commission hearings.

My honourable friend the Leader of the third party opposition is a lawyer. He will understand that I view it somewhat analogous to a question asked of the Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae) on an ongoing trial, which would be clearly sub judice and would not be answered.

Mr. Speaker, as a matter of notice, I have no intention of answering any questions with respect to what is being said on a daily basis at the Clean Environment Commission hearings. Those hearings will be extensive, exhaustive. The

government places a great deal of importance on those hearings.

When they are concluded and when their findings are completed, some three or four or five or 18 months hence, I will be prepared to comment on the matter.

Mr. Edwards: This is a brief entitled, from the Manitoba Department of Natural Resources. He is the minister, Mr. Speaker. Is he saying he is not prepared to defend his own report in this House?

My question for the minister: What is it? Is it now tolerable that the people down river in Portage la Prairie and down from there, including Winnipeg, can live with less water and there will be no supplemental water? What is it? He has been telling this House—

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

Natural Resources Report

Mr. Paul Edwards (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, my question again for the Minister of Natural Resources: Is he prepared to defend the report that his department has put forward or not? Is he prepared to answer for it or does his department function without his leadership, because—

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

* (1400)

Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Natural Resources): Mr. Speaker, the professional engineers and other Natural Resources people have specific mandates with respect to the management of our natural resources, water being among them, fish being among them, other matters being among them.

They are called upon from time to time by different Manitoba groups and organizations and/or citizens, whether they are an irrigator by the name of Ed Connery who wishes to draw water out of the Assiniboine or whether it is a group of communities like the 15 municipalities, towns and cities that represent the Pembina Valley Water Co-operative.

They call and they rely on the professional advice of my engineers. That is the advice, that is the position being put forward before the Clean Environment Commission to pass some judgment

on as to whether or not a proponent's proposal for a water allocation is doable.

That is not my job. That is for my professionals to assist the Clean Environment Commission to come to a decision on that proposal.

Human Resources Opportunity Centre Parkland Office Funding

Mr. John Plohman (Dauphin): Mr. Speaker, a recent report by this government indicated strong support for the Human Resources Opportunity Centres across this province. It indicated, among other things, a growing demand for the program and a payback to government of \$16 for every one dollar spent, a cost-effective program by any government standards.

I want to ask the Minister of Education about this program, Mr. Speaker, because, unfortunately, when we questioned the Minister of Education during Estimates, it was evident that there was no consideration given for this report when the decision was made to cut the Human Resources Opportunity Centres by 10 percent and to eliminate the Parkland Centre completely.

Will the Minister of Education today indicate whether she has now reviewed this report? Will she now admit that this was a gross miscarriage of justice and a colossal error by the government in making this decision?

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, we are coming to the line that deals with the HROCs and the HROPs in the Estimates process of the Department of Education and Training, where we will be able to talk in detail about this.

However, I did say to the member at other times he has raised the issue, this government did have very difficult decisions to make. We have attempted to now work through a process with staff to provide the service on behalf of Manitobans.

That service is still being provided. He speaks of one particular HROC and HROP, and we are attempting to service the needs of that particular area through itinerant workers.

Mr. Plohman: Well, Mr. Speaker, in light of the fact that the minister made no contingency plans when this decision was made to provide service for the Parkland, she now has an opportunity to correct the mistake. She has an opportunity to review.

I ask her today whether she will review the decision in light of this report and reinstate the funding and the program for the Parkland Human Resources Centre that is so necessary for the vulnerable people in the Parkland who are depending on that program.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Speaker, we have staff from the Brandon area who will be going into the Parkland area. They will be on an itinerant basis, but the service will still be provided in the Parkland area from the HROCs and HROPs in the Brandon area.

In addition, in the Parkland area, we have maintained the Single Parent Job Access Program, and we are working very hard to continue to maintain programming and support for the people of the Parkland.

Mr. Plohman: How ridiculous. Did you hear that? Itinerants from Brandon—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member's comments did not get on the record.

The honourable member for Dauphin, kindly put your question now, please.

Mr. Plohman: Certainly, I would, Mr. Speaker. I want to ask this minister: Is this all the commitment that she has to the decentralized program that this government touted high and low as the great saviour for rural Manitoba?

Is this what she does for decentralization by having workers go from Brandon to service the Parkland? Do you know how far that is?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Speaker, I wonder when the last time that member was up in the Parkland area. However, let me just say that there were difficult decisions to be made. We have maintained commitments in several areas of Manitoba.

We will get to the discussion of all of the centres which have remained open, all of the programs which continue. As I said, we are still looking to service the needs of the people of the Parkland.

We have maintained the Single Parent Job Access programming, and we will continue to provide support for the people of the Parkland with the trained workers.

Flame-Master Furnaces Judicial Decision—Appeal

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Housing.

Last year almost 200 homeowners in Gimli attempted to get justice over defective Flame-Master furnaces. Now the Minister of Housing failed to act, and he was sued.

Last week the minister lost in court, and Mr. Dave Kowcun of Gimli got a \$1,200-plus-costs award towards a new furnace.

I want to ask the minister whether he will be appealing the court decision.

Hon. Jim Ernst (Minister of Housing): Mr. Speaker, before they haul me off to jail, we are having this matter under consideration as to whether we are going to appeal.

Government Action

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): I would like to know when the minister will be acting on the other 193 people that had defective furnaces and are out a lot of money because of this case.

Hon. Jim Ernst (Minister of Housing): The circumstances surrounding Mr. Kowcun are somewhat different than the circumstances surrounding a number of the furnace issues there, in any event, but before anything is done, we will carry out the judicial process in this matter to determine liability. After that, we will deal with it.

Mr. Maloway: Clearly, this man has won his case, and more people are going to proceed to the courts. I would like to know when the minister will decide to do something and solve this case in the interests of Manitobans.

Mr. Ernst: The last time I looked, the member for Elmwood was not a member of the appellate court. When they decide, as they will in due course, should we decide to appeal, then we will make a decision.

Repap Manitoba Inc. Investment In Manitoba

Mr. Reg Alcock (Osborne): Mr. Speaker, I bring some good news to the House. Mr. George Petty, the president of Repap, is about to go into his annual meeting tomorrow. He indicates that he expects the company to be in a positive cash flow and in an ability to start back to his expansion plans.

I would like to ask the Minister of Finance what this means for Repap's investment in this province. Will we begin to see some of that long-awaited

investment as a result of the fact that the company is about to become profitable?

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the very reasoned question he puts before the House.

Mr. Petty extended an invitation to me personally to be in attendance at the annual meeting of Repap. I will unfortunately be unable to attend.

We are mindful, too, of some of the turnaround obviously within the coated paper line that is a significant contributor to the well-being of that company. There is no doubt, as we continue discussions with Mr. Petty and Mr. Kass particularly, we will be trying to push more quickly the larger developed project at The Pas and in keeping with the commitment made by Repap contractually to the province.

Yet, I would not want Manitobans to believe that there is going to be expansion, certainly within the context of the next few months. When one surveys all of the major players within the forest product industry, certainly Repap is probably best positioned to take advantage of any recovery within the industry.

* (1410)

Mr. Alcock: Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the minister could tell us, when Mr. Petty phoned to invite him to the meeting if he indicated when we would start to see some of that investment in this province.

Mr. Manness: Mr. Speaker, the company has lost roughly \$300 million in the last two years. I do not think their bankers or their financial supporters are going to let them be engaged in significant expansion at all in terms of 1993.

An Honourable Member: You certainly miscalculated that, did you not?

Mr. Manness: Well, what I did not miscalculate, Mr. Speaker, was the fact that the NDP have been against Repap from Day One and indeed the 800 jobs. I did not miscalculate that.

In fairness to the question, Mr. Speaker, certainly Repap has made no new time commitment with respect to the major project development.

Social Assistance Dental Services

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Mr. Speaker, I have no intentions of leaving the good constituents of Burrows for Osborne, but when the member for

Osborne leaves we will be happy to represent his seat by our party.

Mr. Speaker, for several years the City of Winnipeg has run a dental clinic for social assistance recipients. They treat 4,200 people a year. In the past they have billed on a flat-fee basis. Now, because of provincial standardization of social assistance, the Minister of Family Services has decided that they would go to a fee-for-service basis.

Why is the minister making this change when the City of Winnipeg says it will be more expensive to administer?

Hon. Harold Gillehammer (Minister of Family Services): Mr. Speaker, we have been in discussions with the City of Winnipeg over a number of issues to do with the standardization of the Social Allowances Program. The city, of course, has been the service delivery unit for social allowance recipients in a number of areas.

Part of the changes we are making to have one system of social allowances in the province requires some changes in the manner in which the city does business. We are currently in discussions with them on a number of areas, and I am sure that when those discussions are completed, we will have arrived at a system which is workable.

Mr. Martindale: I would like to ask the minister why he is forcing these changes on the City of Winnipeg, when the Deputy Medical Officer of Health has said, quote: There will be an overall decrease in dental services for patients on assistance, and the inevitable outcome will be, of these changes, that teeth which could easily be saved will be extracted. They are providing less service at a more costly rate to administer.

Why are they doing these things?

Mr. Gillehammer: The province agrees to fund to a certain level the services that are provided by the City of Winnipeg. If the city wants to go beyond those services, then they have some ability to use funds of their own to do that.

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

Committee Changes

Mr. Nell Gaudry (St. Boniface): I move, seconded by the member for Crescentwood (Ms. Gray), that the composition of the Standing

Committee on Economic Development be amended as follows: Osborne (Mr. Alcock) for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux).

Motion agreed to.

Mr. George Hickes (Point Douglas): I move, seconded by the member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Economic Development be amended as follows: Wolseley (Ms. Friesen) for Selkirk (Mr. Dewar) for Thursday, June 17, 7 p.m.

Motion agreed to.

Mr. Edward Helwer (Gimli): I move, seconded by the member for St. Vital (Mrs. Render), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Economic Development be amended as follows: the member for Morris (Mr. Manness) for the member for Springfield (Mr. Findlay); the member for La Verendrye (Mr. Sveinson) for the member for Gimli (Mr. Helwer); the member for Ste. Rose (Mr. Cummings) for the member for River East (Mrs. Mitchelson); and the member for Assiniboia (Mrs. McIntosh) for the member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Rose).

Motion agreed to.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Hon. Clayton Manness (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I would ask, first of all, whether or not there is a willingness to waive private members' hour.

Mr. Speaker: Is it the will of the House to waive private members' hour?

Some Honourable Members: No.

Mr. Speaker: No, there is no leave.

Mr. Manness: I move, seconded by the Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings), 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.

* (1420)

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): Will the Committee of Supply please come to order.

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

When the committee last sat, it had been considering item 4.(g)(1) on page 39 of the Estimates book. Shall the item pass?

Mr. John Plohman (Dauphin): Mr. Deputy Chairperson, we asked the minister about the report that was commissioned by the Planning and Policy Development Branch. The final report was provided November 5, 1992. We asked this during the earlier part of the Estimates.

Has the minister had an opportunity now to review that report?

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Deputy Chairperson, yes, I and my department have had an opportunity to look at the report.

I am aware that the report was supportive of the role of these programs when they were a part of the Department of Family Services, and now, we will have to look at the role and exactly what the function of these particular programs are within the Department of Education and Training. I explained that to the member, I believe, the last time we spoke about this.

Mr. Plohman: Yes, well, the minister should not be worried about whether she has to explain things. That is her job.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I would like to ask the minister if she has found out from her staff what this report cost to undertake.

Mrs. Vodrey: That was an expenditure done within the Department of Family Services. The member may like to address that question to the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer).

Mr. Plohman: The minister is now responsible for this program, Mr. Deputy Chairperson. The Minister of Family Services indicated he would answer no questions on HROC, the Human Resources Opportunity Centres, because they now fall under the Department of Education.

We are not going to be caught in game playing between the two ministers. That minister said it is no longer his responsibility. This minister is now responsible. It is up to her to find out what it cost when it was commissioned and provide a report to this committee.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, we are, as I have said, not attempting to play games by any means. We are attempting to provide the information that is the most current.

At the moment, the Department of Education and Training has to now look at the programs that have been transferred from the Department of Family Services in the light of the work of the Department of Education and Training. This was an expenditure he is asking about that was accepted and passed by the Department of Family Services. It was not passed within the Department of Education and Training.

Mr. Plohman: Certainly, when programs are transferred, all aspects of the discussion surrounding those programs are relevant to the issue. The minister has a responsibility to provide responses on aspects both before the program came and following because she is now responsible for the program, and what went on before has everything to do with how the program is dealt with now.

We have a report done. The minister says she is reviewing this report, and she is going to see how this can be incorporated into the future program changes in her department. So if you are using a report that is commissioned by this government, if you are using that report for future decision making, you have a responsibility to provide a report to the committee on what the costs of that report were.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I have not been the minister who tabled that report. I am not quite sure how the member has actually received that report, if in fact it was presented to him or if he received that report by some other means.

However, I will say to him that certainly as Minister of the Department of Education and Training, I am looking very carefully at these programs now and certainly will be pleased to answer questions regarding these programs and my responsibility for these programs as they are part of the division of Advanced Education and Skills Training.

So I will be happy to discuss aspects of the program if he cares to ask those questions.

Mr. Plohman: Well, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I will certainly get to that, but if the minister wants us to table the report for her edification if she has not seen it, then we will be glad to do that. We have a copy. We assume the minister has access to this.

Point of Order

Mrs. Vodrey: There has never been any question of our access to the report, or mine. I have explained that we have been reviewing it. I most certainly have seen it.

The question was how the member received that report, how the member for Dauphin received that report.

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

* * *

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, that was certainly out of order as you have so ruled, because it is none of the minister's concern where I got my report. What is of concern to her, of course, is what she is doing with the report, and we are asking her how much the government paid to have this report done.

*(1430)

She is responsible for the programs. If she does not know how much and did not bother to try to find out, it seems to me after this was raised, the first thing she should have asked is: How much did we pay for this report that we ignored?

So I am asking her what was the cost, and if she cannot give it to us today, just an undertaking that she will find out how much it cost. A simple phone call by one of her staff—she certainly has enough of them around. Ask one of them to go call.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, as I have said from the start, this report was commissioned by another department. It was commissioned at a time when these programs were the responsibility of another minister in another department, and the study itself was to look at these programs within the Department of Family Services.

Since the time of that report, these programs have been transferred to the Department of Education and Training. The Department of Education and Training now has to look at these programs to see how they fit, the function and the

role of these programs within our department, and that is exactly what we are doing at this time.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I asked the minister whether she will undertake to provide us with a cost of this program and a copy of the original complete report.

Mrs. Vodrey: I will remind the member again that the money expended for that report was money expended by the minister of another department, that it was not expended by the Department of Education and Training, and is not to be expended in this year under this year's Estimates which we are discussing now.

We are discussing now the Estimates of the Department of Education and Training, and we are discussing the spending for the coming year. That report was commissioned by the Department of Family Services, and it has come from their budget. So I have said to the member that that minister is the person he might like to ask that question of.

I have also understood from what the member has said, he has offered to provide copies of the report, so it seems to me he already has a copy of the report, and is now asking, could he have another one. Well, he already has one.

So I would say that he seems to have the information contained in the report. I am sure, as he has read that information, he is aware that it was constructed to look at those programs as they were part of Family Services, and they are now a part of the Department of Education and Training.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the minister's comments border on the absurd. She knows very well we have a copy. It says Phase I, Final Report, and was delivered November 5, '92. The Policy and Planning branch undertook this. It could have been Executive Council, or it could have been under the department. It could very well have been by Executive Council Policy and Planning.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the minister knows very well who undertook this report, what it cost, when it was done. We see a Phase I. I want to know where Phase II, Phase III are—if there are other phases, table the report—and if there is there any additional money flowing. If this was undertaken by a private consultant, as we understand it was, through Prairie Partnership or Prairie Research, that this in fact could mean that additional dollars are still flowing in final payments.

We want to know precisely when the dollars flowed on this report and what the cost of it was.

Mrs. Vodrey: There are no additional dollars flowing. There is no money flowing from the Department of Education and Training for any further parts to this report, any completion of this report. There has been no money expended by the Department of Education and Training, nor will there be on this report.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the minister is dismissing this report as if it is irrelevant, as if it is not important. There is certainly not going to be any money spent by this department on this report.

Well, I want to just tell her that one would assume that there would at least be some follow-up by the consultants with this department since they have assumed responsibility and since this major work was undertaken. What follow-up has there been by these consultants with the department?

Mrs. Vodrey: That evaluation was done, again I will remind the member, prior to the transfer of the program to the Department of Education and Training. We will be looking at those programs and any information that has come from the evaluation in the light of our overall economic strategy.

At this point, one of the important points has been that the Department of Education and Training now, through its creation of the new east branch, the Advanced Education and Skills Training, they are looking at the reorganization to make sure that the programs which we have brought into Education and Training are well integrated.

We can look clearly at the roles and what the function of these programs will be, and that is exactly the work that we are doing now.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, that is nonsense. I want to know whether the minister has received a Phase II report?

Mrs. Vodrey: The report that the member is speaking of, the whole report, is a report that is internal to government. That report has not been made public.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I never asked the minister whether it was made public or not. We have a part of that report. Obviously it is Phase I dealing with the Human Resources Opportunity Centre. I am asking the minister if she

has a Phase II report. Yes or no. It is not whether it should be made public; I am asking whether she has received a subsequent phase.

Mrs. Vodrey: One might wonder then how the member did acquire that report. The report is internal to government, and the report was not released.

Mr. Plohman: What is the point of the minister's question? To hide from giving this committee the facts? Providing open information to the committee that is studying—that are members of this Legislature studying her department and her irresponsibility in her department. What is she trying to do here? It is nothing but games. Now come clean with this committee. We are asking for a copy of the report. We are asking some very good information that is necessary for the public.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Order, please. I would ask the honourable member to choose his words carefully.

Mr. Plohman: Certainly.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: I am attempting to keep the decorum at a fairly level pace here, and some of the words the member is choosing are not quite appropriate for any committee that I chair. So I would ask the honourable member to choose them carefully.

The honourable minister, to reply.

* (1440)

Mrs. Vodrey: Again, I have said that this report was commissioned by another department, by another minister, for the use of another department. Now, these particular programs have been transferred to the Department of Education and Training. We will be looking through our reorganization of our AEST branch, at the function and the role of these programs.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, who paid for this report?

Mrs. Vodrey: The Department of Family Services paid for this report.

Mr. Plohman: Have you at least the kind of communication and organization that one would expect, that at least when a major division and branch of government is transferred to another department, that along with it came further documentation on this report, since it is fundamental to the future of this program?

Mrs. Vodrey: Again, the cost of the report was paid by another department. It was not paid from the money which is being made available and which we are discussing this year in the Department of Education and Training, the Estimates for the coming year.

What I think is important is that now we will have the opportunity to look at that report and see what parts of it apply to these programs as they are now a part of the Department of Education and Training.

Mr. Plohman: Has the minister read the report?

Mrs. Vodrey: I have certainly seen the report, had an opportunity to discuss the report with staff, and I am aware of the contents of the report.

Mr. Plohman: Has the minister read Phase II of the report?

Mrs. Vodrey: I will tell the member that we certainly have the full report, and the full report will be examined as these areas are being integrated into the Department of Education and Training.

Mr. Plohman: Can the minister tell us whether she understands the process of Estimates, that the critics, as a matter of course, delve into reports and happenings of the department over the past year, as well as what will happen in the future year, that this is a matter of tradition in the Estimates process?

Mrs. Vodrey: I certainly understand the process of Estimates, but as I have explained, these are the Estimates of the Department of Education and Training. This particular report was commissioned by the Department of Family Services.

Mr. Plohman: This section is the responsibility of this minister at this time. If the minister understands the process of Estimates as she says, she knows that it is standard practice that critics will ask the minister questions about reports that she is now responsible for that have been completed or are in process prior to Estimates. That is a standard traditional practice in the Committee of Supply and committee of Estimates.

Does the minister understand that to be the case?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, if the member wishes to talk about the report—and I do not know if he knows what is in the report. I have told him that I know the contents of the report.

The report was prepared when these programs were a part of another department. We will now

have to look at the report, but we will have to look at it in light of the function of these programs and the role of these programs in the Department of Education and Training.

Mr. Plohman: Well, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the minister knows the report was commissioned prior to the elimination of the Parkland Human Resources Centre. It was based on what was there at that time. Now part of that system is no longer there.

How can the minister review the report to gain any knowledge about what she is supposed to do in the future, if she has already trashed part of the program?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, there were very difficult budget decisions to be made on the part of the Department of Family Services when they were going through the budgetary process. Now that these programs have become housed in the Department of Education and Training, we will be looking at their function and future planning from within this department.

Mr. Plohman: Is the minister not aware that when a program is transferred to her department during the process of a year at any time, it is then her responsibility to answer any and all questions related to that program?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I am certainly prepared to answer questions regarding the content of the program and exactly what our plans are for this program, but there were decisions made in another department regarding the commissioning of a report and very difficult decisions made about this particular area, and then the area was transferred to the Department of Education and Training.

I have said to the member that I am certainly, with my staff, looking at the report, but if the member can understand, we have to look now at this report in light of the Department of Education and Training, not the Department of Family Services.

Mr. Plohman: Does the minister expect us to believe that she was not even consulted on this program, knowing of course that she was now going to be responsible for this program in her department, prior to those decisions being made?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chair, again, I am very happy to talk about the program as it is housed in the Department of Education and Training, but the

member knows that when he wishes to discuss the details of decision making that took place in another department, then it would be that minister who would answer those questions. What I can do is speak to the member about where we are going now. I understand that this program is of interest to him, and I understand that he would perhaps like to speak about what is happening with that program now.

Mr. Plohman: The minister should have a little more respect for this process and the committee than to play games in this particular case.

Point of Order

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Rural Development): Mr. Deputy Chair, I do not think it is fair—

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Order, please. Can I ask you to bring the mike up and start again?

Mr. Derkach: I do not think it is fair for any member around this table who is a member of the Legislature to be accusing another member of being dishonest or playing games or any of the kinds of comments that I am hearing from the member for Dauphin, and I think he should withdraw them and apologize for his conduct in this Chamber.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: The honourable member did not have a point of order at this time, but I will listen carefully to the words that are coming from the member.

* (1450)

* * *

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Deputy Chair, the minister must have more respect for this committee, so that she would not undertake to leave us with the impression that somehow we can go and ask this other minister who is no longer responsible for these programs about decisions that he made. He has already advised the committee that he is no longer responsible. We agree; therefore, he can not answer questions on it.

This minister is now responsible, and if she does not understand that, she should go to her Premier and her House leader and others and get briefed as to what her responsibility is. Clearly, it is a responsibility to this committee to answer questions about the program. We are not asking confidential questions. We are not asking what she knows.

We just want to know whether she was consulted prior to the decisions being made, because she was going to be responsible for these decisions, or did she not even know that?

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: I would like to inform all honourable members that, as rulings in this committee have stated, it is not up to the minister to answer any questions being put to them, and they are not required to answer any questions coming to them about other departments.

Mrs. Vodrey: Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Chair. Let me say to the member, so that there is absolutely no doubt on the record, my respect for this committee, which is why I have been making every effort to answer the questions that are put forward. However, I say again to the member that I am very pleased to answer questions about this particular program and will when he asks them, but he is asking questions that focus on a decision made at another time by another person when these particular programs were a part of another department. I am very happy to speak about these programs now that they are a part of the Department of Education. I most certainly was aware of the reorganization. We believe that the reorganization which was taking place will be very helpful to the people of Manitoba.

We are looking now at these programs in the light of the Department of Education and Training. The Department of Education and Training has a different role. It has a different mandate. It has a different function from the Department of Family Services. So we will be looking at all of these programs in the light of the work that we do in the Department of Education and Training.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, is the minister saying that this report, done when this branch was in another department or this program was in another department, is irrelevant to her considerations now as she is now responsible for it, for all aspects of the program and the report?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chair, as I have answered now probably 10 times or more, I and my department are looking carefully at this report; however, we recognize that this report was done for another department when the circumstances were different because these programs were offered within a department that had a different function from the Department of Education and Training.

Now that it has moved into the Department of Education and Training, I have advised the member that I am certainly aware of the contents of the report and staff are reviewing the report carefully, but we now have to review the report in the light of the mandate of the Department of Education and Training.

Mr. Plohman: Let the record show simply that the minister refused to provide evidence of the cost of this report to this committee.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I want to ask this minister: How much federal money was lost by the cuts that were made to the HROC this year?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chair, let me begin by saying: Let the record show that this minister is responsible for answering for the expenditures of the Department of Education and Training. I have done so for a great many hours and will continue to do so because we have a great number of programs still to cover. I am certainly more than prepared, have been more than prepared, and continue to be prepared to answer questions regarding the expenditures of the Department of Education and Training.

Regarding the question that the member has just asked, I am informed that it will take us a short time to calculate any figures which may be involved, but perhaps the member would like to ask another question and then I will give him that information from his first question when I have it available.

Mr. Plohman: This minister's credibility in this committee is certainly strained as a result of her refusal to provide any forthcoming information about this report. It is clear, and she has that information. I have to say that, as far as I am concerned, there is a credibility gap here, and the minister knows very well that this report was commissioned. Its first phase was made available in November of '92. That is only six months ago. It follows that the consultants would have met with staff to discuss the report following, that there would be follow up on that report and could very well be further—

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Order, please.

Point of Order

Mrs. Vodrey: The member says the report was made available. This report was an internal document. He has obviously some information that is internal. He is leading the committee to

believe that somehow this was a tabled report. It is not.

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

* * *

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the report was prepared November 5, '92, and we have a copy of the Phase I report. Whether the minister says it is confidential or it was internal, that is her problem. The fact is, it is available to the committee, and we have obtained a copy of that report. Now I am asking the minister: How much federal money was lost by the cuts? I also want to ask her: How many staff will provide the itinerant services from Brandon to the Parkland?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chair, as the member knows, in this particular program, when the provincial government spends money, we receive half of that money back from the federal government, and therefore the money which we will not be receiving on behalf of that expenditure is \$534,000.

Mr. Plohman: So the minister is saying that in making this decision the government has forgone \$534,000 federal dollars that were providing this service in the province.

Mrs. Vodrey: As I said to the member in my first answer, the provincial government would expend funds and receive a half back. Therefore, yes, we did not receive \$534,000. However, we did, in fact, by provincial expenditures then, not expend the total amount also.

Mr. Plohman: Just to clarify now, the \$534,000 is forgone federal dollars. Am I correct?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chair, that is correct.

Mr. Plohman: How much of this applies to the Human Resources Opportunity Centres in this line? None of this is New Careers?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chair, the savings as related through the centres—and that would be all of the centres—that is a saving that has occurred as a result of all of the centres, not just one.

* (1500)

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, could the minister tell us what the savings of dollars were to the government and to the federal government of the closure of the Parkland centre?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chair, on that particular HROC, the province would have spent \$325,000 and would have received \$162,500 from the federal government.

Mr. Plohman: Can the minister explain why these figures are not matched? Is it that some of the expenditures of the province are not eligible? Which are those, capital spending, or what part of it is not eligible for federal sharing?

Is the minister saying that the \$325,000 is the total and that the actual cost to the province is really \$162,000 and the federal is \$162,000? That is not what she said, but that way I could read it that is matched.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I believe that is what I said. The member is now correct. I did say that the provincial expenditure would be \$325,000 and we would receive back from the federal government \$162,500.

Mr. Plohman: The minister would be correct in saying the total cost to the province is \$162,500. That is the saving.

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

Mr. Plohman: I ask the minister, how many staff will be providing itinerant service from Brandon? I would like her to provide us with some statistical information about their current work load and the projected increase in the work load.

Mrs. Vodrey: The member asked the question of what expenditures would not be covered under the federal government's cost sharing. Under CAP and Part 3, the areas which would be excluded would be rental of provincial space, the provincial health and education tax. Then capital expenditures must be preapproved, so there would be some capital expenditures which may be accepted. There would be others which would not be accepted. I understand that sometimes capital expenditures such as a van might be accepted under some circumstances and perhaps not under other circumstances.

The number of staff who will be providing the itinerant service from Brandon is two.

Mr. Plohman: Two staff from Brandon are going to meet the needs of the Parkland, now the minister is saying. How many staff are there in Brandon?

Just to further clarify my questions on this, are these full-time staff allocated to the Parkland, or will

this be just part of their work load? I asked questions about work load earlier, so I want to know the total staff in Brandon, whether these two are assigned full time, what their work load is at the present time if they are not assigned full time, and how they will be sharing that with the Parkland.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chair, in the Brandon office, there are four staff assigned to the HROP program. There are 10.26 assigned to the HROC, and there are four assigned to the Single Parent Job Access.

There will be two of the staff who will assume, as part of their caseload, the Parklands area, and they will work as itinerants to the Parklands area. Yes, they are full-time staff. No, they are not assigned full time to the Parklands. They will, as I said, assume, as part of the caseload, work in the Parklands area.

There were, my information says, approximately 120 active cases transferred to the Westman area from the HROP regional office, but all the on-site participants will complete their programming and then some will be moving on to work experience.

So for the two staff who will be acting as itinerant, in terms of their caseload, it would increase by approximately 50 each. However, as I said to the member when we discussed this in the policy area, all staff will have to look at what their caseloads are, and they will have to look at the amount of time, including travel, which all of the consultants do, and then look at a division of work in caseload that is the most efficient. That is exactly the place where they are now, looking at the most efficient way to divide up the caseload. This is true for all people who offer clinical services.

* (1510)

Mr. Plohman: The minister said earlier there were four staff in Brandon on the HROC, and then she said there were 10.6. Can she just clarify that?

Mrs. Vodrey: I believe I said there were 14.26 totally in the HROC and the HROPs. Four are part of the HROPs; 10.26 are in the HROC programs.

Mr. Plohman: I still have not gotten that clear. The minister said four to the HROC and then 10.26 to the HROC programs. What is the difference?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chair, four to the Human Resources Opportunity Programs, the HROPs; and 10.26 to the Human Resources Opportunity Centres, the HROCs.

Mr. Plohman: Yes, okay, so four involved with the program and 10.26 with the centres. [interjection] You hear HROC and HROP and see if you know the difference between P and C, if you can distinguish.

I can use jargon for the minister, too. I want to be much more clear. She likes to play games, as I said earlier, and this is what we are getting here. [interjection] Well, there was mumbling. She can say, I am not playing games, but I will tell you that is what it is.

Point of Order

Mrs. Vodrey: Let the record show and I will check Hansard that I believe the member was using the acronym as well.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: The honourable minister does not have a point of order.

* * *

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, for the record, the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer) said, and I quote from the April 27 Estimates: "The member is possibly aware that we have transferred our training programs out of Family Services now to Education so that all of the training programs that were in this department and some that were in Labour are now part of the Education and Training department of government."

Then he went on to say: "I think, as the Minister of Education (Mrs. Vodrey) and the Department of Education look at this broad spectrum of people they have to serve and this continuum of service, they have to make decisions within there to decide where the dollars are best placed, but knowing that they will have to serve all manner of people who are seeking training and retraining in Education."

It was, he says, "a very difficult decision to downsize in this area, but there was a feeling that there were services that could be offered by other groups within that community and services that could be offered from the City of Brandon."

He said that they will serve it from Brandon, right, but he never indicated any answers about that report and other areas of the discussions, and I have not just found the exact line where he indicated that the Minister of Education would be the one to answer the questions in detail.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I want to get back to the discussion that we were having about staff. The

minister is saying something that is just incredible, really, for anyone to believe that two staff on a part-time basis are going to serve the whole Parkland in any way that was close to the service that was there before.

Is there any intake of additional people that are going to be served, or does the minister just see this playing out the string for the people that were already in the system, and once they have been serviced, the obligation from Brandon is over? How are they going to be involved with intake of all of those people who need this service in the future and are not yet part of that service?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, a couple of points. First of all, the member has had trouble with the term HROC and HROP. I will just remind him that they were given their names by his party when they were in government.

Then he speaks and has read into Hansard what the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer) said in his Estimates. That is exactly what I have been saying today, that we are looking to serve all members of the community and that we are certainly looking with the movement into the Department of Education and Training to provide the full spectrum of service of training for the people of Manitoba, including the Parkland area.

If the member did not happen to ask that particular minister about the report, then that was an opportunity missed with that minister. However, I have been prepared to talk about the report by saying that, yes, we have reviewed it, we are aware of the contents, and we are certainly looking at it, but we have to look at it now in the light of the Department of Education and Training. So with that in mind, I do not know if the member has any other way he would like to look at that report specifically but in the light of our department.

I would then say to the member that—and I think that this is really a very important part of the questioning—that we are looking to certainly maintain a presence in the Parkland area for this service, and we have maintained a presence in the Parkland area for this service. We have also maintained a presence in the Parkland area with the Single Parent Job Access Program. I think the member would agree that that, too, is an important program.

(Mr. Bob Rose, Acting Deputy Chairperson, in the Chair)

Overall—I know that we have discussed this throughout the course of Estimates—there were very difficult decisions to be made. We had to make some very difficult ones, but with those difficult decisions, we have attempted to make sure that there is a presence on behalf of these particular programs available to the people of the Parkland area. We have recognized, as I said, that there is a group in extreme need who are the single parents who require the Single Parent Job Access Program. That one was maintained.

I certainly am aware that there are, I understand, 70 cases for the Single Parent Job Access Program and a single staff does look after those particular clients. So caseloads are a difficult thing when we are dealing with people. I understand that, but we are doing our best to maintain the service. That is exactly what we have done.

Mr. Plohman: Well, Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, to go further on the discussions that took place, the Minister of Family Services said on a number of occasions that these had been transferred to the Department of Education and our critic for Family Services the member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale) said, and I quote: I think the focus in Education and Training probably makes sense.

I guess I was asking for clarification so that I know whether we should ask our questions here or in Education and Training Estimates. I would not want our critic to enter Education and Training and ask questions about the closure of the Dauphin centre and find out that the minister was not involved in the decision to do it. So I think it is probably best to ask the questions here.

He did ask the questions, and again the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer) continued to say that part of the program was transferred as part of the budgetary process, and our critic asked, was there any analysis specifically, analysis or study taken of whether or not to close the centre, what the pros and cons were, and, if so, what did that analysis show?

*(1520)

The minister simply said, well, part of those discussions, of course, that take place within the branch of government discuss the services that were available and analyze those services and requirements. One of the decisions we had to make was that we would downsize this area of the department as part of the transfer, focus that

training within the Department of Education and Training to provide training options in that particular area. However, he did not talk about the specific report that was brought in at that particular time.

So our critic did ask about whether there was any particular analysis, and he was not given an answer or any reference to that report. That is on the record, and so, clearly, when I am asking about the report, it is valid. It is appropriate at this present time. The report was something that was being used by this government to make decisions and was available. That report was very positive about the HROCs, about the Human Resources Opportunity Centres, and the HROPs, as the minister said, the Human Resources Opportunity Programs.

Now, I would like the minister to indicate to us whether she feels this will provide an adequate service to the Parkland to meet the needs of those vulnerable people who were served by the Parkland Human Resources Centre over the last 17 years, the service she is putting in place.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Acting Deputy Chair, we have reflected during the course of these Estimates on very difficult decisions, and they were difficult decisions, and as I can say to the member now, we have looked at trying to continue to provide a presence and a support in these areas, and we also maintained the Single Parent Job Access Program which appeared to have, certainly, one of the heavier caseloads. Because we recognized that, we attempted to make sure that service was still available.

Mr. Plohman: Again, it is basically a nonanswer. We have a nonprogram for the Parkland following this decision. We have no centre serving the Parkland.

We have no referral, no program either, no referral officers. There were two staff who were assigned in the Parkland for that, one in Swan River, one in Dauphin. Those two have been eliminated. So there is really no one referring people to the workers, these itinerant workers who are somehow supposed to provide these services on an itinerant basis. It is totally absurd and inadequate.

We have established, through the questioning process over the last couple of weeks, in the earlier round we had in Question Period and in this committee today, that the move is contrary to the

decentralization policy that the government has. It makes a mockery of decentralization.

We have established that the Human Resources Opportunity Centres were very efficient, that the report the government commissioned which the minister will not tell us about in terms of cost and other phases says that, in fact, the payback was \$16 for every one dollar spent by government.

We have established that the federal government was paying half of the dollars, half of the costs, and all the government had to do was have \$162,500 to provide this service in the Parkland. Throughout we have seen that itinerant services will not provide any level of service and comfort to the vulnerable people of the Parkland who require this service and who have depended on this service.

I have talked with many of them. It has changed their lives. It is cost-effective. It has kept them out of trouble. In many cases, it has turned their lives around and allowed them to lead productive lives. They have gone on to meaningful careers, productive citizens in society, no longer involved with the problems they had in the past, whether it be drug and alcohol abuse in some cases, trouble with the law. There are many costs to society of allowing these people to just continue to linger out there without any program for them.

The minister talks about a continuum. She has gutted the continuum. A major portion of that program was gone when that centre was eliminated. All these other agencies referred people to the Parkland Human Resources Centre. That is gone. So there is no continuum there. It is a continuum in the mind of the minister only. It is at a theoretical level. There is no practical continuum of training and support to these people.

I find it really mind boggling to think that this minister could justify this decision. She has the report. If it was not considered by the previous minister, then why does this minister not consider it, come back to Treasury Board and say, look, this is ridiculous. Look at the report. Look at the service. This is a mistake and I want it reversed. I am responsible for these services now. I want this reversed. I cannot put up with this decision. It does not make sense. It does not make economic sense. It is not cost-effective. It is not efficient. We get matching dollars on this program. It is being used efficiently—\$16 to one payback. What

is going on here? There is every justification to restore this program.

Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, I move that 16.4(g)(1) be reduced by \$150,000 taken from management salaries; and that this committee strongly urge the minister to consider using the resources saved to restore the Parkland Human Resources Opportunity Centre.

I want to speak to that motion, Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson.

Motion presented.

The Acting Deputy Chairperson (Mr. Rose): At this time, I will take the motion under advisement and be back with a ruling.

Does the member for Dauphin wish to continue with his comments on the motion? I am sorry, I understand at this time it is not debatable while it is taken under advisement. The motion is not before the committee until the ruling is returned.

Mr. Plohan: I just want to say, without speaking to that motion, that I have completed my line of questioning on this particular line, and I will await your ruling on the admissibility of that motion and pass to other members who may want to question on this particular line.

I would not be in favour of passing this section, though, until we have a ruling.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): I have a number of questions that I would like to get on the record on this particular line because of the importance of having the Human Resources Opportunity and other programs that are made available as successful as possible because of the number of individuals that it has an impact on.

I recall a case which I had brought up, and I am not too sure if I made reference to the case before to the Minister of Education but during the Question Period, where someone was on social assistance and we were trying to get that individual off the social assistance. I see these programs as opportunities, not necessarily that will cost government money, but will in fact save government money.

There were some concerns that I had with respect to, again, the Department of Family Services and some of the cutbacks that were done there and the impact of those cutbacks on this particular department and particularly, for example, the single-parent ACCESS program, because in

many cases they rely on services such as daycare facilities.

* (1530)

I guess maybe we will start off by asking the minister if in fact there has been an impact for individuals that are trying to upgrade, in particular the single parent out there, as a direct result of that particular cutback.

(Mr. Deputy Chairperson in the Chair)

Mrs. Vodrey: The member has made some statements about the value of these programs, and we have certainly maintained them. We have certainly made sure that there continued to be some funding for these programs. But I know, as we have been talking over the past few weeks, that there have been difficult decisions that had to be made across all departments of government, which did require us to look at the amount of money being spent, and did require us to make some very difficult decisions.

The member says, particularly in the area of child care. Again, any questions regarding the implications of the child care surcharge rate for the social assistance recipients are questions which do go to my colleague the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer), who would have the most detailed information regarding any impacts in that area.

However, I can say that, based on the provisions of the Canada-Manitoba agreement, the Single Parent Job Access Program and the Gateway program will continue to offset the total actual costs incurred by the social assistance recipients trainees for child care expenses.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, it is expected in this Single Parent Job Access Program that 701 individuals will benefit from it. How does that compare to previous years?

Mrs. Vodrey: I am advised that the Single Parent Job Access Program served approximately 730 single-parent social assistance recipients in the year '92-93, and the projection for '93-94 is 701 participants.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I would be interested in knowing in terms of—if we can just get a couple of years. Have we seen a gradual decline in individuals in this particular program?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chair, I have the numbers for '91-92, which are 754; then, as I gave

the member, '92-93 was 730; and we are looking at estimating 701 for '93-94.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I am wondering if the minister can indicate—these numbers that she has given, given that we are in a recession and one would think the demand for a program of this nature would in fact be increasing, is the minister believing that she is meeting the demands for a program of this nature, or are these using the argument of scarce resources that we have budgeted down to this line?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chair, though the member may expect an increased demand, what we have been looking for in these programs is a very good quality of training, and we have been looking to have the quality of the training somewhat more detailed, so we believe that there is perhaps even a greater value. Though the numbers may be slightly smaller, we believe the quality of the training is extremely good and should be helpful to those individuals.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I would have trusted in '91-92 the quality of training would have been extremely good at that point in time, too, that in fact the reason why we see the decrease in individuals in this program is because of the government's priorities. I would suggest to you that the government's priorities on this particular line are all mixed up. I would ask the minister if she believes enhancing programs of this nature does save money in the long term for Manitoban taxpayers.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chair, the money that is available I know is certainly helpful and beneficial to the individuals who are in the programs, as is the training very beneficial.

As the member knows, however, there have been very difficult decisions. Manitoba taxpayers have a threshold amount of money that they have available, as does government, so what we have been looking to do is to provide the best training and to provide the greatest amount of support and to continue these programs, because of the benefits. So I certainly do not believe that we are arguing the benefits of this particular program. However, I can say that in looking at providing the best program, we do not have as many people involved within the program as previously and there is not an endless supply of money which would

continue to allow us to pour more and more additional dollars in to this particular program.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, of the 701 individuals, for example, for the upcoming fiscal year, from what I understand virtually 100 percent of them would be on some form of social assistance or another. Is that not correct?

* (1540)

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I am informed that for the participants, income security would provide a needs assessment so individuals would receive the income security or social assistance as the need is determined. However, all participants in the program do receive a minimum wage or a training wage to assist them.

When we have been speaking about the quality of the programs just previously and under the Skills Training component of the Single Parent Job Access, specific vocational training programs are developed and delivered. They are developed and delivered in conjunction with public and private training institutions in areas which offer opportunities for employment and correspond to the career interests of the individual.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, again, I would go back to the question of cost efficiency and saving taxpayers' dollars. In fact, this is what this government talks about in terms of wanting to be able to do in the programs that are out there is to save money.

I am wondering if the minister could tell me, if you had a program that instead of decreasing but you increased at this particular area of expenditures, would it not save the government money not only in terms of the long term, but also the short term? Is that not a fair assessment? By attempting to get individuals who are predominantly receiving some form of social assistance or another and providing them the skills and assisting them in getting into the workforce, that is not going to cost governments money. In fact, in the long term, I would argue it would save government a considerable amount of tax dollars.

Mrs. Vodrey: That is exactly the goal of our reorganization, is that under our reorganization, we want to make available to Manitobans the greatest number of opportunities for those Manitobans to develop the skills they require.

So as we go through the budget lines in this area, the member will see that there has been significant

dollars devoted in this whole skills training area, and as I have said when we discussed the literacy portion, the spectrum goes from the literacy programs which are community-based right through to the colleges and universities and other skills training opportunities.

For many individuals, they do require literacy training and numeracy training as a starting point, and for those programs to be offered within an individual's community is really a very helpful start. Then there are, as we have discussed, many kinds of programs in between.

Chairperson's Ruling

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Order, please. The honourable member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Rose), who was acting as Chairperson at the time, took under advisement a motion that was moved by the honourable member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman). I have found that the motion is in order.

* * *

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: It has been moved by the honourable member for Dauphin that line 16.4(g)(1) be reduced by \$150,000 from management salaries and that this committee strongly urge the minister to consider using the resources saved to restore the Parkland Human Resources Opportunity Centre.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, as I indicated during the questioning and prior to the motion I made in this House, it is clear that during the shuffle of this important program from the Department of Family Services to the Department of Education, there was a critical change in that program. The critical change was the elimination, the virtual elimination of service to the Parkland region, both from the program and the centre point of view.

The Human Resources Opportunity Centre and the Human Resources Opportunity Program has been in place for some 17 years in the Dauphin and Parkland region. It has served over that time to help people with little hope in life, many times rejected, very low self-esteem, with no future, caught in a syndrome of hopelessness and despair, many times dependent on drugs, involved in crime, dependent on other chemical abuse, and they had their lives turned around.

I have talked to these people, and I would implore each of the members around this table to

talk to people who have gone through those programs to understand the human dimension of this kind of a decision, a decision for \$162,000 that eliminates a program that serves a couple hundred individuals, clients, in the Parkland region every year over that time. That adds up to thousands of individuals who have been helped.

They are not 100 percent successful, but in at least 50 percent of the cases and more, they are successful in reversing this terrible syndrome of despair and turning around their lives. We talked to those people about that, and I am saying to the members of this committee, this is an opportunity to take money from management services and provide it where it is more important, because 50 percent of the dollars, half the dollars, are going to come from the federal government. You get a \$16 payback for every \$1 spent. You forget about the politics of hammering the Parkland.

Surely, the member for Ste. Rose (Mr. Cummings) and the member for Roblin-Russell (Mr. Derkach) should have been standing up for the Parkland, whether that centre was located in Dauphin or Roblin or Swan River or Ste. Rose, wherever. It was serving the Parkland. I say this has been a terrible omission. They would have to be the first to admit it. They do not even have to take my word for it. They can talk to the people there. They know it, and they should stand up and support this motion which would see a reversal of this decision that took place, prior to this minister assuming control, under the Department of Family Services or jointly with that transfer.

The minister will not talk about the evaluations that were done, the report that was commissioned, about the cost of that report, how much the government spent to put in place an analysis that showed very positively that this program was needed, that the demand for the program was expanding actually. There was a tremendous need for this program, and it was so cost-effective, more than any other program I have seen in terms of evaluation at 16 to one.

There is no rationale. The minister cannot explain the rationale. She talks about itinerant service just down the road here. Well, it is a hundred miles away, and there is a park in between. I explained that when we discussed this earlier. In slippery conditions, you do not talk about driving in miles there. You talk about driving in

hours. Otherwise you go around the park and it is much further.

Those people cannot be expected to relocate. Single parents, for example—the minister keeps talking about Single Parent Job Access. These single parents are going to take their kids and have to move to Brandon or The Pas, to the nearest centres now? It is totally ridiculous, and the member for La Verendrye (Mr. Sveinson) should think about this, instead of trying to make some witty comments that show, in fact, he has none.

* (1550)

The fact is this program has been a tremendous support for the Parkland area, a major area in this province. We have representatives on this government. Surely you would look at supporting this motion. It is in order. It takes money from management and it puts it into the program, restores the program—an opportunity here to restore that program.

I ask for your support in turning around, reversing, a terrible mistake at best. I mean, we can characterize it as a mistake during the shuffle of these programs from one department to another. There is certainly no rationale for it. No one has given any evidence. This minister cannot justify it. She is talking about two staff who will be part time in the Parkland to provide some counselling. Where are they going to refer these people? As I said, Brandon and The Pas. It makes no sense.

Let us make a smart decision on the basis of the money that is involved here that will help so many people and bring some good news to those people. It is not for me that I am asking this. It is not for any of us. It is for the people who need this service.

The member for Roblin-Russell (Mr. Derkach) and the member for Ste. Rose (Mr. Cummings), surely, who represent this area of the province that was being served by this program should not fall for this line about itinerant services from Brandon. Where is the commitment to decentralization here? What kind of nonsense. What a mockery of that program if we do not turn this around.

I leave it there, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, and I move that the question be put.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: The member has moved that the question be put.

All those in favour of the question being put, say yea.

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

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

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: I say the Nays have it.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I am happy to take a little bit of time to speak on this motion, because I think that I have, over the course of this discussion, spoken about the importance of skills training to Manitobans, and certainly to all Manitobans, including the Manitobans who live in the Parkland area.

When I look at, first of all, the kinds of Manitobans who might take part in this kind of a program, I understand they are Manitobans who, for some reason and perhaps for many reasons, have had some difficulty in receiving training or receiving employment. The reasons for that may be many.

I also understand that when individuals wish to take part in a training program, it does take them some time to prepare themselves and also to believe that they have the support they need to actually enter into the training program. Because of that, we also recognize that one single training program is not necessarily the only or the correct training program for those individuals. We recognize there needs to be a number of options for individuals to take part in training programs.

The member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) has focused on a single training program as the one and only program, and his emphasis seems to indicate that all individuals should take part in this program and this program only. What I would like to say to him is that I believe people need a series of opportunities, and that was one of the reasons why this particular set of programs was moved into the Department of Education and Training.

In the past, these programs were segregated. They were in the Department of Family Services, and that was very helpful. The report the member spoke about was done for the Department of Family Services, but there has been a recognition in the skills training area that people do need the opportunity for a series of choices. The opportunity to provide those choices comes as we move these particular sets of programs into the Department of Education and Training.

I have spoken during the course of this discussion about the spectrum of programming which is now available. Individuals are no longer required to look only at one type of program, one kind of program, but they are now able to look at a series of programs. We believe that by looking at a number of different programs, they will be able to make the choices that are really most advantageous for them.

I have spoken about the kinds of programs that individuals might like to take advantage of. I have spoken about them from the literacy end, which provide the very basics in education, those skills required in literacy and in numeracy for individuals to then move on into other kinds of programming.

Now that these programs are integrated within the Department of Education and Training, we will be able to look at and help Manitobans look at, again, the whole range of programs, and, I believe, find the program that is best suited for that individual. I would say to the member, again, he has had trouble with the whole concept of choice in a number of different areas, and we are saying now we think it is important for individuals to be able to look at a number of different areas.

We also think it is important to be able to make sure that individuals such as single parents have the opportunity for the Single Parent Job Access Program, and that particular program has been maintained in the Parkland area. I did speak about the caseload that the Single Parent Job Access Program has, and the Single Parent Job Access Program, because of the caseload, was maintained there, and we look for that program to continue to support people in the Parkland area.

We have also said that for individuals who still require the services offered through the HROCs and the HROPs, we will provide an itinerant service for those individuals, that there will still be a presence of this kind of training program that is available in the Parkland area.

So I just want to put to rest some of the issues the member has raised, and, finally, in the area of evaluation, I would just like to remind the member again that this evaluation was commissioned when these programs were a part of the Department of Family Services, and because of that, the whole paper was prepared to integrate them into that particular department.

Now these programs are in the Department of Education and Training, so we have to look at that evaluation, and with that evaluation, we have to see how it applies to the mandate of the Department of Education and Training.

So, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I would definitely not support the motion of the member for Dauphin.

Mr. Derkach: I would like to address this whole area, as well as the motion that has been put before this committee by the member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman).

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I would have to support the Minister of Education in terms of the direction she has taken with regard to providing all Manitobans with education and training opportunities in our province. Indeed, I would have to say the programs that are being offered by the Department of Education and Training today in terms of retraining individuals across this province are second to none. Many other jurisdictions can learn a lot of lessons from the direction this government has taken with regard to training and retraining citizens in all areas of our province.

The government moved to consolidate programs from various departments into the Department of Education for the purpose of efficiency and effectiveness, indeed trying to limit the number of duplications that occur in government from time to time.

When we took government in 1988, I think it was very evident that there was no co-ordination of the kinds of programs that were being offered throughout government, and that was typical of the approach that was taken by the former administration.

I think that taxpayers in this province would expect that we would conduct our affairs in an effective and efficient manner so that we do not duplicate services, so that we do not try to have several departments offering similar kinds of programs. So for that reason, these programs were consolidated within the Department of Education and Training. It does give a focal point to training within one department, and certainly clients then know they can address their concerns with that department when it comes to Education and Training.

* (1600)

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I think the minister, through this course of Estimates review, has been

very successful in pointing out that this department is indeed addressing the needs of Manitobans in terms of education programs, literacy programs, training programs for those who require them.

I could use the example of Workforce 2000 and indicate to you that here is a new program that was developed by this department that has indeed been an extremely successful one. Even in a time when I was Minister of Education and Training, there were provinces that were looking at this program with some envy, because they recognized how important, innovative and effective this program was. As the Minister of Education and Training has reported, some 54,000 Manitobans have taken advantage of this program since its inception.

Now, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) has focused on a program within his particular town. He has made a very blatant political stance on this issue and his rhetoric, of course, rings hollow, because there are opportunities in the Parkland. I am an MLA who represents that area, as well, and I can tell you there are many and varied opportunities in the Parkland area.

I could just identify a couple of opportunities that are now available which have not been in the past. Again, I indicate to the member that, yes, we had a Parkland campus at the time when the former administration was in government. Today, we have expanded those opportunities to people who do not merely live in Dauphin but live in surrounding areas. We have centres outside of the Dauphin area, in many areas, where they are offering opportunities for training, for education to all members of our society and, indeed, there are choices.

I allude again to the FYDE program, the First Year Distance Education Program. There was no such program in the Dauphin area when we took government. Today, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, we have a very successful First Year Distance Education Program operating in the Dauphin community.

I could speak about the native education component of the Department of Education and Training.

When we decentralized positions from Education, we ensured that the Dauphin area would receive some recognition for the kinds of people that live within that area. It is for that reason

that we moved personnel from Winnipeg to Dauphin so that people who need the services of the Native Education Branch could be served in that area.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I think there were eight positions decentralized to Dauphin at that time. I would invite the member for Dauphin to take the time to walk into that Native Education office and to look at the kinds of programming and opportunities that are available to citizens of Dauphin and the surrounding area.

Point of Order

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, on a point of order, the Minister of Rural Development has just said that he decentralized eight positions to the Parkland. There are only three people working right now. There is one vacancy. What is he talking about? There are only three staff.

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

* * *

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, let not the member for Dauphin try to insinuate, by the remarks that he puts on the table, that indeed there has been no recognition of the needs of the people in the Parkland area, because he is absolutely wrong.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I also would like to indicate that within that Parkland area which I represent and in the entire area there are opportunities today in education that have never been available in that area before. People in that area understand that.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I have to say also that people in that area understand that governments have to take control of their spending habits. Indeed, we would like to be able to do more, but there is one reason why we cannot do more, and that reason is because of that enormous debt that was left to this government and to the people of this province by the administration of the New Democrats under the Pawley administration. Whether we like it or not, that is why we are forced to make some very difficult decisions. Those decisions are not just made in one department. Those decisions have to be made across the broad range of departments that exist in government.

The member for Dauphin has to take some responsibility for that enormous debt that this province faces, because he was the member who was the Minister of Highways at the time who constructed a bridge to nowhere in Selkirk, who spent over \$20 million on a bridge which really went nowhere and there were no roads to. That is the kind of expenditure that has caused us to make the decisions that we are making right now.

It goes further. We could talk about the MTX expenditure of \$27 million lost to Saudi Arabia, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, by the former administration, which the member for Dauphin was a minister of and sat around the cabinet table making decisions. Today, unfortunately, Manitobans across this province have to endure that kind of difficulty because of those decisions that were made during that time.

Yes, we have had to make some very difficult decisions. They have not been easy. They have impacted on Manitobans from the north right down to the south. Indeed, we have had to look at how we can deliver services in more effective ways.

When you look at this particular program that the member for Dauphin speaks about, the Minister of Education and Training has indicated very clearly that within the scope of programs in the Department of Education and Training they will look after the needs of the people in that Parkland area by simply reorganizing the delivery of those services from within the department.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the member for Dauphin cannot understand that, because his method of addressing problems was to tax the people of this province and continue spending inappropriately. It was tax and spend, tax and spend. That is the approach the New Democrats have taken. That is why today, or just in the last few days, we have witnessed the kind of demise of the New Democrats in Alberta. They have gone from 16 members in Alberta to zero, and that is caused by the old-think of New Democrats across this land. That is the kind of old-think that this member professes. So he sits in his chair, as critic of Education, and the only things he can really come up with as solutions are to tax the Manitoba people more, spend more and continue with that old rhetoric and that old way of thinking that New Democrats have been accustomed to.

I have to support the Minister of Education and Training wholeheartedly in that she has taken a new approach to education and training in this province. She has taken a fresh look at the needs of Manitobans, and she will deliver programs to Manitobans, whether they are in the south part of this province or the north part of this province, and will deliver them effectively. So I am completely opposed, and I am astonished that the member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) would be so narrow minded as to bring this kind of motion forward in this committee.

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Mr. Deputy Chairperson, it is a pleasure to engage in the debate. I do not want to hold an element of surprise for the committee. I will go right to suggest that I do strongly support the minister and am totally opposed to the motion.

* (1610)

When those of us in Treasury Board had to involve ourselves in these very, very difficult decisions, not the least of which was to pass judgment ultimately on the Human Resources Opportunity Centres, not only in Parkland but indeed elsewhere, I must tell you that it was an agonizing decision. But, just indeed as the first cousins and/or sisters and brothers of the NDP party, particularly the Choices group, said, look, a government at times has to make hard, hard choices, I am here to tell you that we had to make a very hard choice, and we did.

We looked at all of the training area. We sensed there was some overlap and duplication. We sensed there were some areas that had to be addressed. So we went to work, indeed as the taxpayers of this province would want us to do, acknowledging that no program of government should ever be immune from scrutiny, that there is not a program anywhere in government that should not be challenged from time to time.

We have been watching carefully the development of this program, bearing in mind that it provided some degree of social service. We were mindful of that, that every one of our programs does within the social field, and there is no argument there. But the reality is it was time to make choices. So, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, evaluations were done.

Let me say, and I will go a little bit further than the Minister of Education, who probably will not

appreciate me saying so, but what do you do when you are also part of decisions of government, which, at this point in time, is hiring very few people in the public employ of government and in Crowns?

One has to ask the question of themselves: To what extent are you providing some false hope? When one traces the history of individuals who were training under this particular program, almost inevitably they were employed by some arm of government.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, we have a situation, then, where government was reducing the total number employed within the public sector, still training—

An Honourable Member: Some rationale.

Mr. Manness: Well, I did not say it was the rationale. I said it was an element that was brought to bear in the decision, taking into account the hard choices that we have to make.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the member can rail on and on, and he can say, well, we would take a different choice. But, of course, he can never ever—[interjection] Well, I do not know; the member says, political. Every program that is now in place impacts somehow on Manitobans. I would think we were elected to govern and to make choices with respect to all Manitobans.

If he wants to move on to the decentralization issue, there is only one government in Canada that has ever delivered on the whole decentralization program, and that is the Province of Manitoba. It is heralded far and wide as the proper format to take. It is the example of a model of decentralization anywhere in Canada.

Well, of course, what we did not do is what the NDP government in Ontario did. The first thing they did is that they cancelled the whole decentralization program. So, at least, we have been successful in about 95 percent, or 90-95 percent of the program.

But I digress, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, and want to indicate that the choice around this particular centre was not an easy one to make. It was not the only one; others were made, too.

If the member—I do not know whether or not he sat on Treasury Board of the former government—but if he did, he would realize that from time to time when you are forced with these most difficult decisions, you have to decide whether

to gradually choke off a program, or whether or not you ultimately dismantle it hard and then begin to rebuild.

In essence, that is what we tried to do in the training area, and why we consolidated the best of the programs that we could afford under the leadership of the Department of Education and Training.

It is not rhetoric; it is the way you have to govern. It is the way, indeed, that Premier Rae and Michael Decter, who is well known to the member opposite, that is the way they are having to govern. So the member can talk about contingency plans, but contingency plans are well built in, and they will be given greater focus over the years.

But at times you have to dismantle what you have in place and begin to rebuild from there. The member would not understand that, because he could care less of the fact that the province has a collective debt of around—[interjection] No, it is around \$14 billion, your debt. [interjection] No, around \$14 billion that the member talks about.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, in conclusion, I say to you that we make no apology for the decision, bearing in mind that it was a tough decision to have to make. Were money growing on trees, as the NDP used to spend it as if it were growing on trees, I am here to tell you that we had no other choice but to look at all elements of not only Education, not only of all the departments, but specifically in Education in the area of training. We have had to make this decision.

Probably, if the member wants to take his wrath out on anybody, maybe he would prefer to take it out on somebody like myself or other members of Treasury Board, but he does not have the courage to do that. [interjection] We wonder at times who is the critic for anything over at the NDP. They have it so mixed up and messed up.

Mr. Plohman: If you want to move to this portfolio, we will have some fun with you.

Mr. Manness: Well, John has had—but you see, this is the problem. Since the member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) has come into government, he has too much fun at his job. If he would take it a little more seriously and try to bring a little more reason to some of the motions he brings down, I think it would be better for everybody.

So, with those few words, I know there are other members that will want to address this motion

because, indeed, there is an awful lot that needs to be said about this particular issue and this motion in defence of our minister and in defence of our government.

Hon. James Downey (Minister of Northern Affairs): Mr. Deputy Chairperson, one has to take into consideration what really has been going on over the past many hours within the debate of the Estimates of the Department of Education and to again see the kind of what I would call less than responsible action by the critic and member for Dauphin.

I have sat in to hear a considerable amount of debate, and I think there have been some reasonable questions placed to the minister and to the department. I say that genuinely. I think there has been a desire to get some reasonable information. There has as well been, though, some, what I would say, activity which is less than parliamentary and less than democratic in the way in which the member has approached the Estimates—information and tactics which I have never seen the like of in the many years that I have been here.

I think really what it calls into question how effective the use of time we are using of the taxpayers' money to accomplish the end goal of getting information that is adequate so that the public can understand how the monies are being expended, to explain to the public how the program delivery is taking place, how it fits in with the overall government policies that we have been elected to administer.

For the member opposite to introduce a resolution of this nature, which takes time to debate—I can tell you that without question the government stands fully in support of the Minister of Education (Mrs. Vodrey) and the decisions that she has made. There is not any question this is a policy of government that we all have fully endorsed and will continue to support.

But, when one looks, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, at the number of staff that the Minister of Education has had in these Estimates for the number of many weeks—[interjection] Yes, she has to because I have sat here and listened to the members opposite going all over the map on the Estimates. We would pass lines in the Estimate book, and then they would go back to debate certain issues.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, to fully cover adequately the information that the members want, the minister has been very conscious of that and has had staff on stand-by. That is a major cost to the taxpayers of this province to have the numbers of people sit in committee to assist in getting these Estimates through.

* (1620)

I say that it is extremely irresponsible on behalf of the member for Dauphin to bring a resolution like this forward, which is only game playing and grandstanding to try and raise his own profile. I will tell the people of Dauphin—[interjection] I will tell the people of Dauphin if the member knows where it is, the absentee MLA for Dauphin. Yes, it will.

But, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the point is that we are taking a lot of time to debate the Estimates of the Department of Education. Education is extremely important, but I can tell you the position in which this government found itself in after how many years of New Democratic governing forced the kinds of decisions upon us that have had to be made, not easy decisions. It is always easy to spend money and give additional programming, and it is easier for the staff.

I can tell you and I commend the staff, they have had to make tough decisions internally to present these kinds of budgets. The minister has had to make tough decisions. School boards have to make tough decisions. We have all had to make tough decisions.

So I regret that this is the attitude that the member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) brings to this committee as if he does not have a responsible role to play in trying to resolve the problems—may not have been totally his responsibility, but it is a societal problem that we all have to deal with.

If the member would take time to read the member for The Maples (Mr. Cheema), who made the decision yesterday to no longer continue in the Legislative Assembly, I think it would do him some good if he read the comments of the member for The Maples. He continually said he wanted to add in a positive way to the legislative process and to dealing with the people of Manitoba.

This is a very negative approach. This whole time in the Education department Estimates had been absolutely and totally irresponsible as far as the member for Dauphin is concerned. Not all members, I say that there has been some

constructive questions come from some of the members, but I can tell you to bring this kind of resolution forward, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, is absolutely, I think, totally time wasting.

Again, to keep going back and forth all over the Estimate book as the member has done, has forced staff to sit here, to cost the taxpayers' money, and I hope at the end of the day that the member comes clean with the taxpayers and tells them precisely why he is doing this. It is to raise his own political profile.

So I want to leave it clearly on the record that I fully support the minister and the Department of Education in the decisions that they have made.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I would like to add a few words, and I want to start off by commenting that I was listening quite attentively in terms of what the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) was saying in terms of the potential for duplication and things of this nature and priorities—wonderful words. If, in fact, that was what the Minister of Education (Mrs. Vodrey) was doing, she might actually have an argument for some of the things that she has actually done in this portion of the budget.

Prior to while the motion was being ruled upon or the Deputy Chairperson was seeking advice, we were asking questions with respect to the Single Parent Job Access and I just started to get—in terms of other programs, I wanted to comment on the New Careers.

If you look at it, and if it is a question of government trying to avoid duplication to try to be fair and so forth, then one has to question why it is that each and every one of those areas and lines have in fact had a substantial decrease. If in fact there is duplication, and the government is still concerned and was wanting to address the needs of the skill shortages and assist in getting individuals off of social assistance, at the very least we would have seen some sort of indication in terms of priorities on some of the programs that are out there that are successful in this particular area, but we did not see that.

You know, you can go right down through New Careers to Special Employment Programs such as the Single Parent Job Access, the Human Resources Opportunity Centre, which the member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohma) is talking about, and it is a straight cut.

My opinion on this is that the Minister of Education was told this is how much money we have to save and then applied it to all of the different areas. That is not deciding or picking out priorities or which programs are more effective than others and things of this nature—[interjection]

Well, to the former Minister of Education, I would have liked to think that if I was given direction from a Minister of Finance, or from the Premier, that you have to save so much money in the department, one of the things one would do would be to evaluate the programs and the worthiness of each and every program and establish priorities, and the Minister of Education says that is exactly what happened.

If you take a look at the cuts, as I say, it is virtually straight across board on all of the different areas in which we are talking about on this particular line. That is not establishing priorities. I will attempt, at least once we have had the vote on this particular motion, to try and get answers from the minister that would give some sort of an indication in terms of the programs that are more successful. [interjection]

We have given very positive suggestions, things like literacy retraining. If in fact you take a look at some other provinces, in particular the Province of New Brunswick, what they have done is they have spent less money, government dollars, on literacy training than the Province of Manitoba does. Yet they have, I believe, something in the neighbourhood of 2,700 graduates of sorts. It is more community based. They get the private sector more involved. These are the types of training programs—under CareerStart. Instead of cutting back, the minister could have enhanced, whether it is on this particular line or the question of literacy, to look for joint ventures with the private sector and so forth.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, no doubt the Minister of Education and I will have ample opportunity, if not during this Estimates process, in the future to talk about the whole issue of literacy.

But I know, in terms of that issue, the minister herself was on the Illiteracy Task Force for the province of Manitoba and disappointed in a sense that she has not really come to grips with coming up or developing a program that would be able to get individuals off social assistance and so forth.

So in looking at this, and I would conclude by saying that the government did not attempt to prioritize the different areas of government expenditures, in particular in the Department of Education, that it was more of a straight cut on the different programs.

I think it is very shortsighted thinking in terms of, if you plan education for the future, you would see that it is more in the public's best interest to invest in Manitobans, and this is a wonderful area in which we can invest in Manitobans because it is a direct way of getting individuals off of social assistance and into the workforce so they become more productive.

This is why it is most unfortunate that the Minister of Education would give this area of the budget such a low priority, and I would encourage the minister that she should in fact be going back to Treasury Board, that she gave in too easily on this particular area, and fighting for dollars where the public dollars, not only in the short term but also in the long term, will in fact be saved. And you are going to be contributing that much more in a positive way to society as a whole.

* (1630)

Hon. Harold Gillehammer (Minister of Family Services): Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I note that there are a number of other speakers who want to get their comments on the record, so I will be reasonably brief. I am reminded of the comments by the Leader of the NDP Party in Manitoba (Mr. Doer) when, at the beginning of the Estimates process, he referenced that government has many, many tough decisions to make.

I know that, in the Estimates for Family Services, I challenged the numerous critics, who drifted in, to indicate what tough decisions they would make in terms of Family Services, and I have yet to hear any concrete suggestions.

Not only the Leader of the NDP in Manitoba recognizes that, but I am reminded of the words of the Premier of Saskatchewan who talked about the easy time it was to add programs during the 1970s and 1980s, and how difficult it was, especially for an NDP Premier, now to have to disassemble some of those programs that were put in place. [interjection]

Well, I was hoping the member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohma) would be reasonably well behaved. We have watched his bullyboy tactics in here for the

last two months. I cannot believe the degree of disrespect he shows for colleagues here in the Legislature. I would suspect that he would learn something by listening to the comments that are being put on the record by other members and give some balance to the debate that goes on here.

But I suspect that is a little out of character for him, and that while sometimes we do have high expectations for him, I would challenge him to meet those expectations.

I note today that he carries a road map around with him. I know he does not get back to Dauphin very often, but I would have suspected that he did not need a road map to find his way there. In fact, I wonder if it is a recent map or is it the one that has the bridge on it in Selkirk. It was a little bit tattered. It was probably the one with his picture on it.

At any rate, governments all over Canada are recognizing that very, very difficult decisions have to be made, and some of the decisions that were made, as the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) has recently said, were not easy to arrive at. These are decisions that do have an impact, but we are faced with declining revenues and, of course, the escalation of the debt that was brought on during the 1970s and '80s that has that impact of taking over \$550 million out of our budget each year, as the first call on that debt is the payment of interest on it.

I can tell members of the committee that governments across this country, and I had the opportunity to meet with social service ministers recently, are struggling with training programs and what is the best way to get Canadians back to work. Of course, within that large group of unemployed people, in other provinces as well as here, the scarce resources that we have have to be targeted to put in place the best programming that we can. I can tell you from my experience with programs like the Single Parent Job Access and the GATEWAY program which have been left in place, and some other special programming, these were the most successful programs in taking social allowance recipients off the rolls after some appropriate training and putting them back into the workforce.

Now the restructuring of government in Manitoba has taken all of the training programs, whether they be in Family Services or Labour or other places, and put them into the Department of Education so

that a clear focus can be given on those people who are unemployed here in Manitoba. I can tell you that now all of those training programs are within that department, and the programs that have been successful in the past can be enhanced, and the tremendous job of retraining people who have been out of the workforce for some time will be handled by that one department.

I can tell you that we are looking carefully at experiments that are taking place in New Brunswick and British Columbia where social allowance recipients are still accessing social allowance, but special funding has been put in place by the federal government whereby an actual wage subsidy can be paid to those people who are in training as a transition from that world of unemployment to the world of work.

While we have targeted substantial resources, some \$12 million in recent years to fund training programs for social allowance recipients, that is only a small portion of the number of people out there who are at this time needing training and retraining. I commend the minister for some of the skills training initiatives that have taken place and the previous minister for making rural Manitobans, making programs available to them through the expansion of the campus in Dauphin and the ability through Distance Education to provide in rural Manitoba some of the education programs which not only our young people but unemployed people require in fact they are going to get back into the world of work.

I would like to also comment on the recent conversion of members of the NDP to be proponents and fans of decentralization. I recall, when this initiative was first brought forward by our government in 1988 and '89, the critics in the NDP were totally opposed to any decentralization of programming into rural Manitoba, and it reflected the fact that given their urban base historically, they had little regard for the fact that jobs were required in rural Manitoba.

Through the leadership of a number of ministers in this government, many, many jobs have been decentralized to rural Manitoba. I am pleased that now members of other parties see this as a very positive step.

So, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, with those few comments, I want to be sure that members of the committee realize that I fully support the initiatives

that the minister has taken within the Department of Education. I can see, through a number of the initiatives that are underway at this time, that more focus will be given to this whole area of training and retraining.

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment): I have been quietly observing the member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) and the frantic efforts that he is making in order to try and show that he is protecting his base in Dauphin, and attempting, at the same time, to reflect on those of us who also represent portions of Parkland. It is quite disappointing that he has taken the approach he has, because frankly, we have been asked several times this afternoon about prioritization and how the Department of Education has had to deal with some very difficult economic times.

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

Unfortunately, nobody, other than those on the government side of the House, seemed to be willing to talk about some of the realities that we are facing today. [interjection] Well, the member says, fine from within, but one of the things that he has consistently overlooked is, it is very easy to talk about projects in isolation, but you, at the same time, have to be talking about what are the priorities and what are the areas of responsibility that government can best undertake to serve the public and give them the level of service in a manner that is suitable and with the best use of the dollars that are available.

It seems to me that we have to face the harsh reality of where the economy of Manitoba has gone. It has gone into the proverbial tank as a result of a very heavy debt load, but there are a number of other things that are changing across this country, that we need to put Manitoba in perspective in relationship to the programs that have been referenced across the country. If the member wishes to focus on one area, he is totally ignoring all of the initiatives that the Department of Education has had to undertake.

I think I would like to be very clear about commending the Department of Education and the number of changes that they have had to undertake. They have been under considerable pressure, not just financial pressure, but the pressures of reacting to probably some changes that needed to be considered in a longer time

frame. But we no longer have a long time frame to look at some of these rather critical and important changes. The public is expecting results, and they are not expecting us to simply continue to do business the way we did before, unless we are prepared to show that that is only way.

I think the member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) and others recognize that looking at the way we deliver programs to the public these days is shifting, that there are a lot of different approaches that can be used. There are some people in the department who have brought forward some very good ideas and have dealt with what in some cases might have been considered by those who are less willing to leap into the cause as a bit of a body blow.

* (1640)

The fact is that we have to prioritize the programs and will put people in the best position to react to the economy that they are in. They are upgrading their skills and putting them into opportunities that will allow their future to be a little bit brighter. For those who consider themselves educationally disadvantaged, it is part of the process that we need to address, and the amalgamation of the programs between the two departments was not something that was undertaken very lightly. I recall a lot of the discussion that occurred. If anyone around this table or anywhere else thinks there was not a lot of agonizing and a lot of concern that was expressed during the discussion about where these programs and where these dollars might go, then they thoroughly underestimate the concern and the level of agony that the Minister of Education and the rest of us went through in trying to determine some of the best areas to allocate what are very hard to come by dollars these days.

Manitoba and Canada, in general, do not underfinance education. Compared to other jurisdictions we do relatively well. There is not anybody around this table including members of the opposition and government collectively who would not rather have more resources available. What we need to recognize is that making those resources available has to be done in the most efficient manner, and we have to look to society to work with the areas where demands are. We cannot be simply running programs because they have been in existence for a number of years.

(Mr. Deputy Chairperson in the Chair)

We have to put in place programs that will have the best output in terms of the results, not just the efficiency upon which we may be able to use a particular program. We have to have the overall results relate directly to the types of jobs and opportunities that people may be able to access after they have been part of programs that the taxpayers are sponsoring.

I notice the member for Dauphin does not really want to listen to this dissertation, but perhaps he will take time to have a look in Hansard, because I am sure he is going to want to go back to Dauphin and he will selectively quote from Hansard, and maybe he would like to take a look at my comments in their totality so that he can—[interjection]

Well, the member for Dauphin, now that he is listening, seems to be a little bit agitated about whether or not the Parkland is being adequately represented. We are listening to an ex-minister who squandered his dollars rather inappropriately and now cannot stand to see a minister who has taken the responsibility to do some reorganization and reprioritization of dollars.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, when I look at the dollars that are being spent and some of the demands that we have in education as a whole, I look at Clark Hall, I look at the steam tunnel at the University of Manitoba. Where were the dollars when we had 18 percent inflation in this province? Where were the dollars when the growth in the debt in this province was running 10 percent or more year over year. That is the member who did not have the guts to say let us put the money into education. He put the money into places where he thought it would do him the most political good, and because those walls will stand for a little while longer, he did not need to put the money there. Well, he simply forgot that those types of inflationary times cannot proceed forever.

Those of us who have to make a living by dealing with the vagaries of the market and the economy realize pretty quickly that if you want to carry on with that type of thinking, you will find yourself facing a very steely eyed banker, in this case, the economy of Canada and the world, who says that you cannot continue with that kind of nearsighted thinking. We are now reaping the rewards of that type of devil-take-tomorrow attitude.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, no matter how the member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) would like to

cut it, the opportunity to have made commitments to education, health and social services was during the years of inflation and during the years of rapid growth and put in place the efficiencies that were needed and at the same time stop our debt from growing, so that when we hit times like this, we can balance our concerns.

This government has spent the last number of years making sure that health, education and social services receive more than their fair share. We have finally hit the wall in the sense that that fair share cannot continue to grow at the rate that we believe it should. Mr. Deputy Chairperson, when you look at it in that context, I think it is only reasonable that you expect the department to have to make some fairly difficult, in fact, very difficult decisions.

Mr. Plohman: They are political masters. Do not blame it all on them.

Mr. Cummings: Well, the member for Dauphin is whining away that it is the political masters. This may be his bad angle from this side, but I still think that he is not giving me a clear view of what he thinks.

An Honourable Member: The motion is clear.

Mr. Cummings: The motion is only a tip of the iceberg. What we are debating here is the nearsightedness and lack of credibility of the members who are putting together an attack on one program that they felt was a priority that was not dealt with at a time when they had an opportunity to deal with it.

Mr. Plohman: That is why I got these glasses.

Mr. Cummings: I do not know if they reflect your nearsightedness or not, but I would certainly say that they may indicate your lack of vision. [interjection] I acknowledged my eye problem a long time ago, Mr. Deputy Chairperson.

Well, it seems to me that if we are going to spend hours and hours in discussion on repetitive questioning that we have spent in the Estimates of this department that we better start talking about what is the vision, that we have not heard a vision expressed from the other side of the House. Their vision has been tax and spend and keep the programs in place.

The Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) referenced the fact that we have to look at the total context of how we deliver educational services in

this province. [interjection] Is the member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) anxious to cut off my opportunity to express—[interjection] Oh, well, there we go then. He wants to hear the rest of it, I am sure.

Last night, as I recall, there was some desire to keep the committee process going.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, while it is enjoyable to have a little thrust and parry with the opposition, this is a very serious situation that we are talking about, not just this program but all of the changes the Department of Education has had to deal with.

It is not just the Department of Education, but that is the department that we are talking about, and I think we should focus in that area, because we have challenged them. We have challenged the Department of Education to make sure that they are using every effort that they can to deliver programs. I would think that there are people within the department, as well as in the public and in the opposition, who are disappointed in some respect with some of the changes, and have concerns about some of the changes that have to be made.

In the overview and in the final evaluation we will be judged upon whether or not the dollars that are allocated for education are being used appropriately, and if they are being put in a place that will most enhance those who need the educational opportunity and perhaps cannot afford it in their own basis.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, if this is not clear to the members of the opposition, then I suppose the only way that they will listen to any further debate is for us to go to the House and have them express their concern by standing on this kind of a rather frivolous motion at a time when we have a lack of vision and lack of overview of where we want to be with educational opportunities in this province.

I really regret that I do not have the opportunity to go on for another hour or two, because I am just starting to get warmed up.

Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship): Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I will just pick up where my colleague left off talking about a lack of vision by the NDP opposition and especially, you know, the member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) with this kind of a motion. It shows completely that he has no understanding of the overall picture of the difficult

financial circumstances we find ourselves in not only as a province here in Manitoba but right across the country.

* (1650)

We see his cousins, his brothers and his sisters in NDP governments in three different provinces across the country that are making similar difficult decisions. I think in government sometimes NDP administrations do opposite to what, especially opposite to what this NDP opposition might say, but they do not have to accept any responsibility in opposition for trying to balance the budget or trying to get things under control.

I think most of us that are sitting around this table that have not been the minister for Education, Health or Family Services, do know that over the last number of budgets when revenues are not being generated as freely and are not flowing as freely as they were in the past years that we have had to look at our departments very closely and take budget reductions, that year after year while we have tried as a government to protect our health, education and social safety net. We did that until this year, but recognized that no longer can we continue to try to keep the deficit down unless there were some very difficult decisions that were made in those three areas which take up two-thirds of the budget that is expended on a yearly basis in our province.

So, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the ministers responsible for Education, for Health and for Family Services were asked to come to the table with realistic recommendations. None of the decisions in any of those areas are easy to make. I mean, there is not any program that is in place that Manitobans have come to expect. When you take some of those programs or some of those dollars away, none of the decisions are easy.

But what government has done when times have been good, it has increased budgets. I know the first year I was the Minister of Culture I had an increase in my budget. I think even the second budget that we brought in had an increase. Every government department across was looking for new programs and new ways to spend their dollars.

What governments have not done over the past is re-evaluate the kind of programs that have been in place for 10, 20 or 30 years, and look at what the outcomes of those programs are. What we have been able to do with the luxury of increased

budgets is just add on new programs without having to look at and evaluate the old programs. Are they still meeting the needs of Manitobans today? Or is there a better way that we can utilize the scarce resources that are available to provide the most benefit to most Manitobans?

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, we have come to a point where Education has had to share in the burden of looking at what programs most benefit Manitobans. As I said, none of the decisions were easy decisions, but the decisions that have been made, hopefully, will enable us to continue on to provide the maximum amount of education and training for the maximum number of Manitobans.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: All those in favour of the proposed motion, please say yea.

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: All those opposed to the proposed motion, please say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: In my opinion, the Nays have it.

An Honourable Member: Recorded vote.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: A recorded vote has been requested. This section of the Committee of Supply will now proceed to the Chamber for a formal vote.

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 of the Department of Health.

Would the minister's staff please enter the Chamber.

Order, please. We are on item 2.(d) page 79 of the Estimates manual, Healthy Child Development (1) Salaries \$901,100.

Ms. Avis Gray (Crescentwood): Madam Chairperson, I am quite prepared to begin questions when the minister is here. Do we have any idea when he might be arriving?

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment): Shortly. If you ask questions of a technical nature, I would be prepared to handle those types of questions, but I am obviously not competent in policy areas.

Ms. Gray: Madam Chairperson, I am assuming we can just wait a few minutes until the minister arrives, with all due respect to the Minister of the Environment.

Madam Chairperson: Is that the will of the committee?

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): Just on that, do we have any indication when? If it is going to be a significant amount of time, I think we would have to adjourn this section of the committee.

I mean, the clock is ticking in terms of Estimates' time.

Madam Chairperson: The understanding is that the minister is on his way.

Mr. Ashton: I would suggest, then, that we do that, that we adjourn the committee so as not to lose the Estimates' time. I appreciate the efforts of the Minister of the Environment. He had a chance to make some substantial shifts in health policy here. He could have made history. But, if he is not in that position, and if the minister is not likely to be here, I would suggest we adjourn this section of the committee until 2:45. Would that be reasonable?

Mr. Cummings: Madam Chair, I would only ask if the critics have some technical questions that they would like to deal with. They can certainly have at the minister as soon as he gets here, but if there are some technical aspects that they would like to explore, it certainly would be possible for staff to convey to me some of those answers. I certainly will not venture into policy areas, however.

Mr. Ashton: Part of the problem is that most questions in Estimates are related to policy matters; even technical questions lead into policy questions. I appreciate the efforts of the minister.

Ms. Gray: We are trying to make the best use of the time.

Mr. Ashton: And I think to make best use of the time, exactly as the member for Crescentwood (Ms. Gray) said; it is best if we adjourn until 2:45 and then reconvene the committee. It is only 15 minutes.

Madam Chairperson: Is it the will of the committee to recess for 15 minutes until the minister arrives? Is that the will of the committee? [agreed]

Okay, the committee will recess for 15 minutes, and reconvene at 2:45.

Mr. Edward Helwer (Gimli): Perhaps I could ask some questions of the Acting Minister of Health so we can put in some time.

An Honourable Member: I know you want to get a couple of extra hospitals in your riding but—

Madam Chairperson: The committee will reconvene at 2:45.

The committee recessed at 2:30 p.m.

After Recess

The committee resumed at 2:45 p.m.

Madam Chairperson: Will the Committee of Supply please come to order. This committee will reconvene. We are on item 2.(d) page 79, Healthy Child Development.

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Madam Chairperson, I wonder with the indulgence of the committee if I might first off offer my apologies for the delay this afternoon. I was attending the swearing-in of the Associate Chief Justice Gerry Mercier, and that was the reason for the delay.

* * *

Mr. Orchard: I would like to take the opportunity because of events in the last 24 hours in particular that I have not had the opportunity to attend wherein the member for Maples has announced his resignation of his position as MLA in the Legislature and his opportunity for furthering his medical career in British Columbia.

I missed my honourable friend's address to the House yesterday afternoon, and I regret that. There were no individuals who were here and heard the remarks that indicated that they were anything but a very, very sincere and dignified and appreciated contribution to the debate of this Legislature.

On that topic, I want to say that in the five years that we have had our respective roles that we have, I think it is fair to say, grown to appreciate each other's position on issues and to respect each other's opinion.

I have to say that the reputation that Dr. Cheema will leave behind in his resignation as the MLA for Maples today is one of considerable integrity as an MLA representing his constituency, as a member of official opposition and second opposition respectively, and as a critic with a number of

responsibilities, the most prominent of which of course were his responsibilities as Health critic during those elected years.

I say without equivocation that I valued his input. He had a perspective which in today's political environment was unusual in that he was willing to take risk and not only say what was wrong but indeed to say what was right with process. In today's legislative environment that is always a position of risk, and the risk is only temporal and not real, because in the time that I worked as Minister of Health I can assure members of the Legislature that Dr. Cheema's stature in the health care community increased with his continuing exercise of function as opposition Health critic.

He was viewed by administrators, professional groups and Manitobans observing a very trying time of change in health care as being balanced and fair and objective in his criticism and, more importantly, his willingness to take the "political risk" to make sure that the medicare system had the best opportunity to change with the times and to be there when Manitobans need it.

I think that is a contribution that not only I can make but others, no doubt, will make, if they have the opportunity, who worked with him in developing their respective critic roles.

I want to take the opportunity to wish Gulzar Cheema and his family every success in their new venture and new career.

Ms. Gray: I, Madam Chairperson, on behalf of all members of the Liberal Caucus, thank the Minister of Health for his remarks, and if the minister was at the press conference this morning that Dr. Cheema had, he would have noted the question from the press about his relationship with the Minister of Health. Dr. Cheema referred to the Minister of Health as a friend and a colleague and said that certainly with much sincerity.

* (1450)

We will all miss him and his contributions to our caucus in the different perspective that he brought and, particularly, his sense of humour. Dr. Cheema has a wonderful sense of humour, and we will certainly miss that as well.

* * *

Ms. Gray: Moving into where we left off in Estimates the last time we met, under Healthy Child Development, one of the interesting things I noted

as I was going through the Estimates, and albeit quickly, was that in this area of Healthy Child Development, this seemed to be the only section where in fact there was any change in SYs as in a decrease. Obviously this is because of the loss of the services in Dental Health.

When the minister and his staff were making decisions about where monies would be spent, where possible changes or efficiencies could occur, I guess what I am wondering is why there were not any changes at all that seemed to be made in any of the other sections in terms of perhaps decreases in SYs gained through administrative efficiencies. Perhaps the minister could comment on that.

Mr. Orchard: Madam Chair, as long as I understand the tenure of the question as being that the decreases—and I think my honourable friend is correct—in SYs are related to the treatment portion of the Children's Dental Health Program and its curtailment as a budgetary decision in this year's Estimates.

The balance of the SYs are remaining consistent, without either increase or reduction, for primarily two reasons. Basically this division of the ministry is growing into a new role, because I think my honourable friend can see that there is, in some areas under this sub-appropriation, a system-wide, if I can put it that way, blend of responsibilities that are coming to focus on issues.

From that standpoint, we are clearly growing into the role and the responsibility of this division. I will not preclude reallocation of resources as we learn areas that need further reinforcement or opportunities for redeployment of staff as we mature our program approach in this area.

There was deemed in preparation of these Estimates to not significantly change the status quo within this ministry, with the noted exception of the Children's Dental Health Program.

Ms. Gray: In this section one of the expected results is the attendance of children and parents at the child health clinics. Can the minister tell us, has there been any change in the child health clinic program over the last number of years? Has there been an evaluation or have there been any changes in terms of target group?

Mr. Orchard: Madam Chair, I am informed that the roles and responsibilities as undertaken in this area are essentially the same as in previous years.

There may be some opportunity for changes we discussed the other day in terms of implementation of a Healthy Child policy that is in discussion, and possibly some opportunities that may focus our utilization of resource according to the Manitoba Centre for Health Policy and Evaluation study on Maternal Demographic Risk Factors and the Incidence of Low Birthweight, Manitoba 1979-1989, copies of which I will make available as discussed last time we met.

I want to also share with both of my honourable critics the Manitoba Health Guidelines for Postpartum Discharge and Community Follow-up. I believe that was a request for information as well.

Madam Chairperson: Order, please. I wonder if I might just get clarification from the committee.

Due to the fact that there was an Acting Chairperson after 11 p.m. on Monday and given the fact that I have checked the Estimates manual and these items were initialed, but in checking the Hansard I do not have 2.(c) Women's Health items passed. Indeed there are considerable pages of debate and questioning on it, and I wonder if I just might ask the indulgence of the committee to revert back and quickly pass that section if that is the will of the committee. Agreed.

2.(c) Women's Health (1) Salaries \$386,300—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$515,700—pass; (3) External Agencies \$342,100—pass.

I thank the committee for their co-operation.

Ms. Gray: I had asked a question about the child health clinics. I was just wondering if there was a move to looking at targeting those child health clinics, unless they already are, to low-income parents.

Mr. Orchard: I think it is fair to say that probably that is where a considerable amount of the activity is undertaken now, and may well see a more focused approach pending a discussion paper, as I indicated earlier on, whether we can from the low birthweight baby birth incidence report from the Centre for Health Policy and Evaluation—whether there is a readily available methodology to target our resources to the sociodemographic grouping, where low incidence appears to be of a greater degree of problem. That would certainly be helpful if we can easily identify early in the pregnancy those those individuals.

Ms. Gray: Madam Chairperson, can the minister tell this committee, then, how are we targeting

low-income families so that they are the ones that are primarily using the child health conferences?

Mr. Orchard: Madam Chair, I did not want to leave the impression with my honourable friend that we are targeting, but I am saying that that tends to be, probably, where a significant portion or a greater level of our activity is concentrated there. That is by practice rather than deliberate effort of targeting.

I think, though, in terms of future planning exercises, as we are able to identify sociodemographically related issues and would have the ability to target our programs better and more effectively, certainly, we would attempt to exercise that. That is where some of the reports, some of the discussions with the Centre for Health Policy and Evaluation may well lead us, if we can develop: a) effective methods of identification; and b) more effective utilization of resources if we were able to target.

Ms. Gray: Madam Chairperson, the other day when we were meeting in Estimates and discussing the discontinuance of the treatment component of the dental program, the minister commented—and I am looking for his exact words in Hansard—but the minister spoke of the fact that there would be discussions with school divisions in regard to looking at any potential treatment services, I suppose, that could be done through school divisions. Can the minister tell us who is initiating these discussions with school divisions?

Mr. Orchard: Madam Chair, the remaining component of staff will undertake those.

Ms. Gray: Is the minister prepared to table some type of an implementation plan as to what steps his staff are planning to take in regard to how they meet with school divisions, what they decide to do, what they can offer, et cetera? I am assuming that that was all determined and that plans and decisions were made on how his departmental staff would proceed before the actual decision was made for the cuts to the treatment program.

* (1500)

Mr. Orchard: Madam Chair, there was not the necessity of a sophisticated planning strategy around the withdrawal of treatment services. That is fairly straightforward. It continues until the end of this month and will be curtailed.

In terms of the prevention, fluoride and other initiatives around education, clearly there will be a

different methodology of delivering that which will be worked through with the school divisions to assure that we are able to provide within the respective school divisions to those children that are currently availing themselves of the prevention component the continuation of that prevention component in fluoridation.

Ms. Gray: With the continuation of that program then, I am assuming that there have already been overtures made to school divisions by departmental staff. Is that correct and is each school division being met with individually, or how are they working with the school divisions, collectively or individually?

Mr. Orchard: There have been discussions already with the school divisions about the changes that were announced in the budget. Ongoing discussions with the school divisions will focus on a couple of areas, firstly, the interest in the equipment that is in some of the schools. As I have mentioned earlier, one school division—we do not know whether this initiative would be consistent across other school divisions—has expressed an interest in exploring a parent-paid program utilizing our equipment and, as much as possible, the existing staff complement. Certainly, we have no concerns about assisting in that discussion to see whether there is a resolution that may well flow from that.

Secondly, in terms of the ongoing education prevention component, those discussions will be finalized, I would suspect, over the summer months with the school divisions so that we have a program that is reasonably mature come the commencement of the new school year.

Ms. Gray: Can the minister tell us, just to refresh my memory, exactly how many school divisions are impacted by this decision to discontinue the treatment?

Mr. Orchard: Thirty-seven school divisions.

Ms. Gray: To clarify then, each of these 37 school divisions have had contact made with them from the department in regards to future plans for any type of programming. Is that correct?

Mr. Orchard: I cannot say every single school division because appreciate that some of the school divisions were part of the Manitoba Dental Association delivery program wherein there was not the placement of equipment, et cetera, in the schools. I believe that was 17 divisions in that delivery mode.

There has been discussion with a number of the other divisions who have equipment in the school because that seems to be one of the areas wherein at least one school division, as I have mentioned earlier, has expressed an interest in finding a way to maintain the program, understanding that government is not able to reinstate any of the funds formerly dedicated to the treatment side of the program. They are wishing to investigate, with the ministry, options of providing that program at a cost-recovered basis with the parents.

Ms. Gray: Madam Chairperson, is the minister prepared to table any correspondence that has gone from his department to the various school divisions in regards to not only the discontinuance or the planned discontinuance of this program but any other correspondence relating to future plans, whether it relates to equipment or other fluoridation programs, education prevention programs, et cetera?

Mr. Orchard: Madam Chairperson, I would be prepared to share with my honourable friend the letter that is going out to the school divisions in terms of curtailment of the program, but I am not at liberty to share correspondence that may go out to individual school divisions with my honourable friend. I think my honourable friend would understand that correspondence is not intended to be public correspondence. Should the school division wish to share that correspondence with my honourable friend, I would have no objection, but I am not at liberty to share correspondence leaving my office with individual Manitobans or organizations.

Ms. Gray: Well, I will ask the school divisions. My concern is if in fact—are the schools divisions, have they been made aware of what the next steps are, as the minister has alluded to some of them in his comments today. But I am really wanting to know if in fact school divisions are made aware of those comments, which is why I was wondering if there had been correspondence that had gone out to school divisions other than the correspondence regarding the discontinuance of the treatment program. That is why I asked the question. I do not see why, actually, it would be so confidential, that if it is a letter that is going to school divisions about further programs why that would be a huge secret. It is obviously up to the minister to determine whether he is prepared to share that information or not.

Mr. Orchard: Well, Madam Chair, it is not much of a secret. I have indicated probably a dozen times in Question Period and several times in the course of Estimates the nature of the inquiry made by one school division and the willingness of the Ministry of Health to pursue options with that school division including the vesting of existing equipment for the nominal sum of \$1 if that is required to facilitate a school-division-based program which is funded by their parents with children in the program.

There is nothing terribly complex about the initiative raised by the one school division and our response. It may well get complex in terms of achieving the end goal, and that has not been finalized obviously, because there are a number of issues to be dealt with and a number of groups to work with in terms of pursuing the feasibility of that. I have indicated clearly that we are willing to pursue that option with any school division that so wishes to undertake it, and we will be doing that.

Ms. Gray: If I can then from the minister's last comments, then it is up to the school divisions to initiate with the department as opposed to the department to initiate with the school divisions?

Mr. Orchard: A school division has already initiated those discussions. The discussions from the Ministry of Health, when contacted by other school divisions, are that we are willing to pursue that. I think there probably has been a reasonably wide sharing of the one school division's basic premise in terms of the program change.

Ms. Gray: Just for the record, the reason for my line of questioning was my concern that it is being left up to the school divisions to initiate any type of follow-up with the ministry. Given all of the issues that are now going on with school divisions, and we could give lists and lists of all the issues they are having to deal with this year, my concern was, where would that be on the priority lists of school divisions? That is why I thought the department was initiating some follow-up.

My reason for wanting the correspondence, with all due respect to the ministry, was that I wonder if, in fact, any contact has been made with school divisions, other than the one mentioned to actually look at some type of follow-up.

Madam Chairperson: Shall item 2.(d)(1) Healthy Child Development: Salaries \$901,100—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$954,800—pass; (3) External Agencies \$89,900—pass.

2.(e)(1) Acute and Ambulatory Care: Salaries \$81,700.

Mr. Dave Chomlak (Kildonan): Madam Chairperson, with respect to this particular appropriation, the objective is to develop a strategic plan. I am wondering if the minister might outline what the status of that plan is. The Objectives, Activity Identification and Expected Results this year are identical to last year. The only change, I think, is one less staff year and a little less expenditure.

Can the minister describe what the status is of the strategic plan? I am not sure if this is the Moe Lerner component or some variation on a theme.

* (1510)

Mr. Orchard: Madam Chairperson, before I respond to my honourable friend, I have another bit of information for the member for Crescentwood (Ms. Gray). I think this is some of our cancer programming material.

Madam Chairperson, the objectives remain the same as they were. I think that my honourable friend would have to agree with the objectives of minimizing length of stay, while ensuring the quality of patient care, to develop cost-effective and efficacious ambulatory care services and to identify factors influencing acute and ambulatory care service patterns.

In that regard, this divisional staff is working with rural health reform and individual rural facilities as required, and with the development, through the reform implementation committee, of work with a number of programs that have greater opportunities in terms of ambulatory care and reduction in length of stay, so that the work dedication of this group is very much on an ongoing basis with those two major and broad areas of reform.

Mr. Chomlak: Madam Chairperson, just so that I understand completely the minister's response, this is a team of two individuals that are looking basically at the minister's reform plan, the rural restructuring, and is going to produce a proposal to come to the minister or is producing a co-ordination between these various activities. What is the end result of this process?

Mr. Orchard: The process here is to assist the acute care system in shifting program emphasis to ambulatory care, where appropriate. There are a significant number of areas in the appropriate

category as identified in the Centre for Health Policy and Evaluation, how efficiently hospitals discharge their patients that study in terms of focusing in on the length of stay and working with facilities and with the various investigative program groups to achieve both a shortened length of stay and an increased move towards ambulatory care procedures within those individual programs where that is being studied and in terms of advice and working with individual facilities in achieving the same.

The advice of this area will be part of any policy development and any accepted recommendation and program change in our various surgical or medical programs as the task force study groups conclude and bring recommendations forward. We will have been, if you will, at the table providing advice as appropriate and guidance as asked for.

Mr. Chomlak: Madam Chairperson, is this group only confined to rural Manitoba because, for example, Misericordia has a proposal before the minister for some acute/ambulatory care changes. Is this group looking at that as well or is it only confined to rural Manitoba?

Mr. Orchard: As I indicated in my first response, Madam Chairperson, this area of the department works both with rural and with the reform planning group. I guess I did not clearly identify that their task is the urban acute care environment. I thought that was understood from our earlier discussions.

Mr. Chomlak: Madam Chairperson, can the minister identify who the two staff people are in this area?

Mr. Orchard: There is one individual in this area, Marion Sedak.

Mr. Chomlak: Madam Chairperson, the minister gave one name and there are two staff years. Is the other staff year not filled?

Mr. Orchard: That is correct, Madam Chairperson.

Madam Chairperson: (e) Acute and Ambulatory Care (1) Salaries \$81,700.

Ms. Gray: Madam Chairperson, is this section Acute and Ambulatory Care, is this individual then working with the groups of hospital staff, et cetera, in rural Manitoba, the groups of hospitals that are looking at the types of services that they are delivering and if there is a possibility of them creating efficiencies and perhaps amalgamating

some of the services? Does this person deal with those groups?

Mr. Orchard: As we move in that direction, this would be the individual responsible, but I cannot tell my honourable friend which hospitals in rural Manitoba she may have worked with already. But certainly, as they move towards ambulatory care, this would be the individual in the section that would provide the opportunities to change the service delivery pattern as rural facilities collaborate around changing their service approach and collaborating around service approach. Any advice and benefit that can be provided in expediting ambulatory care would certainly come from here for the rural reform process.

Ms. Gray: Madam Chairperson, in reference to the rural hospitals working on the possibility of changing their delivery patterns, this idea, which I think is an excellent one, is, I am assuming, part of the health care reform. I am wondering where in the health care plan this began. Where did this idea begin and how long has the process been underway, the service delivery patterns where the rural hospitals are getting together and looking at how they deliver services and what changes can be made?

Mr. Orchard: I do not know when it would be appropriate to attach a beginning point, because I think that there is a great deal of variability here because some individual communities have affiliated under one administration and have been working towards a service delivery—well, for lack of appropriate terminologies, centres of excellence within a community grouping of four where they will, for instance, maybe focus or attempt to focus on obstetrics in one and surgery in a second community and hospital of a given working group.

That process has been going on to varying degrees for a number of years, but if my honourable friend asked about when would it have commenced in terms of a more formalized process with the assistance of government, I guess we would have to go back with the tabling of the document, the health reform document and several months thereafter, the creation of the equivalent to the Urban Hospital Council in the rural environment where nominations came from the various regions and MHO to establish the Rural Health Advisory Council, and from there the process of asking communities to investigate opportunities for

collaboration around health care service delivery, both acute and long-term, and within communities and between communities.

* (1520)

That was, of course, undertaken I think with some significant dedication of time in the first few months of this year with plans in general being developed for every area of the province of Manitoba and those plans having discussion with the Rural Health Advisory Council and the ministry and the re-asking of those various groups to consider in some cases—well, as a matter of fact, in most cases, a larger affiliation and a larger area of association.

Two answers: First of all, a formalization within the last, say, eight months of a process of asking facilities within communities and between communities to seek opportunities of collaboration in a formal process but certainly not the first time that process has happened. I think my honourable friend can understand that. Some communities have already collaborated well in advance of the request for discussion in that direction by the ministry.

Ms. Gray: The reason I asked the question is: I see this plan is a good one for urban areas as well as rural, but I was wondering how this plan to look at centres of excellence in the rural areas fit in with the fact that this government already went ahead and allowed a number of capital projects to occur in rural Manitoba, i.e., replacement of the Virden Hospital, a new hospital in Minnedosa, et cetera.

I am not making a comment about whether those were needed or not, but I question why in fact those capital projects went ahead when perhaps this discussion now of looking at centres of excellence that it might have been more appropriate to actually wait and hold off on those projects until some of this planning was completed. Perhaps the minister could comment on that.

Mr. Orchard: I think my honourable friend is starting to point toward the Saskatchewan syndrome. We do not feel that any of the capital commitments that we made, and particularly with the two my honourable friend has mentioned, the Virden Hospital reconstruction and the Minnedosa Hospital reconstruction, that either of those, the capital redevelopment plans will not fit appropriately in terms of reform.

The reason I say that goes back to a commitment, and I will share the history with my honourable friend. When I was first elected in 1977, the Carman Hospital of some, oh, I think it was 38 or so beds was in the flood zone and was 40 years vintage, was looking at a very expensive upgrade for fire and other standard requirements. The decision that I encouraged the then-Minister of Health to make was to reconstruct the hospital entirely and attempt to build a smaller acute care function that would have the opportunity to deliver at least as sophisticated a range of services as the old hospital.

What made that decision and my urging of the decision, and I believe the subsequent go-ahead, was the commitment of a physician who had been practising as a general practitioner, a family practitioner, in Carman to indicate that he would return to Carman to undertake a surgical specialty that he was in training for. I think since that time and the return of that physician to Carman, the smaller hospital, I think the configuration of the Carman Hospital, some 27 beds downsized, and from that it maintains a fairly active obstetric program and certainly a very active surgical program with one of the first laparoscopic surgery programs, I think the first one outside of Winnipeg or Brandon, and one of the first in Manitoba to be undertaken there, proving that you do not have to have your major urban hospitals deliver quality care and fairly complex care.

I say to my honourable friend, on a personal note, that is where I spent my recovery days after I allowed a tree to misbehave and almost take my head off. I suffered quite a significant injury, and it was looked after very, very well in that hospital.

Now, that hospital serves a fairly significant catchment area to the west, to the north and to the east. To the south, there is a saw-off point between Morden, Winkler and the Carman community, but clearly, the demonstrated efficacy of a renewed hospital plant of that size has proven itself.

That is why we had no hesitation in, for instance, at Virden, where you have a fairly larger catchment area, and Minnedosa, with the same dynamics, to renew those two hospitals there, based on the confidence that they could provide very focused and very excellent care opportunities.

If I can be so direct as to say, it is always the chicken-and-egg debate. I mean, we want physicians to move from Winnipeg to practise in rural Manitoba, but on the other hand, we cannot expect those physicians, particularly if they are specialists, to move to practise in rural Manitoba if there is not a physical facility within which they can undertake their trained skills.

We are pretty confident, in terms of the reform, the affiliation, the association of health care into districts, that the capital investments we have made and the ones that we propose will have a great deal of integrity and fit in the reformed health care system that we will see emerge over the next number of months and ensuing years.

Madam Chairperson: Item 2.(e) Acute and Ambulatory Care (1) Salaries \$81,700—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$35,500—pass.

2.(f) Capital Planning.

Ms. Gray: I have one question under Other Expenditures. Under Other Operating \$3,400, what comes under Other Operating for costs?

Mr. Orchard: Madam Chair, let me make sure we have the right one. Are you talking under Capital Planning, a \$3,000 expenditure?

Ms. Gray: No, it is under Acute and Ambulatory still, Other Expenditures, after Supplies & Services.

Mr. Orchard: Oh, yes, that is on Acute and Ambulatory Care. Hotel and meals are the major component, \$2,900 of that would be. The other \$500 is in Other, and I do not have a breakdown of the other in the Other.

Madam Chairperson: Item 2.(f) Capital Planning.

Mr. Chomlak: Madam Chairperson, I wonder if the minister would table in the House the annual Five Year Capital Plan.

* (1530)

Mr. Orchard: Madam Chairperson, I was not planning on tabling that document until we got to a later point in the Estimates under, I believe it is, Expenditures Related to Capital.

Mr. Chomlak: Madam Chairperson, if the minister would agree, perhaps we will just defer discussion of this section and meld it all under the Capital Plan under 5.(a) and do it all at once at some later point.

Mr. Orchard: Madam Chairperson, I would be fully prepared to entertain questions now in case I have to provide responses with the Capital

Program. Even if we pass this section, when the Capital Program comes down I am fully prepared to go back and discuss any details that would be here. Right now, if my honourable friends had some specific areas that they wanted to get into, in case I do not have answers today, it might be helpful to discuss that now and I could attempt to provide any information that we do not have close at hand today.

Mr. Chomlak: Madam Chairperson, from my part, I am prepared to accept that offer from the minister. My only general question in this area other than when I have a chance to review the Capital Plan is how the Capital Planning unit has specifically targeted in the minister's health reform package with the Capital Planning with respect to the strategic aspect of it as to where we are going. That is basically my question in terms of this area.

Mr. Orchard: Madam Chairperson, that is an appropriate question, a very appropriate question. In my introductory remarks of the Capital Program, I will share some of that with you and then some of the explanation behind the Capital Program will also I think give my honourable friend some more of that information. I have no question, it will probably stimulate some additional questions.

We have had this debate before, but I want to reinforce why Capital Planning is in this area of Healthy Public Policy. All too often, for probably 25 years, including the first three years that I was minister, Capital Planning was at the commission and it was institutionally focused almost exclusively and entirely. I have to say that the reason we moved it here is we had to put a system-wide approach to Capital Planning. I think that is what maybe my honourable friend from Crescentwood was alluding to.

As my honourable friends might appreciate, but you do not appreciate how enormous the pressures are until you are the minister deciding the Capital Plan, every organization, every community puts enormous pressure on government to renew capital redevelopment projects. There are some times when you simply have to say no, I cannot approve that under the current circumstances.

We have been very cognizant, and as I have said on a number of occasions during the debate on Capital Estimates, the easiest way that a minister can raise his popularity with Manitobans group by group, community by community, is to accede to

their capital redevelopment requests. The only difficulty is that when it comes time to operate those and pay the operating costs of those, you are not terribly popular with the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) and the taxpayers of Manitoba, because the costs come home.

Now, I want to, in the course of the capital Estimates, share what I consider to be some successes in our capital program, and some areas that we are not likely to repeat, given the experience we have had in them, where we think there are opportunities to move the reform process in a more appropriate way with capital investment that may not have been what a given community or a sponsoring organization had requested in the past, but, I think, fits with where health care is going in today's context and environment.

I find the capital area to be a very interesting one to attempt to come to decision making around, and look forward to the tabling of the estimates and the explanation of this year's proposed capital projects and the five-year out projection of where the capital program will be heading.

Ms. Gray: Madam Chairperson, in reference to my question about the building or renovation of some of the hospitals in rural Manitoba, and I used Virden as the example or Minnedosa, the minister talked about the importance of attracting not just physicians to rural Manitoba; he used the word "specialists," to rural Manitoba. Just for clarification, is the minister suggesting that he feels we will be able to get specialists going to such communities as Minnedosa and Virden?

Mr. Orchard: I believe that is a distinct opportunity.

Ms. Gray: Madam Chairperson, has there not been any discussion that when you are looking at some areas such as Westman, as an example, that the centre there would be Brandon as opposed to Minnedosa or Virden? Now, I am sure you find that people who have health issues other than the most ordinary, who are in the Westman area, would either go to Brandon, if they felt the service was there, or they would come to Winnipeg. But, probably, they would go to somewhere such as Brandon because their mobility patterns are such that they are oftentimes there on a weekly basis.

So that is why I am asking the question. I can certainly see a need for attracting specialists to Brandon. Is there not some discussion that that

might not be the centre of potential excellence as opposed to Minnedosa or Virden?

Mr. Orchard: No, Madam Chair, I would not want my honourable friend to get that impression. Clearly, the referral patterns are to Brandon, Westman and Parklands, particularly Westman and Brandon or to Brandon General Hospital, which has a quite sophisticated array of program and services. Parklands, to a degree, refers to Brandon, then to Winnipeg.

What I am saying to my honourable friend, I will give a specific example. A specialist does not have to be resident in a community to serve a community. There are more itinerant specialist practice opportunities being exercised in rural Manitoba.

An example I want to give to my honourable friend would be in terms of urology. [interjection] No, I do not think there is a urologist outside of Brandon or Winnipeg, but I have had discussions with physicians in the hospitals the size of the Carmans, the Portages, the Minnedosas the Virdens, about the 'what if' possibilities of a urologist, for instance, undertaking a day slate of surgery on an itinerant basis with the assistance of the general surgeon and the physicians, anesthetist, et cetera, in rural facilities, and that is entirely a possibility.

The difference from the traditional referral pattern is that, instead of having the patient do the travelling, the specialist does the travelling, and it has, if my honourable friend thinks about it, several important components to it that are significant opportunities for the system. You have the opportunity to utilize acute care capacity closer to home for rural residents. Secondly, I do not think there is any question that you would relieve the pressure on our major urban facilities in terms of waiting times and other dimensions of care. Thirdly, with few exceptions, I think that the cost of care is probably lower per day than in our major urban hospitals. So there is a benefit to the patient receiving care closer to home, the acute skills are maintained in these hospitals by the caregivers, whether they be physician or nursing or support staff. You can, with little incremental cost in a lot of cases, provide the service where there is the physical acute care capacity. Fourthly, it relieves potential pressures elsewhere in the system.

So I say to my honourable friend—do not take my comments literally of attracting a specialist to be resident in a Virden, or resident in a Minnedosa, or resident in a Carman. That will happen in terms of general surgeons, but my honourable friend knows that general surgery is more specialized now, so it is into the specialist delivery program. But the utilization of those facilities by specialists on an itinerant basis is certainly, to me, a very significant and open opportunity for development, and it is from that aspect that I pose the specialist recruitment concept. In the instance specifically referred to by my honourable friend, Brandon is doing that now in some areas. The specialists provide service in Souris, for instance, from Brandon General Hospital practice base.

* (1540)

Ms. Gray: Madam Chairperson, it is an interesting argument that the minister suggests, and I certainly do not necessarily disagree with him. I would be interested in, however, if the minister has available any studies or research on the example he has used about the suggestions of having specialists in such areas, whether it be Winnipeg or particularly Brandon, and then actually utilizing day surgeries in some of the itinerant hospitals. Can he provide any type of analysis or research for us that would suggest the, as I use his own words, demonstrated efficacy of providing these services in this manner?

Mr. Orchard: Well, I do not know whether this will satisfy my honourable friend, but we can provide my honourable friend with some of the case studies in those areas which lead to reinforce my belief that it is an entirely pragmatic possibility. What gives me encouragement personally is the fact that some of the physicians and surgeons who are currently practising on a resident basis in some of our outside of Winnipeg and Brandon communities indicate to me that that would be an entirely appropriate opportunity to pursue and indeed they are.

Ms. Gray: I would be pleased to see those case studies when the minister has an opportunity to share those. The minister used an example of, I believe, a specialist spending some time in Souris, as an example, Souris general hospital, and I am wondering if the minister could indicate what type of specialist that is. Since that has occurred, where a specialist is spending some time in Souris, has there been a significant increase in terms of the

number of bed-utilization days in the Souris Hospital?

Mr. Orchard: Madam Chair, we will attempt to provide that information.

Ms. Gray: I thank the minister. I know the minister referred to pressures on governments to look at Capital Planning, and I know that we oftentimes have requests that come to us and I am sure that the government certainly does on communities or communities within urban centres who wish to build personal care homes. Can the minister tell us, or is this something we need to wait until we get into Capital Construction, what is the philosophy around the building of new personal care home beds?

Mr. Orchard: A progressive one, Madam Chair. Let me give my honourable friend some general rules of thumb. There is a general planning guideline that would say you do not construct a freestanding personal care home facility with less than 40 beds in that facility. There has been consideration for 30 but nothing below 30.

When my honourable friend considers that policy, there are some communities, regardless of how persuasive their arguments are, their catchment area or their area of service mitigates against construction of a personal care home. I know that is a difficult message to give to those communities but it is a consistent message. It has probably not changed since 15 or 20 years.

The exception to that rule has been where there was an existing acute care hospital and there was an opportunity, either to convert but that is not too often, but to juxtapose personal care home capacity. There we have, I guess, probably constructed as low as 18 beds in a circumstance like that and maybe even one of 16 but do not hold me to the exact numbers. They have been less than the 30-bed consideration, but it is because they have been in affiliation with an acute care hospital that, although downsized, still was deemed to be an appropriate acute care hospital for reconstruction. Those are what is called the "swing facility" or that is the terminology we have used where they have been a combined facility, and we have provided—[interjection] "Swing." That is what they call it. Pardon me?

An Honourable Member: Like this place, the swing facility.

Mr. Orchard: We have undertaken construction of swing facilities in Benito, Erickson and Manitou and have had those facilities operating for upwards of three and a half years now. I think it was the first one that was opened.

That is the physical configuration. To identify the need, we have used a consistent guideline in the ministry. I will get that for my honourable friends when we get into the capital budget. It is a target of so many beds per population over 875 in a catchment area.

Now, you get into arguments as to what is a catchment area. I can understand that. Some communities may want to include other communities in order to justify the establishment of a larger facility, but basically those guidelines have not changed. In most areas of Manitoba now we have achieved bed capacity within a few beds by region of that guideline.

We have areas of the city of Winnipeg where further investment is necessary and is underway to bring those areas up to the provincial guideline. That is why, in that northeast quadrant of the city, there are 240 personal care home beds currently under construction, because of all the quadrants of the city of Winnipeg, the four quadrants, that was the one area that was most behind or most below the provincial standard guideline. [interjection] Pardon me? Northeast—East Kildonan, North Kildonan.

* (1550)

The second area that we are actively pursuing is in the St. James west quadrant of the city, where we have some proposals for construction, and we are advancing some other planning areas.

There is a real debate about personal care home capacity. Within the ministry, there are staff who believe clearly and unequivocally that we are building too many, and that we ought to be, instead of focusing our resources on personal care home capacity, spending those resources in a more advanced, if you will—I guess that is the proper terminology—continuing care service.

They point to examples of European countries that have a fraction of the number of personal care home beds per capita than we do. That is one of the most difficult debates to try and come to a decision around, because unless you live and understand the community, the family dynamics in some of those European nations, you do not know

whether there are applicable lifestyles. Our lifestyle does not necessarily tend to lead us today, at least, to in-family support of our elders, our parents. I think there is a significant difference there.

However, I think there is a growing understanding of maybe opportunities that we are certainly pursuing with seniors housing, managers of senior housing, and community groups, because they are making the proposal to us that maybe there is a more effective utilization of not only existing resource, whether it be support services like continuing care or support services for seniors, but an opportunity to make a better investment in EPH, elderly persons housing, than directly into personal care homes.

We are certainly open to those kinds of discussions, but I doubt that we will probably develop a standard and an approach that is going to meet with all the experts' opinions, because as I say, it has quite a range in terms of what is an appropriate target for number of beds per 1,000 over age 75 in the province of Manitoba.

The one thing I will say to my honourable friend is that we have, and I will provide those numbers at a later time in the Estimates program, but my honourable friend will find that we have added some pretty significant amounts of personal care home capacity in the last little while that have come on stream in the last two years. In particular, in the next year and a half that is going to be fairly aggressive as well, and that clearly is enabling us to make the shift in the acute care hospital and downsize the acute care hospitals and their role in providing interim placement for panelled patients. That is a goal that everyone in this House believes is probably an appropriate one.

Ms. Gray: Just another question in this area. With the building of the new Minnedosa hospital, I know there was quite a bit of discussion in the community about what to do with the old building, the old hospital. I recall speaking with some people in Minnedosa about their concerns about some of the community certainly feeling that there could be use made of the old hospital. I am wondering if the minister could update us as to what his department's position is on that, or have there been any further decisions made on that particular building?

Mr. Orchard: Madam Chairperson, I think the old hospital is either currently being demolished or has been demolished.

Ms. Gray: Is the minister aware if it has already been demolished, because I know there was a group of residents who were attempting to try to have it saved?

Mr. Orchard: I am informed that the demolition has been completed. Again, let me indicate to my honourable friend that communities have a very warm spot for facilities that are replaced, and suggestions are made, well, let us convert it into housing, personal care home. There is a whole range of options that always comes forward, but what you will generally find, and there may be exceptions to the rule, but the reason why a decision was made to replace rather than renovate was because of structural inadequacies in the building.

I think it is a fairly common rule of thumb that new construction is not a great deal more expensive than renovation in today's construction environment. So even if you have need, let us say, for personal care home capacity in the community where you have replaced an acute care hospital, probably if you come right down to the decision you would likely construct new that personal care home capacity that was needed and was an approvable capital project. Unless there is a nongovernment use for which a private or independent group would bid for the replaced facility and its land, the most often exercised option is demolition, demolition of the old facility. Each and every time that happens, there is often comment from observers in the community that it is quite a waste of a good "facility."

I can simply say that investigations in the past and going back to the Carman Hospital debate, one of the options was renovation there. Brand-new construction was something like, as I recall it, going back to 1981—I think we committed \$2.7 million on brand-new construction, and I think renovations were going to be \$1.8 million. So that when you balanced everything, you went for the new construction.

Ms. Gray: Madam Chairperson, I think one of the main concerns, now that I recall the discussion with some of the residents of Minnedosa, was not necessarily what the final decision was—and, again, this is obviously over and done with now, but

perhaps in the future. It was the concern that there was an attempt by citizens—and maybe their difficulties were with their town council, I am not sure, as opposed to the department—but all they wanted was some real information to say: No, it does not make sense to keep this building; the costs would be prohibitive; it is less expensive to get rid of it. Then, should some other kind of construction occur, the cost would be at least as reasonable.

I think that is what they were a little leery as to whether in fact that was the case. All they wanted was some information provided to them to say that, and I think that is where some of the difficulty was, but I thank the minister for his response on that.

Madam Chairperson: Item 2. Healthy Public Policy Programs (f) Capital Planning (1) Salaries \$206,400—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$120,400—pass.

Resolution 21.2: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$14,008,600 for Health, Healthy Public Policy Programs for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March 1994—pass.

Mr. Orchard: Madam Chair, if the questions that stimulate from some of the answers here, I will just beg the indulgence of committee; I should have done this beforehand, as long as my ADM Ms. Hicks is around.

There was for the fiscal year '92-93, Manitoba Health provided advice to Manitoba Environment regarding possible risk of human health from proposed developments on the following proposals: Abitibi-Price, Pine Falls, on the de-inking plant modernization in the Clean Environment Commission hearings; for the Town of Altona in terms of the waste water lagoon expansion; the Boreas project in Thompson, which has to do with forest renewal; City of Brandon waste water lagoon; Bristol Aerospace in terms of the Rockwood plant, the ground water contamination issue; Camp Arnes, Lake Winnipeg, again, waste water lagoon; the R.M. of Cartier, a water supply pipeline; the same thing with R.M. of Ritchot, only this time Centra Gas in terms of the pipeline; city of Winnipeg and 27 other municipalities.

If my honourable friends want the listing of the other municipalities, I would have to provide that later, but that was in terms of lead in water.

* (1600)

A number of Manitoba communities in terms of radon gas in buildings; a number of Manitoba communities with public health inspection services; Red River, Winnipeg to Lake Winnipeg, sewage in the river; Lynn Lake, dust from mine tailings; southern Manitoba, crop residue smoke; city of Winnipeg, decontamination of soil pollutants; city of Winnipeg in terms of the Palliser Furniture air pollution; city of Winnipeg, HIV contaminated sewage was the investigation or the issue; Flin Flon, HBM&S air pollution. We certainly had a significant role at Oakville with the train derailment.

Conawapa with the environmental review; the same thing with Repap; Coulee Agro in Plum Coulee with crop protection warehouse; the R.M. of De Salaberry, Otterburne, waste treatment lagoons; disease control centre, the federal virology lab in terms of providing advice to the location; Ducks Unlimited, water supply impoundments advice; Elie farm supply crop protection facility; Enviro-Oil in Virden and the R.M. of Wallace, bulk materials handling. Enviro-Oil is the used oil remanufacturer. I believe they are in full process of locating a second manufacturing facility in Virden and the R.M. of Wallace.

Farmers Co-op Seed Plant Ltd.—I believe that is at Rivers—a seed-cleaning plant, advice; Heritage Co-op 1929 Ltd. in bulk materials handling; Homewood Co-op, crop protection bulk materials handling. The same thing with Imperial Oil at Roblin and Winnipegosis, Brunkild and Elie, bulk materials handling in terms of Interlake agro services; Laidlaw Environmental Services was waste transfer stations; Lanagro was bulk materials handling.

The R.M. of MacDonald, the rural water pipelines, for advice; R.M. of MacDonald, the water storage reservoir, water supply impoundment; Manitoba Hydro at Anola in terms of advice on transformer stations; Manitoba Hydro at Raven in terms of advice on transmission lines; then the same issue again at Split Lake; Manitoba Pool Elevators in Arborg, bulk materials handling; as well as the same issue for Manitoba Pool Elevators at Darlingford, Dauphin, Elgin, Fisher Branch, Glenboro, Killarney, Ninga, Solsgirth, Starbuck, Stonewall, Swan River, The Pas.

Gimli, hazardous waste storage facility, waste transfer stations; household waste depot on Logan

Avenue, waste transfer stations; town of Morden, water treatment and plant sludge waste water treatment lagoons; the R.M. of Morris, Rosenort lagoon expansion, waste water treatment lagoon; Neepawa-Gladstone Co-op, crop protection bulk materials handling; the New Rosedale Colony in terms of waste water treatment lagoons; Pelican Rapids, lagoon; Novopharm Biotech, manufacturing and industrial advice; Pineimuta Place, lagoon, a waste water treatment lagoon; the R.M. of Shoal Lake and Oakburn, sludge removal, waste water treatment lagoon; Simplot Soilbuilders at Plumias, bulk materials handling; sludge disposal, town of Swan River; Swan River Consumers Co-op, bulk materials handling; True Resource Management, Guertin Brothers waste transfer stations.

Twin Valley Co-op, Elkhorn, anhydrous ammonia, advice in the bulk materials handling area; Twin Valley Co-op, R. M. of Miniota; United Grain Growers Birch River, United Grain Growers Deloraine, United Grain Growers Fannystelle, United Grain Growers Hargrave, United Grain Growers St. Anne, all bulk materials handling. Those will be fertilizer and chemical plants.

R.M. of Woodlands, the Warren lagoon expansion, wastewater treatment lagoon; City of Winnipeg in terms of advice around the north end pollution control sewage treatment plant and the West St. Paul sludge review. Those were the areas in '92-93.

Mr. Chomlak: I thank the minister for that list. While the ADM is still here, just two small questions. Firstly, most of the programs are self-explanatory. What is the basic issue surrounding the transmission lines and the question of health? Is there a generic issue surrounding those?

Mr. Orchard: Madam Chair, I am advised it is to do with the magnetic aura around transmission fields. I think the issue came up that there was the linkage that has been—now I do not know how much science there is behind it—with M.S. and transmission line auras. I think that it what the investigation at Anola and at Raven—I am not sure about Split Lake—but that is what some of them were about at least.

Mr. Chomlak: The second issue was the issue of the holding tanks at the Ducks Unlimited. Was that in relation to ground water perhaps in terms of

drinking water, or what was the health-related issue there?

Mr. Orchard: My information is rather limited. It says Ducks Unlimited and, in parentheses, water supply impoundments. Now I am not even certain whether this is the new facility at Oak Hammock Marsh. So if my honourable friend wishes, I will provide that information later.

The member for Kildonan asked about AIDS cases in women and in aboriginal people. From 1985 to June 16, 1993, we have had three cases of AIDS in women out of 97 total cases during that same period of time. We have 14 cases of AIDS in the aboriginal community and 76 cases in the Caucasian group and seven that fall in other ethnic groups.

I do not believe that any of the female cases are aboriginal women, but we will double confirm that because I think that would be the nature of my honourable friend's question.

From 1985 to June 16, 1993, that was AIDS cases. There have been 386 HIV positive individuals, and of those the male-female breakdown are 360 male and 26 female.

Now I do not have the same breakdown in terms, nor would we have because that is not part of the information that we have on HIV positive, we just have male-female. So I cannot give my honourable friend in terms of aboriginal on the HIV positive. Let me just check and see whether I have some others.

*(1610)

There was a question awhile ago about auditing practitioners' records. Bill 4, an amendment to The Health Services Insurance Act came into force September 30, 1991, and provides Manitoba Health with the legal authority to carry out the inspections of practitioners' offices including medical laboratories for the purposes of claims' verification. So that authority exists, and my honourable friend might recall the debate around that. It was centered around recovery of dollars from one of the labs in the province.

The facility management agreement between ISM and the ministry goes until January 1, 1995, so there is another 18 months and a few days in that contract. A question from the member for Crescentwood regarding overtime paid in the department, the overtime paid in '92-93 was \$1,339,802.81.

Ms. Gray: Madam Chairperson, while the minister has been answering questions that we had asked the last few days, and we appreciate that, I had also asked a question and I am not sure it was responded to. I do not know if he has the answer today about whether the administrative support positions that were directly supporting field staff such as mental health workers, public health nurses, et cetera, were being, and I used the term, fast tracked, similarly to the home care case co-ordinators and mental health workers.

Mr. Orchard: No, I do not have that information, so I will have to provide that to my honourable friend at a later date.

Madam Chairperson: Item 3.(a) Administration.

Mr. Chomlak: Madam Chairperson, this particular division, the Administration end, has seen an expansion of two positions from last year. It looks to me like it is the administrative support area. I wonder if the minister can identify those particular positions and what they are for.

Madam Chairperson, just for purposes of clarification, while I recognize that the appropriation this year indicates there were seven staff years last year, last year's Estimates book indicates five staff years, so that I am trying to ascertain.

Mr. Orchard: Yes, my honourable friend is right. It was five last year. It is seven this year because we have transferred in two staff years from other areas of the ministry, an administrative officer from the Home Care branch and an Administrative Secretary 2 from the Health and Wellness branch.

Mr. Chomlak: Madam Chairperson, of the seven people the minister said have been seconded or moved to work with Connie Curran, are any from this particular area?

Mr. Orchard: That is in a subsequent area of this division.

Mr. Chomlak: Madam Chairperson, just in general, can the minister outline what new policy initiatives and new directives are being undertaken by this branch of the ministry this year?

Mr. Orchard: Madam Chair, let me maybe take a little time to answer that question. With the changes that are being undertaken in the health care system or shifting of service provision from acute care hospitals to other areas of program delivery the Continuing Care department has been liaising with the hospitals and with the community

planning to very much be part of that change in that shift.

That has not to date led to any policy changes that have been proposed. That does not preclude that as we gain more experience in the reform process that we may find policy changes that may be proposed and brought forward and announced. There are some opportunities I believe, as I have always stated, in terms of a better co-ordination of service, and that in part is what we hope, in terms of the Connie Curran contract, we are able to identify and bring into place.

My honourable friend will know that as part of the reform process, we were going to expand the hours of operation of our assessment co-ordination within the acute care hospital system, and that I will have to give my honourable friend the status report on that. That is the only change that is not a change in policy but that is a change in method of delivery of the program. There are the changes that my honourable friend knows, and have been subject of discussion in Question Period and the Estimates, in terms of the Ostomy Program which is under this appropriation, in terms of the medical supply program and in terms of the, if you will, housekeeping aspect of the Continuing Care Program that will impact on the Continuing Care Program and its delivery. Those are the only program changes to date.

Again, I am not trying to avoid the question of my honourable friend, but I am simply saying that as we mature our thinking and as the process of health care reform unfolds, there may well be policy and program changes that are recommended. I can only indicate to my honourable friend that at any time those are undertaken it will be accompanied with a full announcement process and will probably only be achieved subsequent to some pretty full investigation around the value of any changes that might be proposed by hospitals, by the community services groups and by community health centres.

Mr. Chomlak: Madam Chairperson, how are those opinions from the community service groups, the community health centres, the hospitals being brought forward to the ministry to fit in with what the minister just did? How is the minister receiving these suggestions and going about this policy development process?

* (1620)

Mr. Orchard: Just so we do not get off on the wrong phraseology, program development process rather than policy, because the policy has remained consistent. That is what I qualified, that there may well be policy changes, but none to date.

The venue for those discussions are the various investigative committees where it is appropriate. For instance, with an acute care hospital, if they are moving in a direction which would have an impact on aspects of the Continuing Care Program, we naturally have departmental staff attached to that area of program investigation.

I think my honourable friend understands why. I mean, if they are currently part of, and there is an opportunity for an increased or a decreased role as the system shifts, they have to be part of that input in decision making. So where necessary, they are attached to those task forces and issue investigation groups and are attempting to liaise with the development of those shifts in program delivery and to accommodate those shifts with flexibility within our current program of continuing care delivery.

But, if my honourable friend is wanting specifics that group A has made a proposal to do X, Y, Z in terms of the Continuing Care Program, that is not really the process that is there in place. It is not an exclusionary one. I mean, we accept them, but the main process of discussion is as part of the study group process of looking at program and other issues in the reform. Where appropriate, Continuing Care staff are attached to that discussion process.

Mr. Chomlak: Madam Chairperson, I am not entirely certain I understand the minister's comments. Perhaps they will be clearer when I read them in Hansard.

We have in existence, at present, a Continuing Care Program with its various component parts; and we have the minister's reform proposal of May of last year; and we have a significant shift in the shifting from acute care beds; and we have less hospital capacity at this point; and what I do not see is the plan in place at the community level to deliver what everyone in the system agrees is the need for more community-based services.

Mr. Orchard: Madam Chairperson, I am not wanting to, although it might be an appropriate time, to get into the full debate, but I harken back to discussions we have had just as recently as I

suppose two days ago with the closure later on this year of the 39 surgical beds at St. Boniface, for instance.

Those are accomplished not by replacing the service with another service in a less-expensive locale, but in terms of managing the delivery of service to the individual patient in a more effective way. That more effective way is in terms of length of stay around the surgery, which is identified in the hospital efficiency report.

St. Boniface has been working, for instance, in terms of a same-day admission policy. They had this piloted for a number of months at St. Boniface. On the basis of their experience with that same-day admission process, know, have confidence that it will work across their surgical program slate. They also are moving fairly dramatically towards an increased utilization of not-for-admission surgeries and that led to the decision to close 39 surgical beds.

They are maintaining their level of activity, and they are doing it with fewer in-patient days; hence, fewer beds that they have to staff and maintain and operate. That has not led to a demand for replacement service, that is an effective and more efficacious management of existing resources.

Similarly, let me deal with another issue that I know my honourable friend is familiar with, and that is of course the consolidation of pediatric services. Again, there were bed closures in a number of hospitals, consolidation of services at Children's Hospital, with some existing beds that were not utilized being commissioned. But again, that shift did not entail the creation of a community supportive home care delivered service.

Similarly, in terms of the downsizing of our two teaching hospitals, which was undertaken before March 31, there were replacement services, but the majority of those were actual bed replacements for the individuals in the three locations that I have mentioned to my honourable friend—Concordia, Municipal and Deer Lodge—and accessing the continuing care service. I do not think there is any question that, in some circumstances, greater access of the existing continuing care service but not the necessity of the creation of a new or additional program venue in a Continuing Care Program.

Now, I refer back, and this is where, with all due respect, the former leader of the second opposition

party maybe got a little strayed in terms of her statements around the St. Boniface closures of surgical beds and the staff layoff notices that went out. My honourable friend the member for River Heights (Mrs. Carstairs) made the automatic assumption that there should be a position created in the community for the ones that were being eliminated in the St. Boniface Hospital.

An Honourable Member: I did not say that.

Mr. Orchard: No, that was the tenor of her remarks.

An Honourable Member: No.

Mr. Orchard: Well, then the newspaper and what I heard in Question Period was not right.

But I wanted to get my introductory remarks because I think there are two quotations in there that are appropriate for all of us to revisit. They are not my remarks, so my honourable friends do not have to search in them hidden meanings or diabolical plans. They are just statements of considered fact by the Centre for Health Policy and Evaluation wherein the essence of those remarks were that one should not conclude that for every acute care bed that is closed there has to be a replacement of that bed and the service it provided with a service in the community or elsewhere in the system, that there are opportunities and significant opportunities to downsize the acute care service delivery section without replacement of service simply through more effective operation of our acute care facilities.

Clearly, that is what is happening as we speak. That is the genesis of implementation of better programming, better management at St. Boniface. I think my honourable friend will see those kinds of management initiatives decrease the reliance in our acute care hospitals on inpatient services.

I just want to indicate to my honourable friend that that is very much the process of, call it health care reform. It is health care reform that is going on in every single province in Canada. I will use British Columbia as an example, because all too often the seniors in our society get identified with increasing inpatient needs. That is a pretty common attachment of—you know, our population is aging, therefore, we need more acute care beds, et cetera.

* (1630)

British Columbia has two dimensions going for them: (a) I think they are the fastest growing population of all the provinces in Canada; and (b) I also believe that they are the fastest growing retirement population in Canada, because quite frankly a lot of people leave the Prairies, for instance, to enjoy the milder climate of Vancouver Island. With those changes in population, which would tend one to believe there has to be more acute care hospital beds, the British Columbia government, before the last election and after the last election, have accepted the lowered acute care bed ratio per thousand population as was recommended in their royal commission report which is going to mean in British Columbia, with a growing population of both in general and with senior, a reduction in acute care bed capacity.

Of course, that is what in part is putting the intellect, if you will, behind the decision to retire Shaughnessy Hospital from service, because they are moving away from acute care systems. Right now, for instance, in Saskatoon, as I understand it, there is a newly constructed hospital which has not been opened yet because they are in the process of deciding how they reconfigure their acute care services in Saskatoon, given a decreased demand and reliance on acute care beds.

In each and every case, I can tell my honourable friend, whether it be in Manitoba, as I have explained previous to mentioning some brief detail around British Columbia and Saskatchewan, those downsizings in acute care capacity are, with few exceptions, done without a budgetary replacement in the community.

There will be some improvement in both amount and availability of some community-based services, certainly, but not nearly the dollar-for-dollar budget transfer, and that is a reality. They are able to offer those services in a more effective fashion, and we believe we can too.

My honourable friend will be interested to know also, and we can pursue this maybe further as we discuss this line in the Estimates, the managers of some of our housing projects are very supportive of the Continuing Care Program, so supportive of it that they believe there is an opportunity to manage it better within their facilities and have commenced some discussions with the ministry that I am very interested in, in seeing how we can make that community-based relationship with the Continuing Care Program to make the system work more

effectively for those who are assessed and need it for care that are resident in those buildings.

That has not led to a policy change or a program change, but clearly, I sense a very, very enthusiastic willingness to pursue that opportunity with the ministry and with Continuing Care, and we want to do that because now is the time to have all Manitobans take a real solid look at how we can exercise opportunities for progressive change to make all programs work better.

Mr. Chomlak: Madam Chairperson, what I can gather from what the minister has said to this point is that all of the changes to the health care system that have occurred have not required any significant change in programming or services offered in the community. Is that correct?

Mr. Orchard: In part.

Mr. Chomlak: Can the minister explain in which part it is correct and in which part it is incorrect?

Mr. Orchard: The part that is correct is that unless one considers a community hospital community, and I do not sense that is where my honourable friend is coming from, that degree that would be incorrect in his assessment, correct in my assessment. We have introduced new services for long-term care at three facilities, and that has allowed us to physically transfer the service and budget from a more expensive facility, i.e., teaching hospital to a less costly facility, i.e., Concordia acute care hospital, Municipal or Deer Lodge long-term care facility.

That, I do not think, is the pure definition of community my honourable friend believes is community, but it is a redeployment and a reinvestment in the health care system which has done two things. I submit, without denigrating the service provided to panelled Manitobans who are in both of the teaching hospitals, I am not denigrating the service that they receive there, but I know that in an acute care hospital the environment for care is not the same as it is in a dedicated long-term care facility.

I will simply say to my honourable friend that that shift did two things. It allowed a better opportunity for quality care, because the care was long-term care, not acute care. Secondly, it did reduce the system cost in providing that care.

That is why we were able, in part, to reduce our global budget this year, because we are spending less resource on average to support those

individuals in a better care environment. That is health care reform. In addition to that, we are working with community groups for year two of service delivery, replacement of service delivery and enhancement of service delivery in the community, some of which may flow from the discussions that some of our housing managers want to undertake.

If that results in a new policy and/or program approach, that will be community based, that will be new, that will satisfy, I think, my honourable friend. But if my honourable friend takes a look, groundwork on stage two has been underway. Stage one, year one was the downsizing, primarily of our teaching hospitals and a replacement of services where necessary and appropriate in lesser cost, more appropriate facilities.

That is a replacement of service, that is new commitment of program, that is new hiring, that was new capital investment in some cases; but it is not pure community that my honourable friend is, I think, wanting to attach to, and I accept that. But we did not intend that first year of shift from tertiary hospitals to be focused on a plethora of new community-based services.

Mental health is entirely different. We can get into the mental health reform. That is an entirely different process than the first year of our downsizing of the acute care hospitals.

Mr. Chomlak: Madam Chairperson, can the minister explain why last year in the Estimates book he indicated that there would be 24,000 recipients of home care, and this year the Estimates book says 20,000 recipients of home care. In other words, the total number of recipients has dropped by 4,000.

Mr. Orchard: Madam Chair, I have, on page 54, that "approximately 24,000 Manitobans will receive services from the Home Care Program in the fiscal year 1993/94."

* (1640)

Mr. Chomlak: Madam Chairperson, this is a new one to me because on page 46 of last year's Estimates book, I see approximately 24,000 Manitobans will receive home care services—do you know what?—I have erred. That is right. I was looking at the home care equipment program, as opposed—well, my question is not wrong in a certain extent, but I will rephrase the question. It was the wrong question. The minister is correct.

Madam Chairperson, 24,000 home care equipment—the same question, why is the home care equipment program down by 4,000 this year?

Mr. Orchard: That is the expected result of the \$50 charged for supply lines that were supplied free of charge, and equipment items. Anything over \$50 will be provided at no cost to the recipient, but anything under \$50 will and that would account for the fewer numbers.

Mr. Chomlak: Madam Chairperson, the tenor of the minister's reform document certainly, if one looks at page 13, implies a shift. The charts, the graph and the money reductions imply a shift towards community-based service, more efficient, less expensive, less costly, more efficient services offered in the community as opposed to the institution. The chart on page 13, which I have seen, certainly implies that, but let me get to the heart of the matter.

We see a reduction, the minister will no doubt admit, and without getting into playing around with the numbers, because it is very hard to deal with the hospital budgets until we get to that item, but basically the hospital budgets are down in the Estimates by \$20 million. So we see them down at \$20 million. Presumably, a good deal of that \$20 million is as a result of fewer acute care beds in the hospital system.

We then move to the Continuing Care system and we see an elimination of the homemaker services. We see a user fee charged on home care equipment supplies. We see 4,000 people dropped off of the home care equipment supply program because they fall off of the \$50 cutoff line. We see personal care home bed costs rising dramatically, a 74 percent increase, and we see a means test for personal care home beds put into place. We see increased personal expenditure on the part of the recipients of the service at the community level.

What we do not see in this mix are any initiatives from the department, any programs at this point from the department that are designed to fit in with the tenor of what is outlined and what Manitobans were led to believe would be the case in terms of the minister's Health care reform.

The minister has to admit that certainly, and throughout the document, not only implied, but specifically stated, is one of the reasons why there

is considerable distress in the community with the minister's initiatives.

Mr. Orchard: Madam Chairperson, first of all, I want to indicate to my honourable friend that he can continue to use the phraseology, user fee, but it is not accurate. User fees have a very distinct meaning in health care provision and user fees trigger the penalty under the Canada Health Act and the reduction of payments supporting health care service provision from the federal government should a province introduce user fees.

Now, if my honourable friend wants to use them, my honourable friend can, but my honourable friend would also have to then say that Premier Ed Schreyer and the New Democrats introduced user fees in Pharmacare, Personal Care Home Program. Now, I do not mind if he wants to do that, if he wants to be open and honest about it, that is the way we will approach it. [interjection] Pardon me? [interjection] Well, it is a consumer contribution, and it is the same dollars, but it does not have the connotation of contravening the Canada Health Act. I think that is what all of us are attempting to preserve, the Canada Health Act and the provision of servicing.

Now, let me indicate to my honourable friend. My honourable friend is concerned and we are going to have a very lengthy and generous debate in this area. I look forward to it because my honourable friend is concerned, for instance, about homemaking services being removed from the Continuing Care Program this year, my policy decision that I indicated earlier on.

My honourable friend, in expressing that concern, has to acknowledge that in 1985, a very progressive policy was brought in by the then Howard Pawley government, called support services for seniors. The driving force behind support services for seniors was to provide the opportunity in communities, rural and northern, and within the larger community of Winnipeg support services for seniors groups through community councils, the opportunity to provide supportive services for independent living for seniors at a cost-recovery basis or supplied entirely by volunteers or a combination thereof.

The support services for seniors program which now I think has gone to some three point some million dollars—we can get to that line and discuss it—has enabled a number of communities in

Manitoba to provide services that were never provided by government in any fashion, but in the issue specific to my honourable friend's statement, services of house cleaning, meal preparation to support individuals and their independent living in their own homes or apartments.

The structure of the support services to seniors program, as introduced by the NDP—and I congratulated them for it then and continue to—was to provide on a cost-recovery basis, my honourable friend's terminology, a user-fee basis, that service that was formerly provided free of charge by the Continuing Care Program in areas where the support services for seniors, the community services organizations brought the service in.

Now, at the time, it might have been smart politics for me to accuse the NDP of bringing user fees into the Continuing Care Program, but it made good sense. It still makes good sense. What is different, and I will admit to the difference in approach with this budget, is it has been a gradual approach up until this year where the housecleaning and meal preparation support has been removed from the Continuing Care service venue when support services for seniors have been available in that community.

There is considerable sophistication across a lot of the province right now, but there are areas without support services for seniors. So what we had was a genuine disparity of program, where communities that had support services for seniors programs, their seniors were paying for housekeeping and meal preparation. Because there were not support services for seniors in other communities or parts of the city of Winnipeg, they were receiving them free of charge, even though in those communities where there were no support services for seniors there were services available that the individual could access and pay for.

So we made the policy decision—and my honourable friend can argue that it was wrong, and that is fine, I will accept his argument that it was wrong—we decided that we would make it consistent across Manitoba, that no one would receive free-of-charge housecleaning and meal preparation as part of the Continuing Care Program, because we do not believe there is any area of the province of Manitoba where those services cannot be accessed either through

support services for seniors programs or for hire in the community.

If my honourable friend believes that was wrong, then my honourable friend has to say that they would reinstate that if they were to achieve government and, in so doing, would have to say that the 1985 policy foundation of Howard Pawley's government was wrong, and that would make for another interesting debate if my honourable friend makes that statement.

* (1650)

Let us deal with some other areas. That support services for seniors, that is the meals and housecleaning aspect of it. I do not expect to be applauded by those Manitoba residents who were receiving that service free of charge, because there were no support services for seniors. I do not expect to get accolades and thank you's, because they are going to have to now pay for that service as other Manitobans have been paying for upwards of nine years.

I think my honourable friend has to admit that there is a consistency of approach there. But what is more important, and my honourable friend ought to consider, is in looking at the budgetary line, he will see that there is an increase in the budgetary line of Continuing Care year over year. That is with a reduction in resource to provide housecleaning and meal preparation. We have invested that into more sophisticated care needs to maintain independent living for more people for a more prolonged period of time.

Now, that is what my honourable friend says we should be doing, and that is exactly what we are doing, and that is exactly why I have said this policy is consistent with the health reform document.

Now let us consider a couple of other aspects, because while we are at it let us get all of the issues on the table. We have introduced consumer contribution in terms of ostomy supplies, up to \$300 per year, a 50-50 cost-sharing up to a maximum of \$300 per year. Those supplies were formerly provided free of charge. We made that difficult decision for several reasons. First of all, other provinces do require significant contributions and in a lot of cases more contributions from their ostomists in terms of maintaining their supply program. Ours still remains as generous as most programs. Again, there is a reduction in the commitment to the Continuing Care Program as a

result of that, but we did not take the budget away. We left it in there to purchase yet more care for Manitobans to maintain their independent living in their homes and in their communities to avoid the institutionalized care.

We introduced a policy that home care equipment under \$50 would be paid for by the individual. We still maintain the wheelchair and the more expensive home support supply programs as part of the Home Care program, but for lesser cost, no. The reason, again, is to take that resource—because, Madam Chair, I do not believe, if most Manitobans think about it, that asking to purchase an \$8 or a \$10 or a \$12 cane is an undue imposition of cost. Again, we did not remove those dollars from the budget, we reinvested them. In what? More care to maintain independent living of individuals in the community.

So, Madam Chairperson, I say that everything we have done this year is consistent with reinvestment in community care. Yes, it is asking some people to contribute out of their pocket for something they received free under the program before, but this environment, financial and fiscally, does not enable us to make those free programs available anymore. That is why when we are engaged in this debate I want to hear more from my honourable friend the New Democrat and my honourable friend the Liberal that it is wrong. I expect to hear that from them. But I want to know if you would reinstate them should you be government, because any other position is just simply nefarious politics of low value.

* * *

Mr. Marcel Laurendeau (Deputy Chairperson of Committees): Madam Chairperson, a motion was moved in the section of the Committee of Supply, meeting in Room 255, by the member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman). The motion reads:

I move, that line 16.4(g)(1) be reduced by \$150,000 from management salaries, and that this committee strongly urge the minister to consider using the resources saved to restore the Parkland Human Resources Opportunity Centre.

Madam Chairperson, the motion was defeated on a voice vote, and subsequently two members requested that a formal vote on this matter be taken.

Madam Chairperson: A formal vote has been requested. Call in the members.

(Concurrent sections in Chamber for formal vote)

Madam Chairperson: Order, please. In the section of the Committee of Supply dealing with the Estimates of the Department of Education, a formal vote was requested.

The question before the House is, moved by the honourable member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman), that line 16.4(g)(1) be reduced by \$150,000 for management salaries and that this committee strongly urge the minister to consider using the resources saved to restore the Parkland Human Resource Opportunity Centre.

A COUNTED VOTE was taken, the result being as follows:

Yeas 18, Nays 25.

Madam Chairperson: The motion is accordingly defeated.

The hour being after 5 p.m., committee rise.

Call in the Speaker.

IN SESSION

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hour being after 5 p.m., prior to private members' hour, the honourable member for Gimli with committee changes.

Committee Changes

Mr. Edward Helwer (Gimli): I move, seconded by the member for St. Vital (Mrs. Render), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Economic Development be amended as follows: the member for Roblin-Russell (Mr. Derkach) for the member for Assiniboia (Mrs. McIntosh); the member for Emerson (Mr. Penner) for the member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Praznik).

Motion agreed to.

House Business

Hon. Clayton Manness (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I would like to announce at this time, believing that the representations toward Bill 22 will not be exhausted tonight, I would like to call another period for the Standing Committee on Economic Development to consider Bill 22 tomorrow afternoon at one o'clock until 5 p.m.

Mr. Speaker: I would like to thank the honourable government House leader for that information.

Mr. Speaker: Is it the will of the House to call it six o'clock?

Some Honourable Members: Yes.

Mr. Speaker: The hour being 6 p.m., the House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow (Friday).

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, June 17, 1993

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