



Fifth Session - Thirty-Fifth Legislature

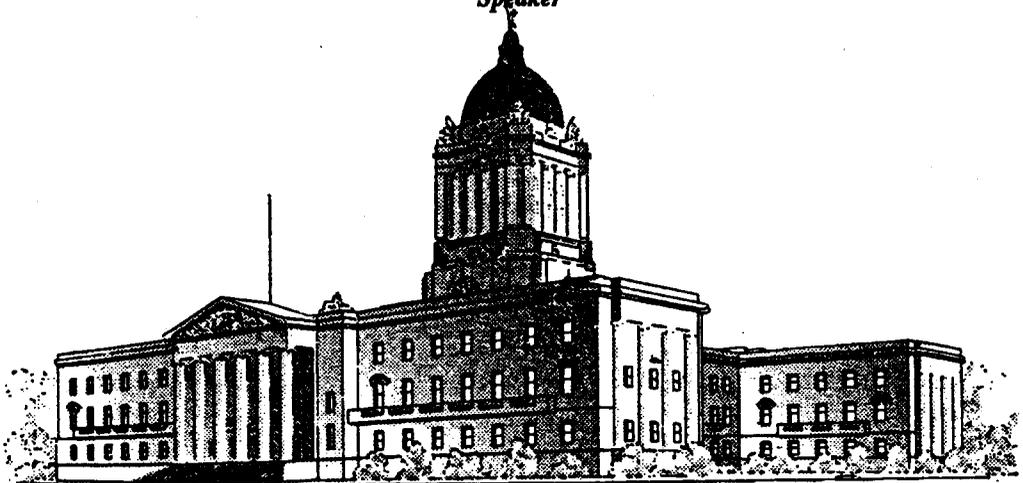
of the

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(Hansard)

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authority of
The Honourable Denis C. Rocan
Speaker*



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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Fifth Legislature

Members, Constituencies and Political Affiliation

NAME	CONSTITUENCY	PARTY
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
KOWALSKI, Gary	The Maples	Liberal
LAMOUREUX, Kevin	Inkster	Liberal
LATHLIN, Oscar	The Pas	NDP
LAURENDEAU, Marcel	St. Norbert	PC
MACKINTOSH, Gord	St. Johns	NDP
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	NDP
MANNES, Clayton, Hon.	Morris	PC
MARTINDALE, Doug	Burrows	NDP
McALPINE, Gerry	Sturgeon Creek	PC
McCORMICK, Norma	Osborne	Liberal
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
ROBINSON, Eric	Rupert's Island	NDP
ROCAN, Denis, Hon.	Gladstone	PC
ROSE, Bob	Turtle Mountain	PC
SANTOS, Conrad	Broadway	NDP
SHELLENBERG, Harry	Rossmere	NDP
STEFANSON, Eric, Hon.	Kirkfield Park	PC
STORIE, Jerry	Flin Flon	NDP
SVEINSON, Ben	La Verendrye	PC
VODREY, Rosemary, Hon.	Fort Garry	PC
WOWCHUK, Rosann	Swan River	NDP

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, May 9, 1994

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Thompson General Hospital Patient Care

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Barbara McLeod, Maggie Hurtubise, Linda Perchaluk and others requesting the Legislative Assembly to request the government of Manitoba to consider reviewing the impact of reductions in patient care at the Thompson General Hospital with a view towards restoring current levels of patient care and, further, to ask the provincial government to implement real health care reform based on full participation of patients, health care providers and the public, respect for the principles of medicare and an understanding of the particular needs of northern Manitoba.

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, I have the pleasure of presenting several annual reports: the Annual Report 1992-93 of the Department of Agriculture; the Annual Report 1992-93 of Manitoba Farm Mediation Board; and the Annual Report 1992-93 of the Manitoba Agricultural Credit Corporation.

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 Warren Collegiate sixty Grade 11 students under the direction of Mr. Wiebe and Mr. Smith. This school is located in the consistency of the honourable Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Enns).

Also this afternoon, from the Children of the Earth High School, we have eight Grade 9 students

under the direction of Ms. Jan Orvis-Cook. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Point Douglas (Mr. Hickes).

Also this afternoon, from Pinkham School, we have twenty Grade 5 students under the direction of Ms. Siobhan Faulkner. This school is located in the consistency of the honourable member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale).

From the Sisler High School, we have twenty Grade 11 students under the direction of Mr. Bill Harper. This school is located in the consistency of the honourable member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux).

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

* (1335)

Speaker's Ruling

Matter of Privilege— Functions of the Office of Speaker

Mr. Speaker: Prior to Oral Questions, I have a ruling for the House.

After Prayers on May 3, 1994, the honourable member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) rose on a matter of privilege and moved: "THAT the statements made by the Premier calling into question the impartiality of the Speaker be referred to the Committee on Privileges and Elections."

After receiving advice from the honourable member for Thompson, the honourable First Minister (Mr. Filmon) and the House leader of the Liberal Party (Mr. Lamoureux), I took the matter under advisement.

As all honourable members know, I view this as a very serious matter, and I would like to take some time to review the main points in the argument put forward by the honourable member for Thompson when he rose on this matter of privilege.

The member tabled a transcript from a television interview with the First Minister just after the votes had been taken on the budget. The transcript quotes the Premier saying, and I quote: When the votes are taken, we have 29, they have 28. You'll continue to see this happen and I don't see it as being a lot different from other years.

The honourable member for Thompson, if I may summarize what he said, interpreted those words of the First Minister as meaning that he, the Premier, did not see me, the Speaker, as an independent arbitrator of this House and that I was subject to the government Whip.

The Premier, in speaking to the matter of privilege on May 3, acknowledged he had said that there had been six votes in the Chamber thus far in the session and that the results had been 29 to 28. He went on to say, in each case, and I quote: "I would never, ever bring myself in a position to question your impartiality or your right to rule in accordance with the precedents that have been long established in the parliamentary tradition of this world."

The honourable member for Thompson has fulfilled the first condition of privilege by raising the matter at the first available opportunity. He indicated that he had only received the transcript of the interview on May 3, and I take his word for that.

Before ruling on whether a prima facie case has been established, I would like to make some observations.

Erskine May's *Parliamentary Practice*, 20th edition, defines privilege as: "the sum of the peculiar rights enjoyed by each House collectively . . . and by Members of each House individually, without which they could not discharge their functions, and which exceed those possessed by other bodies and individuals," or as Hatsell, the great 18th Century authority said: The privileges of Parliament are rights which are "absolutely necessary for the due execution of its powers."

May, page 127, as well as Beauchesne Citation 71 are clear that accusations of partiality of the Speaker are reflections on the Chair, and Beauchesne Citation 168(6) indicates that such

reflections may be punished as breaches of privileges.

This is backed up by the Australian House of Representatives Practice, edited by A.R. Browning, that states: "Traditionally, a reflection on the character or actions of the Speaker inside or outside the House"—and I want to come back to this point later—"has been punishable as a breach of privilege . . ."

Another authority, The Encyclopedia of Parliament, edited by Laundy and Wilding, indicates that disrespect to the House collectively is the original and fundamental form of breach of privilege, and includes libels on the House at large and upon the Speaker.

I looked at the question of whether the principle that statements made outside the House by a member cannot form the basis of a matter of privilege is applicable to this case. In my opinion, it does not because the remarks of the First Minister (Mr. Filmon) relate directly to proceedings in this House. My opinion is reinforced by a ruling of Speaker Lamoureux of the Canadian House of Commons given on May 10, 1966, where he indicated that in order to constitute a breach of privilege the matter must be based on things arriving from the actual transaction of the business of the House.

Maignot in his book *Parliamentary Privilege in Canada* put it this way: "if one member speaking outside the House reflects improperly on the conduct of another member's parliamentary activities and the matter is raised as a matter of privilege in the House, the Speaker certainly has jurisdiction to examine those same words and determine if there is a prima facie case of privilege or contempt of the House." In our case, the issue does arise from my casting votes on the budget which is definitely part of the actual transaction of the business of the House.

A review of Manitoba Speakers' rulings found nothing directly relevant to this particular matter of privilege.

* (1340)

The Canadian House of Commons does have some rulings that are of interest. On March 23,

1993, Speaker John Fraser ruled a prima facie case of privilege existed when a member of Parliament was quoted in a newspaper as alleging that the Deputy Speaker was in collusion to restrict the right of members of the Bloc Quebecois to speak in the House.

On May 7, 1976, Speaker Jerome ruled that accusations by a former M.P. that members of the House of Commons had been in receipt of bribes was one of privilege.

Speaker Jerome also ruled on July 25, 1975, that accusations by a newspaper about a member leaking budget information were the basis of a prima facie question of privilege.

Now, to get back to the case before us. My job now is to decide whether, assuming that the facts are as stated, the conduct complained of can reasonably be held to be a breach of privilege. In my review of the actual words spoken by the Premier (Mr. Filmon), I find that they do not in themselves reflect on the partiality of the Chair. They do not directly imply wrongdoing, slander or partiality of a presiding officer such as were noted in the House of Commons rulings I just cited. The interpretation of the honourable member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) of what the words spoken by the First Minister is just that—an interpretation. The explanation by the Premier of what he meant is also just that—an explanation. To paraphrase Beauchesne Citation 494, I must accept statements by members respecting themselves and particularly within their own knowledge.

In this case, what we have are an interpretation and an explanation of the same incident. I doubt neither the intentions nor the honesty of the honourable member for Thompson or the honourable First Minister. Therefore, I do not find that there is a prima facie case of privilege.

Having said that, I would like now to thank the honourable House leader of the Liberal Party for something he said in his remarks on May 2. He noted that members of the media as well as members of this House have been saying that the government has a majority of one in this House. This has been a concern to me as well.

The government does not have a majority. There are 28 government members in this House and 28 opposition members, and there is one Speaker. What we have is a tied House. What we also have is a Speaker that has had to and I am pretty sure will continue to have to cast deciding votes.

I appreciate the comments of the Premier and of the honourable member for Thompson and indeed of many members in acknowledging the difficult and delicate role the Chair is forced to play in the upcoming weeks and months. As a servant of the House, I will do my utmost to fulfill that role to the best of my ability and in accordance with the best traditions of parliament. That concludes the matter of privilege.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Burns Committee Status Report

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Premier.

Last week during the Premier's Estimates there were at least three hours of questions by both Leaders of the opposition dealing with the issue of the Jets and the Burns report and the deadline and the viability of the hockey team and the issues of public support and various options.

Again, there is media speculation that there are various proposals being put forward just waiting for the review of the existing private owner of the hockey team. Of course, this concerns all of us because under the agreement that was signed by the Premier and the mayor of the City of Winnipeg on November 12, 1991, as each committee keeps studying this issue and studying this issue the taxpayers of the province of Manitoba are subject to the partial operating losses of the hockey team.

I would like to ask the Premier: What is the status of the Burns report? Secondly, how much money are we anticipating that the province will have to pay for the operating losses of the hockey team for the fiscal year we are currently in, which is the next fiscal year of the Winnipeg Jets hockey team?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, I have a couple of things to say in response to that

question. First, as I understand, the information that was the basis of a newspaper article on the weekend came from some briefing notes that were being prepared for the Burns commission. The Burns commission has not supplied me with any written report and recommendations, and it is my assumption that no final report exists. In fact, I am told that Mr. Burns issued a statement to the effect that some of the material within that newspaper article was incorrect.

The member is correct in saying that all of us ought to be interested in finding a solution as quickly as possible so that we obviate the need for continued support of the losses of the Jets hockey team. That is why both the Mauro committee and now the Burns committee have been asked to give us their best advice as to the solution to what is a very difficult issue. The issue of course is one in which we would not like to have the ongoing support of the team require funding from the taxpayer. On the other hand, there appears to be still some question of viability without further commitments of support from the private sector.

With respect to the final aspect of the member's question, as I told him last Monday evening, until we get the information from the interim steering committee on an approved budget for the forthcoming year for the Jets hockey team—and we do not expect to get that for I believe it is at least a month—we are not in a position to give him any accurate estimate on what support we may have to give vis-à-vis losses in the next season.

*(1345)

The Winnipeg Jets Operating Losses

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, it is indeed alarming for all of us to not know four weeks already into the current fiscal year what our liabilities are going to be for the agreement signed by the Premier on November of 1991.

It is also a great concern for us, when the Premier and the mayor established this committee in November of 1991, they asked that all these issues be dealt with: the issue of the new arena, the issue of public support; the issue of viability to the

team. This, of course, was moved over to the Mauro report, or the Mauro committee, then four or five months later it has been moved over into the Burns committee.

Everytime we drift along and drift along and not make a decision, the taxpayers of Manitoba and the taxpayers of the city of Winnipeg are liable for the operating loss of the hockey team.

My question to the Premier today is, and he has been briefed by members of the committee he indicated in Estimates last week, members of the Burns committee, the Mauro report indicated a \$30-million necessity of public support for a new arena. There is speculation today that it may well be \$60 million of public support for a new facility.

Can the Premier tell us, is the cost of this new facility doubling in terms of public support? Can the Premier tell us why we cannot get the figure for the operating losses of the team? Does the team not even have a draft budget, so that we would have some information on the basis by which all Manitobans can start making an intelligent decision about the various options?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, firstly, I would not put out draft information when we are in a position to get firm information on which to make that kind of—I know it may be good fodder for the Leader of the Opposition to try and make some political hay on it, but it is not the basis on which to make good decisions.

Secondly, in our discussion last Monday evening, he acknowledged that it would not be appropriate for government to attempt to make decisions when they do not have final indications of whether or not there will be a revenue-sharing agreement among the various teams in the NHL or a salary cap, both of which were seen as essential to a decision in the Mauro commission report.

The Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of the Liberal Party (Mr. Edwards), I believe, both indicated their agreement with that approach to it. We do not have either one of those pieces of the puzzle in place. So the question is, do you take a precipitous decision and commit to a development and a construction of a new arena, purchase of a team and all these things without that information,

or do you ensure that when you make the decision, that critical long-term decision that does involve taxpayer participation to some degree, that you have all that information as much as possible?

We are taking the prudent course by ensuring that we do have that information. The course that he is suggesting would be imprudent, Mr. Speaker, and I do not accept it.

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, the Premier cannot talk about prudent courses when he signed an agreement in 1991 that requires us to pay for the operating losses of a hockey team and he cannot tell us four weeks before the budget of the Jets what it is going to be. So let the Premier not lecture any member of this Chamber about his agreement and his operating loss of the team being covered by us.

The Premier has now confirmed that the arena is not an option because we do not have a salary cap as recommended in the Mauro report, and we do not have a revenue-sharing agreement from all the other NHL teams.

My question is to the Premier. If we are going to cancel the operating loss deal that he has signed for the team, what is the option that we are looking at in six weeks in terms of the hockey team?

The government signed an agreement. It has moved it from one blue-chip committee to another blue-chip committee to another blue-chip committee, and we want to know six weeks ahead of time, what are the options for the public of Manitoba.

Are we going to have all the facts and figures on the table so that we can make an intelligent decision on something that is very important to our province?—but also so are the losses that we have to cover very important to the people of this province.

* (1350)

Mr. Filmon: You see, Mr. Speaker, this is why Manitobans cannot put any trust in this Leader of the Opposition. Just Monday evening he said: I do not want to politicize this issue because this is too important to Manitobans and there is a very fragile situation.

Now, today, he is doing exactly what he said he would not do, trying to make some cheap political points. That is why Manitobans do not trust him.

The fact of the matter is that we signed an agreement that did include responsibility for sharing losses with the City of Winnipeg, because such an agreement already existed with Winnipeg Enterprises Corporation in which they were responsible for the losses exceeding the first \$400,000, I believe. We took, in return for that, shares in the hockey club so that we would then become covered for some degree for the losses that we would be incurring.

There are reasons behind all of these, but the long-term reason why we are spending the appropriate time in trying to find a solution is that I believe most Manitobans would like to see the continuance of an NHL hockey team in Winnipeg. I believe most Manitobans recognize that if the team is to fold or be withdrawn from this city, it will not likely return in our lifetimes. So most Manitobans want the right decision to be made, and they want sufficient information available at the time that the decision is being made.

We do not have all that information. That is what the Burns committee is saying; that is what everybody is saying. We do not know whether or not the NHL will have a revenue-sharing agreement. That is one of the critical factors pointed to in the Mauro report. We do not know whether or not there will be a salary cap at this point. That is one of the requirements put forward in the Mauro committee.

So for him to try and make some cheap political hay on this is irresponsible, and it goes absolutely contrary to what he said on Monday—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Points of Order

Mr. Doer: The Premier is imputing political motives in this Chamber about cheap politics, when we are asking questions about the costs of the various options that he signed. All we want is the information, Mr. Speaker. Let us get the rhetoric from the Premier out of the debate, and let us have an intelligent debate about this issue.

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

* * *

Mr. Filmon: On another point of order, I have said repeatedly, when I have that information I will share it with him and other members, so let him not try and put anything in my mouth.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable First Minister does not have a point of order. That is clearly a clarification of the facts. That is all that was.

**Connie Curran
Contract Cancellation**

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Premier, and given the government's track record on the kind of deals that they have entered into, the question by the Leader of the Opposition was quite justifiable.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier has staunchly defended the Connie Curran contract, the \$4 million plus \$800,000 of expenses, tax-free, even going so far on radio to defend it. Since the Minister of Health has told us in Estimates that not all of the money has been paid out to Connie Curran and that some money is in trust, will the First Minister direct the Minister of Health to not pay out that more than probably three-quarters of a million dollars in trust to Connie Curran and, instead, put that money back into health care for the many programs that have been cut by this government and to community services that are not in place?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): The honourable member will recall discussion last week when it came to costs in health care systems, and I reminded him of the cost to the Ontario health system of the salary and expenses of one Michael Decter, with whom honourable members opposite are very familiar.

You know, even if they withheld 20 percent of Mr. Decter's salary, he would still be paid way more than Frank Maynard here in Manitoba. The honourable member ought to remember when he is raising questions like this, the issue of hypocrisy does enter into the debate from time to time. It

usually only happens when honourable members from the New Democratic Party get into the debate.

When you are looking at the performance of a contract, Mr. Speaker, you have to look at what you contracted for and look at the deliverables, and that is precisely what has been happening. As a result of looking at the deliverables, the savings that were contracted for were arrived at within the range contracted for. There are no legal grounds by which the government of Manitoba or the hospitals involved in the contract can hold back money indefinitely.

* (1355)

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, why, since the minister himself said on November 3 that he could not justify Connie Curran's contract, can this minister now say that he is going to pay another three-quarters of a million dollars to Connie Curran when everyone in Manitoba knows that this contract and this project, the Connie Curran contract of \$4 million plus \$800,000 in expenses, tax-free, is a disgrace to the province of Manitoba?

Mr. McCrae: Not unlike the previous set of questions, it brings into the debate a fair amount of rhetoric. The honourable member brings into the discussion a fair amount of rhetoric, as well as interpretation which certainly is not accurate.

I remember the newspaper article to which the honourable member refers very well, and it is very difficult, Mr. Speaker, to tell the honourable member today, when his mind is clearly made up that it does not matter that there is all this waste and inefficiency in our hospitals. His mind is made up; he wants to continue to defend that waste and inefficiency. I very, very clearly disagree with him and so do the people who need the health system in the future.

**Home Care Program Review
Tabling Request**

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Mr. Speaker, we think a million dollars going out of the health care system would be far better in the health care system paying nurses than paying their American consultant.

My final supplementary to the same minister: Since they are now going to go ahead and pay the \$750,000 more to Connie Curran, will they table the home care contract and, at the same time, will the minister ask the Department of Justice to view the legality and consider breach of contract against Connie Curran, Mr. Speaker?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, that is typical of the New Democrats and is the reason why we need to make changes to our health system, because he has just finished saying, if you have a million dollars just throw it into the system. Do not ask how you are going to spend it or anything, just throw a million dollars into the system and that will make everything all better. That is exactly what got us into the problems in the first place, that kind of mentality.

Time for change is here, and this government and governments right across this country, New Democratic governments when they are in office, conduct appropriate reforms and do their best. In some cases, it is too bad they waited as long as they did, because they now have to go with the slash-and-burn method of reform, which is not the system we are using here in Manitoba. What we are doing is, through a phased approach, bringing about changes that will leave us with a health care system for many generations to come.

National Hockey League Salary Cap/Revenue Sharing

Mr. Paul Edwards (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I listened with interest to the response of the Premier to the Leader of the Opposition's questions, and I wanted to follow up with the Premier on one of the comments he made.

Clearly, according to Mr. Mauro's committee and according to what we know of the Burns report and according to all other people who have studied this, key to the determination as to whether or not any public money should go into an arena or the Jets is the issue of a salary cap or revenue-sharing agreement. That is not new, and I do not think the Burns committee is likely to give us further guidance on that. That seems fairly agreed to.

Mr. Speaker, my question for the Premier: Given that it is only he and Mayor Thompson that have met with Mr. Bettman from the NHL, and there is no indication publicly as to whether or not this is on a short-term agenda for the NHL, whether or not it is a realistic possibility, can the First Minister tell us whether or not all of this is in fact moot or whether or not, according to his discussions with the NHL, there is a reasonable possibility that either of those two things is going to happen in the short term?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): The Leader of the Liberal Party gave two options in his preamble. One was whether it is on the short-term agenda and, two, whether or not it is realistically possible.

Mr. Bettman is very open in saying that it is on their short-term agenda, that the NHL governors believe that it is part of the solution to long-term stability for the league. The other side of the coin, of course, cannot be answered until they are through their discussions and negotiations with the players who are adamantly opposed, I might say, to any salary cap. So, like most sensitive negotiations, nothing will be known for a considerable period of time.

They now have sort of postponed their time frame till perhaps early fall, the beginning of the next season. That is where it may reach a head. At some point, the negotiations between the players and the NHL, vis-à-vis a salary structure—as Mr. Bettman refers to it rather than “cap” but referring to it perhaps I think in a similar context to what we believe is necessary—they now are saying that they will not bring that to a head during the NHL playoffs.

They will leave it until perhaps the start of the next season as the breakpoint for their discussion. So we will not know that for some time. It is pretty evident about that, and that is what makes the decision that we have to make more difficult. Whether or not we can make it without that, as I said on Monday evening in my Estimates debate, I think it is very difficult for us to make that decision without having these pieces of the puzzle in place.

* (1400)

Mr. Edwards: Mr. Speaker, in those Estimates the Premier specifically indicated, and I am quoting: "When you look at it from a business point of view, there is not a good reason why you would want to extend that any extended length of time because you want to be able to get underway with a development decision," clearly indicating that if there was an extension it would be seen in a short-term sense. He compared it to the Abitibi-Price extension. Mr. Speaker, he has now used the words "considerable period of time" according to his best information being required to get a salary cap or revenue-sharing agreement in place.

Under the current situation with current facts as they are, Mr. Speaker: Can the First Minister indicate whether or not he believes there is any point in considering an extension, given that he has used—in his own words, he has tied it to a short period of time he would be prepared to extend it, when in fact it looks like it is "a considerable period of time," using his words, that is going to be required to even look at a salary cap or revenue-sharing agreement?

Mr. Filmon: I guess that is where we get into difficulty with words, and I should apologize. I did say "a considerable period of time," but I did talk about this fall as being the potential breakpoint. So I do not have any real assurance of any particular date. I do not think the NHL can give us any particular date.

At this point, we are hopeful and I think they are hopeful that this fall may bring a resolution to the issue, but I cannot give him any assurance on that. What I can say is that we believe that we need to have this part of the arrangement settled in order to make our decision vis-à-vis the ownership of the team and a new arena.

The Winnipeg Jets Government Ownership

Mr. Paul Edwards (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, finally, for the First Minister on this issue.

Mr. Mauro talked in his report about public majority ownership of the Winnipeg Jets hockey

team. The First Minister in Estimates on Monday talked about that as being a possible option, that the public would own the majority in Winnipeg Jets hockey team, but the Premier indicated that only if certain conditions were in place and on a temporary basis.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask the First Minister: Under what conditions would he be prepared to exercise the option and take government ownership of the Winnipeg Jets hockey team?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, I believe we ought to be prepared to take ownership on an interim basis if it facilitates putting together the best package for long-term viability of a team and arena complex. That is the critical part of it, that we would be doing it to facilitate a proper long-term solution, not doing it to become long-term owner-operators of the hockey club.

Youth Court Backlog

Mr. Gord Mackintosh (St. Johns): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Justice.

The minister has received a letter from the mother of a young offender dated February 14 of this year. In that letter, the mother talks about charges being laid against her son in August of 1993 for car theft, among other things. The mother now tells me that nine months later this youth has yet to be sentenced. In fact, we are talking here about a guilty plea. Meanwhile, this youth was involved in eight additional car thefts, according to information received from the mother. The mother says that this child is laughing at the justice system.

My question to the minister is: Given that this minister is well aware of backlogs of up to nine months even on guilty pleas, will she advise this House what plan she is going to put in place to deal with this crisis in the court?

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Mr. Speaker, the member references a very specific case. I would be willing to look into that particular case, but I would also want to be very careful because obviously the

case is still before the court. The member has said that there has not been a sentencing.

I would like to make it clear that any remarks I make today are unrelated to a specific case which the member has tried to raise in this House and deal only in general terms with the issues of the youth court to protect the fairness required for those people within the justice system.

That member comes dangerously close to ignoring due process of law, Mr. Speaker, when he raises those issues, particularly in this House.

I will be very happy to address the issue of how we are dealing with youth crime and justice in this province, because the member knows very well we have taken a very strong stand in the area of youth crime and justice. Our stand is one—and I was very happy to hear on Saturday—in which that member strongly endorsed one point of the nine-point plan.

He gave his full support to the youth justice committees, and I look forward to his continued support in our plan to deal with youth crime and violence.

I will be pleased to continue answering if the member—[interjection]

Mr. Mackintosh: I never heard an answer, Mr. Speaker; I heard some vague allegations about due process.

My question to the minister is very straightforward. What plan does she have to deal with the serious backlog in the youth court, a court in crisis?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Speaker, I reject totally the member's allegations of court in crisis. I notice that in this House, where he cannot be so irresponsible with the use of dates, he has now changed the range of backlog that he has been speaking about. He has been quite irresponsible in lately raising a period of time for backlog which is absolutely incorrect.

I can tell the member today that for those youths in custody we are booking court dates for youth in the youth court as early as June for those people who are in custody. We have no more than a

five-month backlog or a five-month waiting period.

Let me also say to the member that, again, I will remind him he comes very close to ignoring due process, because in due process of law there are two sides and cases must be prepared.

Point of Order

Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader): On a point of order, the minister has repeated an accusation made against the member for St. Johns. I would like to quote Beauchesne's 487(2): "Words may not be used hypothetically or conditionally, if they are plainly intended to convey a direct imputation."

The minister is suggesting that somehow on this side of the House, for our Justice critic to be raising questions about delay in the justice system that that is interfering in the justice system. That is not only not true, it is unparliamentary. The minister should withdraw that and should just answer the questions raised by the member.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member did not have a point of order. I believe the honourable minister was just actually quoting from the sub judice convention.

* * *

Mr. Mackintosh: The minister says there is no 11-month backlog. I bring in an example of a nine-month backlog and she says, do not bring it in.

My question for the minister, once again, Mr. Speaker: Will the minister consider putting together a committee of the Crown, of police, of defence, of administrators, of judges to try and deal with this problem? Would she try and deal with the crises—

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

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Speaker, again I say the member dangerously exaggerates the facts. He again tries to ask the Attorney General of this province to speak about a case which is before the courts, which he has brought forward to this House and which, in all interest to fairness and respect for

the position that I hold, he knows that I will not speak publicly about a case before the courts.

However, I have said that my comments are to be regarded generally. I reject totally his accusation of 11 months. I have made it clear in this House today that for those youths in custody we are booking court dates as soon as June.

I would remind the member that he is not and nor am I able to speak about some of the reasons that a specific case may now be before the courts. As he knows, there is due process to law; there are two sides to prepare a case.

* (1410)

Sex Offenders Release Notification

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Mr. Speaker, parents and community members are very concerned about the release of sex offenders into their neighbourhoods without any notification, and the police are not even notified when a sex offender completes his sentence and is released from jail.

Since the police are only made aware of parole and probation orders, can the Minister of Justice create a system so that the Winnipeg Police Department will be regularly informed as to when sex offenders are being released into the community?

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Mr. Speaker, the member speaks about a system which we have for treatment specifically of sex offenders, which is, I will tell the member, one of the leading programs both in terms of access and in the content of that particular program across Canada. We work very carefully with that particular program.

Also, Mr. Speaker, in relation to treatment of sexual offenders and the community being aware of when they are attending programs, he may like to know that I have worked with a representative from that area to make sure that police are notified when sex offenders are attending a group in that community.

Treatment Programs

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Mr. Speaker, can the Minister of Justice instruct the Crown to investigate the lengths and types of sentences being granted to sex offenders in the Manitoba court system with a view to providing greater treatment opportunities to these people, since part of the problem in treating sex offenders is that they are not spending enough time in jail to be treatable and many are receiving one-year sentences, intermittent sentences or probation? Will the minister improve the existing programs, make them more effective and make sure that people receive treatment before they are released?

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to educate the member that sentences are imposed by the courts. That is part of the responsibility of judges as they sentence individuals, and perhaps that member would like to step into the issue of judicial independence and range of sentencing. However, if he is raising concerns about an amount of time possible for sentencing, then we have to address that through federal legislation.

I would also like to say to the member then as well, in terms of treatment, we do have very active treatments within our institution, within Headingley Jail, that within Headingley those convicted sexual offenders receive individual counselling. There is also group counselling, but I will say to the member that group occurs on a regular basis. It is not a come-and-go group. It has a defined beginning and end.

Sentencing Reform

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Mr. Speaker, I am grateful the minister referred to the federal government, because the previous Parliament had a bill before it on sentencing reform.

Will this minister contact the federal government and push them to do something about sentencing reform, not just look at a bill, but do something proactive so that sentencing is fair and consistent and fair to the public and the victims?

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Mr. Speaker, the federal

Liberal government has a great deal to consider in terms of the legislation before it, both legislation that deals with young offenders and other legislation of the Criminal Code. I have presented to the federal minister several suggestions from the people of Manitoba to deal specifically with issues of the Criminal Code. I look forward to some co-operation from the federal government, but I have not had any indication at this time that they are willing to make changes.

Home Renovation Program Budget Allocation

Mr. Jerry Storie (Flin Flon): Mr. Speaker, one of the few bright spots in the provincial budget was the Home Renovation Program. There is increasing evidence that this particular program was an add-on that was added on in the process without any consultation with the Home Builders' Association, the housing industry or the Department of Housing.

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Housing (Mrs. McIntosh). Given the fact that there is no reference to the \$10 million that is to be expended in the special warrant that was passed on March 23, 1994, there is no money available in the Estimates as printed and tabled in April, can the Minister of Housing tell the people of Manitoba how the government is going to pay for this program?

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the member for Flin Flon knows parliamentary procedure full well in terms of when he refers to special warrants and the dealing with the budgetary matters. There is an allocation within the '94-95 budget, \$10 million under Other Appropriations. As he knows in terms of this particular program, there is an application process that has to be substantiated by attached invoices, quotes to tenders on any particular projects and so on, so there is a time provision in terms of as these projects will be coming forward. But provision will in fact be made to meet all payments as required.

Mr. Storie: Well, Mr. Speaker, first of all, there is no authority for this particular kind of payment and it shows us the confusion this government is in,

even in a program that has the potential for a lot of Manitobans.

My second question to the Minister of Housing is: Given the fact that there are no application forms available, there are no brochures available and the department does not have the authority to pay, can the minister tell us how long people are going to have to wait, given that they are already in some cases finishing their projects, before they will receive the support that they are entitled to from this particular program?

Mr. Stefanson: Mr. Speaker, again, I think the member for Flin Flon has served in previous governments. He knows the issues of confidentiality when preparing a budget document, and he knows that you cannot set the wheels in motion in many instances to prepare all of the documentation because of that confidentiality, or at least I hope he appreciates that aspect of preparing a budget on behalf of Manitobans.

Immediately, the wheels were put in motion to prepare all the detailed documentation that is going out, the kinds of brochures, the application forms. I have outlined for him a detailed process in terms of how applications will be dealt with. There is money allocated in the '94-95 budget. There is provision to meet the payments. I am not sure where he is heading with this questioning.

This is a program, Mr. Speaker, that has been very well received by Manitobans, both in terms of the construction industry because of the hundreds of jobs that it will create in that industry and because we are doing something for people and families in terms of improving their homes during this particular year.

Mr. Storie: Mr. Speaker, if there were application forms in place so that people could find out the information they need and if the program was restructured so that lower-income families and families with houses in the inner cities and in some rural communities could take access, it would be a good program.

My final question to the Minister of Housing (Mrs. McIntosh) or the Minister of Finance is: Can the minister tell the people of Manitoba, if they

have finished their project, when they might reasonably expect to receive the support that they were promised?

Mr. Stefanson: Again, the member for Flin Flon I think looked at the details of this program. There are provisions to deal with the people in various income levels. There is a provision to deal with individuals who qualify under the RRAP program, the Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program, which is lower than the \$5,000 threshold, Mr. Speaker. There is a provision to deal with emergency home repairs, again for individuals which are below the \$5,000 threshold. So I want to remind the member of those provisions that are in this particular program.

We are just in the process that has to deal with renovations that were started after April 20, 1994. We are just in the process of individuals. We are now three weeks from budget day. Some individuals who might have been quick off the mark are in the process of maybe starting to complete their renovation programs. They will be submitting their detailed information in terms of their cost. They will be providing the two quotes required. That will be assessed by the department, and refunds will be processed, as is provided under the program, Mr. Speaker.

Maintenance Enforcement Public Hearings

Ms. Norma McCormick (Osborne): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Justice.

On Saturday I met with about 30 people concerned with the effectiveness of Manitoba's Maintenance Enforcement Program. They shared their experiences and their common belief that the maintenance enforcement system is not working as intended.

My question to the minister is: Will the minister consider acting on the priority recommendation of this group and hold a public inquiry to examine the problems and deficiencies with this operation—[interjection] I am asking my question—to hear the suggestions of those directly affected for improving service and collection?

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Mr. Speaker, as I stated in answer to a question last week, my department is making sure that it is holding meetings and is speaking with people who are concerned about maintenance enforcement, representatives of women's groups in particular. We are gathering information.

As the member knows, a great deal of our concern is to collect money owing from people who reside in other provinces, so we are working with ministers across Canada and in the territories to look at how we can revise the REMO act, but, of course, it will take the co-operation of the federal Liberal government.

* (1420)

Out-of-Province Collection

Ms. Norma McCormick (Osborne): My supplementary, Mr. Speaker, in response to both today's question and also to my question on May 5: The minister indicated that there was a large amount of money owed to children from outside the jurisdiction. Will this minister put on record whether she considers the \$4 million of the \$27 million to be the very large piece she was referring to and what her department intends to do to collect the \$23 million owed to children by their parents who still live in Manitoba?

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Mr. Speaker, the member has put incorrect information on the record. No, that is not the accurate amount.

However, I will tell the member that we are working very hard. We are working very carefully with people within Manitoba who are owing money and who are required to pay that money. We have done that through a number of enhancements within my department. We have added five new staff members. We are also working with counterparts across the country.

Point of Order

Ms. McCormick: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, the information with respect to the \$4 million has been received from the minister's department.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member does not have a point of order. That is a dispute over the facts.

Sex Offenders Treatment Programs

Mr. Gary Kowalski (The Maples): My question is for the Minister of Justice.

Mr. Speaker, it is evident that the public is at risk when sex offenders do not receive treatment they need to avoid reoffending. Sex offenders who receive treatment reoffend at a much lower rate than those who do not receive treatment.

Because of heightened public concern for the demand for this service and the lack of resources, will her government review the resources available to provincial treatment programs for sex offenders?

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Mr. Speaker, I just need to say to the member that—from the previous question—she does not have the total amount of money owing from across Canada.

However, to the member's question, the third question in a series—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I would remind the honourable minister to deal with the matter raised. There was no point of order on the member for Osborne.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Speaker, in terms of treatment for convicted sex offenders, first of all I think the member does need to know that treatment is determined by the courts, No. 1, that is what is required when the sentence is given. Full treatment is 160 hours of therapy and it does focus upon prevention, upon rehabilitation and relapse prevention. The program does come in two forms, a form of institutional programming and also a form of programming in the probation area.

Mr. Kowalski: I have a supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

Why has this minister decided that savings can be found in community and youth corrections? Has she thereby decided that treatment programs are

not necessary, or does she have an alternate plan and will she share it with this House?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Speaker, I reject those allegations totally. Let me tell him that we do have a very comprehensive series of treatment programs. As I said in an earlier question, we have a comprehensive series of treatment programs within the institution. They involve both individualized therapy and they also involve group therapy.

As I said in an earlier answer, group therapy is not a sort of come-and-go kind of group. The group therapy is one in which there is a beginning and an end, and individuals would then go into the next group as it has the spots available.

Point of Order

Mr. Kowalski: On a point of order, the Estimates figures in the budget show that there—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I would like to remind the honourable member for The Maples that points of order are used to show the Chair that there has been a breach of the rules. This is clearly a dispute over the facts, so the honourable member does not have a point of order.

Louisiana-Pacific Co. Treaty Land Entitlements

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Mr. Speaker, several times I have raised with this House the concerns of the First Nations' communities of my constituency with regard to the Louisiana-Pacific deal.

This week I met with chiefs, and I would like to quote a chief who said: We are not opposed to economic development. No one is opposed to economic development. What we want is to be consulted. What we want to have is input, and what we want is a fair piece of the pie. We want jobs.

In light of that statement, Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the Minister responsible for Native Affairs why he has not met with the First Nations to hear their concerns on treaty land entitlement, on traditional land use, why he has not met with them. Will he make a commitment today to go up to the

constituency and meet with these bands to address this concern so that he does not put these jobs in jeopardy?

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister responsible for Native Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I find it so ironical that from the New Democratic Party benches we would have concerns raised about job opportunities. The question of how those jobs and economic opportunities are distributed is certainly a very valid question, but it is coming from a member and from a party who do not want the operation in the first place so that discussion becomes very academic.

Point of Order

Mr. Jerry Storie (Flin Flon): Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, one of the obligations of every member is to bring the truth to this House. The Minister of Labour—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please, right here. Hold it. The honourable member for Flin Flon, you know full well, sir, that is unparliamentary because in essence what you are saying, the honourable minister is not telling the truth. Therefore, that is unparliamentary. Right? [interjection]

Order, please. The honourable member for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans), I am sure, does not want to reflect on the Chair.

What has happened here, the honourable member for Flin Flon has said that the minister should bring forward the truth. What you are saying, sir, is that he has not been bringing the truth. Therefore, that is unparliamentary.

The honourable member for Flin Flon, just to withdraw that, please.

Mr. Storie: I did imply that that may be entirely possible in this instance, and if that is unparliamentary, Mr. Speaker, I will withdraw it.

Mr. Speaker: I would like to thank the honourable member for Flin Flon. There was not a point of order, by the way, because that was a dispute over the facts.

* * *

Mr. Speaker: Time for Oral Questions has expired.

NONPOLITICAL STATEMENTS

Multicultural Week

Mr. Jack Reimer (Niakwa): Mr. Speaker, I wonder if I may have leave for a nonpolitical statement.

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

Mr. Reimer: Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to inform the members of the House that this week, May 9 to 13, has been proclaimed Multicultural Week in Manitoba.

Canada is a reflection of the cultures of the world. Nowhere is the fact more evident or proudly more celebrated than here in Manitoba. Manitobans have always been deeply committed to maintaining their ethnocultural heritage and their traditions. The various celebrations, observations and festivals held across the province throughout the year attest to the enthusiasm and pride we feel about our origins.

We have become more aware of how multicultural events are a positive force in our society. They provide economic stimulants, learning experiences, a basis for understanding each other and countless opportunities for bringing our ethnocultural communities closer together. Our dynamic multicultural community is a vital factor in Manitoba's continuing growth and progress on every level. At a time when other nations are being torn apart by their ethnocultural divisions, we are building for the future on the strength of our ethnocultural diversity.

Multicultural Week is our official recognition of Manitoba's multicultural reality of its roles in our society and our day-to-day lives. I ask all members of this House to join with me in recognizing and celebrating Multicultural Week in Manitoba. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Becky Barrett (Wellington): Mr. Speaker, I, too, would like to rise and commend the people of Manitoba on the beginning of Multicultural Week

in the province of Manitoba and share, as the member for Niakwa (Mr. Reimer) has stated, the positives that the people of Manitoba have experienced through the richness and the variety of the ethnic groups that have graced our province over the last 125 years.

Mr. Speaker, I also feel that it is incumbent upon us, too, in this House to ensure that the programs and the community be enriched by everything that we do in this Legislature, and we, too, work and take account of all of our actions and the effect that all of the deliberations that we undertake in this House have on all of our communities, most particularly this week the multicultural community.

Again, Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the NDP caucus we, too, share in the celebrations of Multicultural Week.

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

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Speaker, it is with pleasure that I stand up to give comment on Multicultural Week on behalf of the Liberal caucus.

Later this week, in fact, I am going to be over at Meadows West School where there is going to be a multicultural concert. This is a school that has now sponsored a multicultural concert of sorts for the last number of years. I have had other opportunities to be able to attend it, and it is always a positive experience when you are able to participate first-hand in some of the different cultural events that are out there.

I know over the last weekend, for example, I was over at the Sikh temple on Mollard and was able to participate in a Sikh wedding. You get a better appreciation and a better understanding of the many different cultures and heritages that are out there that help make up what we are and is a part of the Canadian identity of being a multicultural society, because far too often we hear the words of multiculturalism and we do not necessarily see the sorts of actions from the public as a whole that reflect in terms of what really and truly being a multicultural society is all about.

Hopefully, as we get weeks of awareness such as this we will get more individuals participating and experiencing first-hand what multiculturalism is all about, thereby getting a better appreciation and understanding of the many different cultures and heritages that are out there. Anything that goes to further promote multicultural harmony, whether it is a heritage dance, whether it is barriers that are out there, can be a very positive thing. It is with pleasure that I say those few words. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

* (1430)

ORDERS OF THE DAY

House Business

Hon. Jim Ernst (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, House leaders have discussed certain adjustments to the sequence for Estimates consideration. Therefore, I would ask you to seek the unanimous consent of the House to set aside the Estimates of the Department of Industry, Trade and Tourism so that consideration of the Estimates of the Department of Education may begin today in Room 255. When those are completed, that section of the Committee of Supply will revert to the Estimates of the Department of Industry, Trade and Tourism in order to complete them.

Mr. Speaker: Is there unanimous consent of the House to set aside the Estimates of the Department of Industry, Trade and Tourism so that consideration of the Estimates of the Department of Education may begin today in Room 255, and that when those are completed that section of the Committee of Supply will revert to the Estimates of the Department of Industry, Trade and Tourism to complete them? Is that agreed? [agreed]

I would like to thank the honourable government House leader.

* (1440)

Mr. Ernst: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson), that Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair and the House resolve itself into a Committee to consider of the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty.

Motion agreed to, and the House resolved itself into a committee to consider of the Supply to be

granted to Her Majesty with the honourable member for St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau) in the Chair for the Department of 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): Good afternoon. Will the Committee of Supply please come to order. This section of the Committee of Supply will be considering the Estimates of the Department of Education and Training. Does the honourable Minister of Education and Training have an opening statement?

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I will say a few words to start off with. I would indicate to members at the table that our government, of course, is committed to maintaining adequate funding levels despite the current financial constraints. I know members opposite will want to take issue with me particularly that the reduction in funding represents a threat to the quality of education. I do not accept that as a matter of fact, because to accept that then would sort of be equivalent to throwing your hands up and saying you have no solutions.

The reality is, the government of Manitoba and indeed governments across the land are going to have to do reform and a lot of the changes that I think most of us around this table would agree to; they are going to have to do that in the context of restraint.

As I pointed out to those who want to listen to the global numbers, when we came into government six years ago and subsequently upon bringing down seven budgets, we have increased funding in education. I might be corrected on this, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, but it seems to be about \$750 million to \$1 billion. Maybe I am out tens of millions of dollars somewhere, but this government has certainly shown that a

commitment to education is, if not the highest, certainly the second highest level after the billion dollars in addition we have put into Health over seven budgets.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, as members know, we have increased funding to colleges by 3.3 percent and, according to much of the latest available data, Manitoba fares reasonably well in funding for schools, colleges and universities vis-à-vis the other provinces. We are ranked second in percent increase to basic operating grants for colleges. We did a telephone survey in '93 and '94 and have found out subsequently that in '94-95 several provinces are freezing and reducing their operating grants, I think in particular Alberta, Saskatchewan and Ontario, while we have increased ours by 3.3 percent.

Indications for '94-95 are that most other provinces are freezing and reducing the operating grant to university. There are wide ranges here, a range of zero percent in New Brunswick down to a minus 11 percent for Alberta. The only exception that we can find so far is a 2.4 percent increase in British Columbia, which probably represents no increase in the level of funding, but simply accounts for increased enrollment.

Tuition fee increases at colleges are similar to increases in other provinces. Also, I might indicate that average tuition fees in arts and sciences at universities in Manitoba in '91-92 were the lowest among the four western provinces. That is a number that comes from Statistics Canada, for anybody who wants to challenge the number.

Manitoba ranked in the middle in terms of elementary, secondary per-pupil expenditures in spite of the fact that this is the second year when reductions are being made on a per-pupil basis. I would like to again indicate that when we try to factor a per-pupil cost across Canada and compare Manitoba to our sister provinces and when one takes into account that the cost of living here is probably lower than—well it is lower than—the national average, I daresay that we are doing reasonably well in maintaining our commitment to funding to education.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, what needs to be remembered, and as I remind my friends, the critics from the opposition parties, is that we still as a province are spending almost \$1 billion on the education system across all facets.

I would like to spend just a few moments on talking about reform, the department restructuring in K to Senior 4, and here I am talking about regionalization of services, integration of program design and delivery with educational technologies, emphasis on aboriginal education, emphasis on quality, emphasis on assessment and evaluation—those are the hallmarks of what we want to be part of the reform model.

I want to ensure members that I hope we will have an opportunity to dialogue in depth about some of the matters, although it might be more opportune if Education Estimates were being considered a month or month and a half from now because hopefully, by that time, we will have the reform package out in greater clarity to the public.

I daresay that there are some areas that I can give insight into to the members and maybe have some understanding from them as to their views, because I have reached out to a lot of Manitobans. I certainly look forward to not only members pushing me as to what my view is on some of the issues, but also they will share with me their insights as to how they believe that reform should be conducted in the realm of education over the course of the next number of years.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I want the record to show that my No. 1 priority, having come into the ministry, is the reform of education, not only in K to Senior 4 but also post-secondary sectors of the department. To give effect to that change and to that emphasis, I should say, members are well aware that we have now appointed a second deputy minister. I will move into greater reasons for that in a time to come, but certainly one of the reasons for having to do that is the great emphasis of change. The expectations on one person, one deputy to lead this, I think, was just too much.

Measures will be taken to ensure a more co-ordinated approach to post-secondary education, as recommended by the University

Education Review Commission. A point that I would like to make is that this is why Universities Grants Commission and Colleges Secretariat are part of the same appropriation. Members will notice that there is a change in format. That is one of the reasons why we have made this change. We are trying to, again, rather than set up a number of divisions and branches and appendages, more and more, we are trying to consolidate those functions. We are hoping we can work to more of a single post-secondary division or branch within the department.

I might point out, when I am mentioning the University Education Review Commission, I am hoping and I am expecting that this month yet, I will make a definitive response to that report.

I might indicate, still talking about reform, that we have allocated this year, members will notice in the line, \$2.25 million to ensure that the K to Senior 4 reform in areas of curriculum development, standards and evaluation, parental involvement, will begin to take shape and certainly this funding will help put into place, hopefully, the reform areas. They will involve the development of a curriculum framework which will include provincial standards and benchmarks, a review of special ed programs and ongoing consultation on forum with parents and other education partners.

So, \$2.25 million, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, to be directed towards K to Senior 4 reform.

Also, progress on major departmental initiatives is furthered by these Estimates. These include Francophone schools governance, education legislation reform, review of university education and the creation of employment development centres in the school division district boundaries review. I know members will want to pose questions in all these areas.

* (1450)

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the last point I would like to make with respect to the reform agenda is that we will continue to dialogue as a government as widely and broadly as we possibly can. Certainly, a manifestation of that occurred just a little over a week ago with the Parents' Forum, which by all of the input that has come to me by

way of individual comments from virtually everybody that was in attendance certainly rated that forum as being highly successful. I certainly will use a fair amount of the material to try and guide my thoughts with respect to the ultimate blueprint that we want to share with Manitobans.

The third area I would like to talk about is distance education and technology, again one of our very high priorities. The government is committed to using the remarkable new capabilities of the electronic highway. This will radically improve education and training opportunities throughout the province. Through the application of telecommunication technologies, Manitobans will have vastly improved access to a wide variety of education and training programs, information sources and a high level of expertise from throughout this province and in fact from anywhere in the world.

As well, the department will be integrating curriculum matched software with curriculum development at the K to Senior 4 level in order to improve its own capabilities and increase the resources available to our students and teachers. Specific actions in this area include application to the Canada-Manitoba infrastructure program for a comprehensive distance education system which includes local interactive television clusters, an extensive video conferencing system for delivery of post-secondary courses in adult education, province-wide local access to Internet, a technical structure for library linkages, a system for ongoing training of skilled human resources.

Those are some of the specific actions that we hope to begin to work toward, and yet there are many others, Mr. Deputy Chairperson.

We want to develop the multimedia resource and expect to do this as an exciting, effective way of delivering curriculum to middle-year students. We want to refocus the Manitoba Satellite Network to provide research, development and course delivery for the evolving distance education system. We would like to pilot project grants to ensure that the education and training system as a whole benefits from the creativity and energy of those educators who are pioneering with the new

technologies and, of course, we want to begin to integrate this into other areas of education by an active exploration of library linkages throughout the province.

We realize that because there is such a pressure for distance education to come in in a myriad of ways and yet it is very important, given that certainly in the first instance this will all have to be supported for the most part from the public purse, it is just so crucial that there be some not only integration, but that there be a gatekeeping function in place so that there is not overlap and duplication built into a delivery system that is going to plague us cost-wise for years and, I dare say, decades to come. This has been the experience in too many of the jurisdictions into which we have looked, stateside and even some of the efforts in Canada, that various microsectors of education have run off to do their own things and other partners in the community have run off to do their own things and all of a sudden you have an incredible waste of effort and indeed of cost. What we have to do in this province is try to bring it in in an orderly fashion.

I sense that now there seems to be a desire by the federal government to also be more involved, although education per se is a provincial responsibility, but as we move into the post-secondary education and some of the other outreaches that are now more feasible through an electronic approach and a technological approach, it has to be done in a sharing of good minds and indeed of resources as between all levels of government, but beyond that thinking as to how we hold everybody back a little bit, or at least those that are let on to the system do not find themselves in the position of having to be built into a high-cost system.

So to that end, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, we are contemplating and probably will establish a Provincial Distance Education Technology Council to explore the administrative and management structures for distance education in our province.

Fourthly, the fourth broad area, skills training initiatives, of course, are to receive special

attention also. This is becoming such a—certainly not new and it is certainly not significantly different, but it is taking on new twists and it is what is making the whole area of training, and I know this is very important to the member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen), but it is what is taking on its own special initiative.

I point out to members at this table that the former federal government took all human resource activity and put it under one ministry, and of course that government now has been replaced and the new government has chosen not to change that structure tremendously. And all of a sudden one minister is finding, in this case himself, grappling not only with training per se, but how it sort of fits in with all the social reform on the social side.

We, not only we in Manitoba, but our provincial governments across the land are trying to come up with something to begin to match this structure, because departments traditionally in a provincial setting are very much caught in the older ways, and I am not going to use the word turf protection. They are trying to work together, but the reality is, we have had a social safety net in place for 30 to 40 years, which is sort of purely based on social programming in and around unemployment insurance, welfare costs and then a little bit of crossing into training.

Yet, here now we have the federal government with a structure in place where training is trying to become tied so closely and involved with social reform, and that is another dimension of the reason why we moved to a second deputy within Education, because training and education is going to become more than training and education. It is going to be a little wider. It is going to have to come into fully understanding and complementing the changes in the social safety reform that the federal government is leading.

I only point that out as a starting point, but certainly training will receive and has received special attention. In order to equip our citizens with the skills necessary in today's world, we are revitalizing the Apprenticeship Program, increased resources allocated by almost \$300,000. Yet we

will continue with what we deem to be successful programs such as the Workforce 2000, and I know members across the way would disagree. We will continue with these programs, and also CareerStart, Partners with Youth and the literacy programs.

Youth Career Development Programs continue to be strengthened. For example, new businesses will participate in the Young Entrepreneurs component of the Partners with Youth program which was introduced in '93-94. Responsibility for the provincial co-ordination of co-operative education was incorporated within youth programs to strengthen partnerships among programs that promote the transition of students from school to work. A new component of the new CareerStart program, Tradefocus, will be implemented in pilot form in '94-95 in order to enhance the profile of the trades as a career choice for Manitoba students.

The last point I would like to make, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, with respect to training is that a movement toward a fully integrated, co-ordinated approach to skills training programs was begun with the consolidation of skills training in Manitoba Education and Training. This will be enhanced further by the creation of a one-stop, single-window employment and training service called Employment Development Centres, which will include the federal and municipal governments as partners. Again, this refers back to some of the general statements I made just a few minutes ago when we today have to remove overlap and duplication in all of our efforts to try and make more successful the limited dollars that we have to direct toward the needs in these areas.

The final point I would like to cover, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, again is a focus area within the department, the new initiatives that are being developed in collaboration with our federal government. We have included \$1 million for our new initiative, welfare to work, in co-operation with the Department of Family Services and the federal government.

Under this new initiative, pilot projects will be undertaken to assist social assistance recipients to obtain employment. Assisting single parents will

be a particular focus. We will participate with the federal government on a review which will lead to significant social security reform. Clearly, education and training will be important components of social security reform. Again, I am just reinforcing the point I made a few minutes ago.

* (1500)

In addition to social security reform, opportunities exist with the federal-provincial infrastructure program and the Winnipeg Development initiative. Consultations with the federal government will result in a number of joint projects with benefits for Manitoba.

Just to finish on this point, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, our department, and indeed this government, is trying to work as closely as possible with the federal government in its efforts to restructure social security reform, because having been actively involved in the planning and the management of this province over the last, as I say, seven budgets, it is clearly obvious to us that if we do not try and evaluate our programs, reduce those that are not performing and taking those savings to those that will perform better, ultimately, we will lose the whole system we have. So governments across the land have absolutely no choice but to make those efforts. To the extent that the federal government is sincere and is genuine in its approach, and we are convinced that they are at this point, we will continue to work closely with them.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, with those few opening remarks, I look forward to the comments of my colleagues and, furthermore, spending a productive period of time reviewing the Estimates of the Department of Education and Training. Thank you.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: We thank the Minister of Education for those comments. Does the official opposition critic, the member for Dauphin, have any opening comments?

Mr. John Plohman (Dauphin): Mr. Deputy Chairperson, we have two critics, of course, and perhaps both of us would want to make some comments on different areas, mine dealing with

the public education system K-12, K-S4 and my colleague dealing with post-secondary and apprenticeship employment programs and so on.

Perhaps the minister would be able to share his written comments. I know he had some notes he was referring to, and we might be more productive if some of the statements made, where he did refer to those notes, could be distributed. We would not have to wait for the Hansard, which will be a few days down the road, before we can deal with it. We will be well along the way in the Estimates by that time, so maybe the minister will be able to do something in that regard with his statement. I would appreciate that.

I just wanted to indicate a few areas of where we will be concentrating and raising issues with the minister. I guess, in many quarters, there is some—well, I think there is a great deal of concern about the direction the minister is taking with regard to education reform in terms of priorities and the present government's commitment to the public education system as we know it and where this is all leading with the purposes. We want to explore, in the general discussion, with the minister, his motives and objectives and so on, and where he sees his vision for the public education system, where he sees this leading to.

Certainly, we do not disagree that change is always needed and that certainly we are at a point, at this time, of great change, but I think it must be done from a position of being positive, positive change, constructive, building on what we have at the present time as opposed to tearing it down or throwing it out and starting over again. I wonder if the minister sometimes is taking that approach.

I have sometimes some serious concerns, as I said in my budget speech, about the minister's support for the present system. I think that we have to admit that the present system, over the last 20 or 30 years, has done a very good job, and we should establish some confidence in the public education system and build from that confidence to change rather than creating a situation where there is a lot of questioning or an in-depth lack of confidence in what is happening in the public education system.

Because of the societal pressures on our public school system, no doubt people have made a lot of demands on the public education system, and as a result, since the school system has not always met those demands, they question whether the system is doing its job, so to speak. Those are valid questions.

But we cannot allow, I do not think, and that is why I have asked the minister during my speech as well to consider the kind of misinformation that is being thrown out by those who seem to have an agenda that is contrary to the best interests of the public school system as it has been known and run in the past number of years, that those statistics which are not accurate should be refuted by ministers, by governments, because they are in a position to do so and to carry some weight in what is said about the public education system.

So it bothers me when I see the Economic Council, Statistics Canada, a 1989 literacy survey being referenced as a basis for saying there is a 38 percent illiteracy rate in the country when in fact some would argue that it is probably closer to 3 percent in terms of Canadian-born nonliterate. I know that the numbers are far less than that, and I think that the minister has a responsibility to ensure that to the best of his knowledge facts are being used in the debate on the future of the public education system, not innuendo and misinformation.

It is the same with the retention rate in our schools, the graduation rates—much higher than some would lead us to believe in terms of dropout rates and so on. So I think that this is part of the job of the minister and all of us involved in education in some way to put out factual information on precisely how well the public education system is doing as a system rather than simply buying into a kind of a crisis mentality or creating it to a certain extent by in fact proliferating that kind of information.

So we want to ask the minister about the role he sees for public education, the impression the minister has and factual information as to how well it is doing its job, the issue and purpose of competition that the minister refers to as being

necessary in the public education system. It cannot be free from competitive pressures and statements like this that I have heard the minister make. Exactly what is he talking about there? What is the purpose of it and the form it would take in terms of competition, how the private sector agenda is influencing the minister's agenda? What constitutes the basics in the minister's mind?

The consultation process that he wants to undertake—I mean, we had the Parents' Forum, which was kind of an isolated thing compared to the kind of consultation that perhaps should take place. What happened to the Partners in Education forum that took place in Brandon in '93 and the follow-up from that, and where is the minister fitting into that process? How he intends to spend, what he said I believe, \$2.25 million on the reform, what are the priorities, those kinds of questions on the reform.

The minister, of course, has said that there will be the documents coming forward within a month or so and then we would have a lot clearer idea. Of course, if we were dealing with the Estimates at that time it might be a lot easier to question the minister about where he is going. We are going to be asking a lot of things that undoubtedly will be somewhat answered perhaps within a short time. Unfortunately, I guess, we cannot do much about that at this point.

We are going to also raise the issues of funding in the public education system. The minister said, well, he is committed to adequate funding models and that funding is not an issue, that it is not jeopardizing quality. Whenever I have asked him about funding, he has attempted to leave the impression that what I am saying is just like, let us throw more money into the public education. Well, we do need perhaps some increase, especially in some areas, with regard to funding.

The big issue that we have raised with the minister, and he cannot, I do not think, seek to leave a different impression about our intention and concern there, is the fairness of the funding model that he has put in place and that he is now overseeing in this province. As a result of the artificial impositions of such things as Bill 22 and

Bill 16, the cap that has been put in place and then the reductions that have taken place in funding and re-assessment, we have seen a tremendous disparity in the funding in the last few years.

* (1510)

Without establishing, first of all, what is a level of service that we expect, what is a realistic, a fair expenditure to arrive at that level of service and then funding accordingly, ensuring it is done equitably, we just see cuts in some school divisions that are much higher, even low-spending divisions that are being cut drastically, like Interlake, Evergreen, Lord Selkirk. At the same time, other divisions that spend much more per pupil are receiving increases.

There has been no attempt, it does not seem, to determine what is required, what is a level of service that the government is prepared to support and then ensuring that it is done equitably. I think that is the issue in funding. It is funding fairness. Let us not say it any other way. That is the issue in funding right now, and we have to pursue that with the minister. Of course, in relation to some of the other things, the private school increases, the fact that funding has been far below inflation over the last number of years, the funding fairness aspect is the big one.

We want to talk to the minister about reorganization, the programs branch in the department, the issues surrounding loss of professionals in the department. So many losses in the Curriculum Branch, so many of the consultants, even the director and others, co-ordinators have been lost in that area, have left largely of their own volition in some cases; other cases, the government has made a direct cut. Either they have taken premature retirement or whatever the case may be, but they are gone, and the minister does not have that capacity of professionals that he has had in the past. That is a deep concern to us.

Child Care and Development Branch is also another one. Distance Education branch, key people have left there, and yet, these are the priorities for the minister. He is talking about education reform. Curriculum is obviously an

important part of it, and Distance Education the minister talked about as being a major priority. Of course, we want to talk about that, and the costs of all involved: who pays; what services; how they will be developed; who will deliver them and so on?

So those are the important issues that I see with the public education system and, of course, the Francophone School Division. There are a lot of problems out there in the implementation of the new Francophone School Division and how it is impacting on existing divisions.

We said last year, when this was being initiated by the government in response to the Supreme Court decision, that in fact existing divisions should not be negatively impacted. They should be compensated. Yet we are seeing a lot of difficulty being created in many areas of the province and, particularly, in the Mountain School Division and in the surrounding area. I think we have to find out from the minister clearly what he is attempting to do there.

There seems to have been some variations from the original intent of the act and so on, and we want to know exactly where this is going and how he is going to ensure that existing divisions are not being impacted in any substantial way by the implementation of the Supreme Court decision, they are not being made to pay, which is not the intent, I do not think, within the spirit of that agreement, particularly since the federal government has money available or it was in the process of being negotiated as being available.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I am going to stop there. Those are some of the major areas we will want to deal with with the minister, and I hope we have some very informative discussions in that respect.

Point of Order

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Second Opposition House Leader): I know in the past we have had the official opposition, then followed by the second opposition responses. I know, with the New Democrats and the Liberals, we have split that particular department, and I would request maybe, in particular, from the Minister of

Education (Mr. Manness), if there would be any objection to dealing with them separately? For example, the lines are in fact very well defined for post-secondary, and maybe we can deal with the K-12 or K-S4 first and then go on to deal with post-secondary education. So I would look in terms of the will.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Order, please. The honourable member did not have a point of order, but we will be following line by line, as is the normal procedure of the committee. We do go line by line, so it will follow the format that the honourable member is wishing to deal with.

At this time, we are going through the opening statements in which each party is allowed 30 minutes. The opposition party has now used up 12 minutes of their time, so she has some remaining, then we will go to the honourable member for Inkster.

* * *

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): I was interested by the long list of future projects which the new Minister of Education or the third minister in this government has given us, and certainly the ones which he has outlined, distance education, apprenticeship, employment development offices, libraries, relationship between them and distance education, the development of an initiative with the federal government and single parents, the review of the Roblin commission, a number of areas which the department is now beginning to look at after six years in office.

I would certainly say that each of these is significant, but what is equally significant is the delay and the drift that we have seen from this government. Six years in office, and they are now finally beginning to look at distance education, apprenticeship, libraries, libraries where they sat on a Public Library review report for two years. It was printed, it was ready, but they simply did not release it to the public, in spite of many letters from all across the province. The same thing with the Roblin review—they promised it, I believe, now three to four years ago. They delayed two years in implementing it. The report itself was

understandably late and even yet we do not have a formal response from the government.

Unemployment development offices, development centres I think the minister called them, one-stop shops in relationship with the federal government and municipalities—that is an interesting proposal. It is one that has been around in other jurisdictions for a number of years, both here and in other countries.

Of course, what it does is come after six years of delay on labour force development boards, where both the federal Tory government and this government went through a long process of review and delay. We are no further ahead this year than we were six years ago on the development of a labour force policy in Manitoba.

So while I welcome the minister's interest in these new areas, apprenticeship particularly I think is a very significant area for Manitoba to begin to move in, but for six years we have seen the apprenticeship committees on curriculum, for example, have been dormant.

Now, in the year before an election, the government decides it is going to put some interest and attention to the area of apprenticeship. So I am interested in these future prospects that the minister directs us to and certainly would be interested in asking some questions about those and about the plans they might have for perhaps bringing any of them to fruition within the months that are left to this government.

The particular areas that I will be looking at I am sure are quite evident to the minister. We have been asking questions in the House for two years now about Workforce 2000. My primary concerns are about the appropriate use of public money for private purposes and the accountability of this particular fund to the public. The minister has, I believe, had a number of individual and collective reviews of this program. None of them have been made available to the public, in spite of the proposals and recommendations of the Auditor, so I will be pursuing some areas there.

I am concerned about students, about the changing population of students in Manitoba, the changing economic conditions that students are

facing. It is not something which has happened overnight; it is certainly something which has been developing over the last 10 years. But I do believe that there are some significant changes which this government has made to the conditions of students, and I would like to know what the evaluations of those changes have brought and what the minister will be able to tell us from the reports, which I know he has had done and which I believe he is prepared to table here. That is the one done by Peat Marwick on ACCESS students, which the minister indicated he would be prepared to table, and other reports and evaluations which I believe have been done on student loan and student debt issues.

* (1520)

I am interested also in the overall planning of post-secondary education, the government's preparations for a formal response to the Roblin review and the plans which it has to develop some of the proposals there. I am concerned about colleges, as I think most Manitobans interested in post-secondary education are. It is a very serious issue for Manitoba, and the Roblin review, I believe, was a direct denial of this government's continuing policies over the last few years when it emphasized the important role the colleges had to play and recommended to the government an increase in the number of places and the number of programs.

So I am concerned about the kind of plans that the government has to encourage the increase in programs, the nature of those programs, what goals it has for the colleges, what kind of numbers of students we should be looking at, what are the types of courses we should be looking at, what is the role of the colleges vis-à-vis the universities and the training program. In particular, I am concerned about the experience that the minister has had with existing boards and the role of the private sector in the determination, direction and selectivity of the courses which are currently being offered at the colleges.

In training and social assistance the minister has mentioned now, in the last few months of the government, a series of programs in conjunction

with the federal government, some of them indeed at the initiative of the federal government, that he is prepared to look at. This is interesting. I do not know the details of them, so I would not want to comment on them at this point.

I think we should regard them in the context in which they are being placed, and that is that over the last four or five years we have seen a systematic reduction of the existing programs of training such as New Careers and other types of community-based training programs, whether it was in the Core Area Initiative or whether it was those which came directly from the department. We have not seen them replaced with any alternatives. So, again, in these last few months we now see some prospect of alternative, and some of them I do underline are not at the initiative of this government but at the initiative of a new federal government.

Finally, I would like to have some discussion with the minister, perhaps as we go through, on his ultimate philosophy about education. Ultimately we are looking at a transmission of a culture and a way of life. [interjection] The minister says it is dangerous. Yes, of course, it is, but it is fundamental to where you are going. It is fundamentally an issue, I think, of what kind of Manitoba you want to see 10, 20 years down the road, and how we build an education and training system that will help us get there.

The minister's own values, I have to read between the lines, but it is my assumption that his fundamental values for Manitoba are based upon the creation of wealth. I would like to pursue with him some of the implications of this as his fundamental goal for education. There are many other definitions and goals of education than the creation of wealth, and when that has become the ultimate one, I think we perhaps can be helpful to the minister in suggesting the limitations of having that as the only definition of education. So we will pursue that perhaps if we have the opportunity, and I will finish my remarks there.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: I thank the honourable member for Wolseley for those comments. Does the critic for the second opposition party, the

honourable member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux), have an opening statement?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Deputy Chairperson, it is actually with great pleasure that I am here on behalf of the Liberal caucus as the Education critic. I really and truly have been enjoying the challenge that is in fact there.

When I was first appointed as the critic, I was trying to first come to grips with trying to establish some form of a mission statement. We all, at least I like to believe or I choose to believe, want to see a very healthy public educational system. I am of the opinion, as all of my caucus colleagues, that the first priority has to be given to the public educational system, and I see it as my primary role to ensure that the quality of education in the province of Manitoba is moving in the right direction.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, this is in fact what I had thought in terms of. It is not all inclusive, one could always add to it, but one of the thoughts that I had with respect to a mission statement was that the educational system of Manitoba must be to provide an environment that promotes and fosters the learning potential of every student. It must give students the opportunity to develop the knowledge, skills and values necessary to become productive citizens in their community and throughout the world.

One could go on to talk about guiding principles in order to enable government to provide the opportunities as I just finished pointing out, but needless to say, I wanted to comment on what some of the things the Minister of Education talked about in his opening remarks and also to say a few words in terms of what it is that I would like to see come out of this particular discussion.

The minister has talked about education reform, and I am pleased to hear that discussion that the minister wants to see education reform. I have had the privilege to be here for six years now, and I have finally seen someone, a minister, who is prepared to take some form of action in a real way in terms of implementing the reform.

I do believe that the change is necessary. It is a question in terms of how you manage that change.

I am not convinced that the Minister of Education is in fact managing the change as best that it could be. I share many of the concerns that he has talked about. I have a discussion group that has met. I had one individual who is part of the discussion group who brought me two textbooks, a Grade 6 textbook and a Grade 1 textbook, and pointed to the Grade 6 textbook as, this is the book that my daughter is being asked to read. I just recently found out that she is having a tough enough problem reading the Grade 1 textbook. What she personally took great offence to is the fact that she was not aware of it.

I think that there is a sincere feeling that there needs to be some form of change in education, but I do not believe that this change is something that has been needed just in the last six months. I believe that we should have been seeing government moving towards change in education or facilitating that change a number of years ago.

I was somewhat surprised to hear some of the remarks that the Minister of Education, for example, put on the record in Brandon. He sure made some very strong statements, and—

Mr. Manness: It is the only way to go.

Mr. Lamoureux: He says it is the only way to go. I do not know about that. A lot of individuals talked about it being—I should not say a lot. I had a couple of calls, and one caller in particular said that it was like the Minister of Education being a bull in a china shop, and that kind of stands in my mind in terms of the way in which he was going to deal with education.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the Minister of Education did get a lot of attention when he made some of the statements that he made, and we want to do some of the follow-up to some of those statements and see what the minister was in fact talking about.

I know I have had the opportunity to hear the Minister of Education on numerous occasions address groups of individuals expressing his concern about education. He is always stressing that he is working with his partners in education, and he talks about The Manitoba Teachers'

Society and the superintendent's association and the Manitoba Association of School Trustees.

I was very cognizant of the fact that he was in fact missing out a significant portion of the population, or other stakeholders, so I was genuinely pleased in the throne speech to hear that the government was going to have a forum for parents to participate. I thought that was a positive step. I then believed and was somewhat suspicious in terms of actual timing of the Parents' Forum. I would have thought that it might have been more appropriate to have the Parents' Forum prior even, possibly, to the establishment of some of the partners that the minister was meeting with, in other words, toward the end of fall, early winter, so that the minister is in fact able to take some of these forum discussions that came out of the workshop to his partners and seeing what those partners have from the beginning as opposed to after hours and hours of dialogue, because I know he has been meeting with those three partners in particular on an ongoing basis.

* (1530)

I know some of them have shared some frustration in the sense that they are not hearing as much from the minister as they would like. It seems that they are the ones that are doing a lot of talking and so forth, and that is important, to listen. That is to a certain extent a good chair, but I believe that what they are hoping to see is some sort of a direction in terms of where the government is going to be taking the whole issue of some of the reforms that the minister is in fact talking about.

As I say, the parent council was a good idea. I still believe that the Minister of Education is missing one of the most important stakeholders in education, and that is in fact the students themselves. As the minister knows, because I believe he was there all day, as I was, during the Parents' Forum, there was very strong representation saying that the students had to be involved, the students needed to be involved. Even though I did not necessarily see it in the slide show at the end, but with the comments and discussions that I had between breaks of sorts, of course—I did

not want to interrupt or to minimize the interruptions on my behalf, but there was in fact a very concentrated effort by a number of individuals to try to express that we need to get the students involved.

In fact, I recall offhand, when the president of MAST, Gail Watson, spoke, she quoted from the newspaper a student, and the remarks that she read from a student that wrote a letter to the editor, I take it. She received a considerable amount of applause in terms of, yes, the student is right to a certain extent but, more importantly, that she is listening to the students.

I am hoping that right off the bat this will be one of the issues in which the Minister of Education will seek at least to appease my mind that students are in fact a part of the minister's agenda, agenda for change if you like.

I am interested in knowing what he intends to do about getting students first-hand experiences with education, the things that they believe are necessary in order to implement change.

A year ago, we had the Boundaries Commission appointed, in which Norrie is the chair, and we all wait for that particular commission to come forward. It is still a tad bit unclear in terms of when it will become public information, and I am hoping that the Minister of Education will indicate, in a very clear way, in terms of when we can anticipate that report being cleared.

One of the concerns that I do have about the commission is the one of governance versus boundaries. You can draw as many lines as you want, but until you decide how the government's models are going to work and the responsibilities of Department of Education versus school trustees or school boards and parent councils, the actual lines of boundaries or the number of school divisions could be somewhat irrelevant.

You have to know in terms of the roles that each of the stakeholders are going to have in education. Again, I will go back to the Parents' Forum, where there was a very strong representation saying that parents need to get more involved in education. I have read numerous reports that have indicated that the more you get the parent involved in the

school, the better the quality of education. I have heard the Minister of Education make mention of that.

I would like to see in terms of what the minister has to say in a very real way about the role of the parent and some of the responsibilities that he or she might have in terms of guiding our schools. There were a number of different issues that came out of the Parents' Forum that I made note of and which I will go into more detail once we go into the Estimates, to see in fact what the minister has done in the interim in terms of getting that ready.

He makes mention of distance education. Just recently I had a presentation in which someone had a Highway 2000 for Manitoba Schools 1994, and it is quite the illustration. It is really an eye opener in terms of what is available and out there in terms of technology and the advantages of acting on this in a very quick fashion. We have individuals who are out there and in particular in rural Manitoba, that could use this. Distance education can provide better access, in particular to those individuals who live in rural Manitoba. It will be interesting to find out from the Minister of Education, because under one line he has reform and it includes curriculum, it includes distance education, to find out in terms of the type of resources that the government is in fact putting in for the promotion of distance education.

The minister, at the beginning of his comments, made reference to the adequate funding levels and then he argues that education reform does not necessarily mean, if you will, that there has to be increase in actual dollar amounts. Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I would like to see the Minister of Education take some initiatives that would clearly demonstrate just that.

I know when we had talked about the Student Services package, I did not perceive that as necessarily being fair. I did not get a convincing answer from the Minister of Education when I asked him the question in terms of where was the fairness in that, and I will be seeking to get that clarification from the Minister of Education, because again I have heard the Minister of Education time after time talk about, he will do

what is fair and that you do not have to throw more money in order to improve the quality of education.

Well, that in itself, no doubt, we will find out more and more as we go into the Estimates, but the issue of fairness is something that I plan to ask the Minister of Education on a number of occasions where I believe that he has made some poor decisions.

In terms of programs or new initiatives, again, I had asked the minister a question with respect to a literacy program. He had indicated to me when I asked him that particular question that Manitoba is leading the way, that other provinces are following. Well, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I am going to be looking to find from the Minister of Education which provinces are they that are actually following. The Minister of Education can look at what other provinces are doing. I had pointed out, in particular, the province of New Brunswick, where we talked about the literacy program and how the private sector and the government were working together to improve the rate of literacy in the province of New Brunswick to great success. No doubt discussions of this nature will lead to interesting dialogue between me and the NDP critic for Education.

I know we were just recently at a function in which he felt that the private sector has no role in education, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, and I look to explore that because I do believe that there is a role for the private sector in many different aspects of education. I do not believe for a moment that the member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman), in particular, because he is the critic, is more concerned about the state or the future of public education than myself, but I choose to acknowledge that there is, in fact, in some areas, some benefit in getting the private sector involved. One of those areas is in fact a thing such as the literacy program because the results speak for themselves.

* (1540)

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I know we were wanting to move on into the Estimates, but before I conclude I wanted to make very quick reference to the point that the minister has now assigned two

deputy ministers responsible for Education. As I pointed out through a point of order earlier, you will see that the two opposition parties have acknowledged that the importance of education is such that there is a need to have K-12 critics, post-secondary critics. I see some form of acknowledgement of that when we see the current Minister of Education (Mr. Manness) appointing a second critic.

I look in terms of exploring the reasons and the rationale behind that. I think that is a very positive move, and having said that, I will leave the comments on post-secondary education to the critic from the Liberal Party, the member for Crescentwood (Ms. Gray), when we move on to that particular area. With those few words, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I am prepared to go on.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: I thank the honourable member for Inkster for those remarks. Under Manitoba practice, debate of the Minister's Salary is traditionally the last item considered for the Estimates of a department. Accordingly, we shall defer consideration of this item and now proceed with consideration of the next line.

At this time we invite the minister's staff to join us at the table and ask the minister to introduce his staff that is present, please.

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I welcome to join me John Carlyle, Deputy Minister of Education, well known or certainly known, I would think, to all around this table. Across the table from him, Jim Glen, Assistant Deputy Minister of Education, the ADM of Finance, and to my far left Tom Thompson, the Director of Finance. At this time, I have copies of some of the notes, which I used to begin the Estimates, to table.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: We thank the minister for that. We will now move on to 16.1 which will be (b) Executive Support (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits.

Mr. Plohman: Just a brief question to the minister on this area—there is no change of staff. Perhaps names have changed but positions have not, or have they? Can the minister just tell us who is working in this area and what kinds of people, in

terms of qualifications, not specific but in terms of the kind of function they perform?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, my staff is looking up the exact listing. I am led to believe there is virtually no change. Some of the names are different. Mine is different.

Pearl Domienik is the secretary to the minister. Pearl was my secretary in Finance. Presently, Sharon Curtis Leslie is a secretary to the ministry. Linda Kuhn is a secretary to the ministry, and within Executive Support, Cindy Carswell is a special assistant to the minister, Chris Enns is my executive assistant, and in the deputy minister's office, three positions, Mr. Carlyle, Diana Saaid, secretary to the deputy minister and Pat Lavoie, program analyst.

I believe those are all the same positions, and the only changes are, of course, those people who came with me when I came to the office.

Mr. Plohman: Did the minister say Cindy Carswell is a special assistant?

Mr. Manness: Yes, she is.

Mr. Plohman: She deals with the departmental matters that might arise and Chris Enns primarily with constituency issues for the minister, or is that not still the way it works?

Mr. Manness: Well, every minister does it differently. The member as a former minister would know that. I have very little activity on a constituency basis through my political staff, I would say, and what there is, that is right, Mr. Enns handles, and it might use 20 percent of his time. The rest of the full time, Ms. Carswell's full time and indeed most of Mr. Enns' full time is directed toward departmental issues of which there are many.

Mr. Plohman: Does the minister have access to any other political advisers besides the two special assistants, executive assistants?

Mr. Manness: No, I do not. I, of course, have access to the policy arm of the Premier, but, certainly, no.

Mr. Plohman: Well, then, maybe just to clarify my question a bit, in terms of contract people, perhaps I will give him one example; Beth

Cruikshank, for example. Are there any others of that nature?

Mr. Manness: Well, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, we hire other people in the department, but I would put Beth Cruikshank in that very same position. Her role is 16 hours a day, not one moment of which is political. As a matter of fact, I dare say she might have been a little bit more active politically before this contract. So there are no other contracts on an untendered basis.

Mr. Plohman: So does Beth Cruikshank report directly to the minister or to someone in the department?

Mr. Manness: Well, actually both. She formally reports to Planning and Policy and more directly to the deputy minister, but I make sure she reports to me also, periodically, two or three times a month, because of my great concern I have around the whole area of distance education, and the member may want to delve into that in greater depth later on.

Mr. Plohman: Just to clarify then, this is the only person of this nature who reports directly to the minister as well as to the deputy and to Planning and Policy branch. There is no other additional staff on contract that would be of a similar nature to Beth Cruikshank in other areas?

Mr. Manness: No, nobody at this time. I say "at this time" advisedly, because I always have been a very strong advocate as a minister to bring in individuals who I sense can do a job and challenge some of the reporting lines within government. I have done it in Finance. I have encouraged it in Industry, Trade and Tourism in the past, and I have done it in this case with respect to Beth Cruikshank for a short period of time.

* (1550)

Mr. Plohman: It is interesting that the minister has indicated that Education Reform will have some \$2.25 million going into it, and we are going to deal with the next line shortly on Planning and Policy Co-ordination where there is a decrease.

There is a major amount of dollars, in the area of three-quarters of a million I believe, for Distance Education. I am not sure that is part of the reform,

but in any event this will be used obviously to hire some people as well I would think. So is this what the minister may be alluding to when he talks about not hesitating to bring in additional people, that with this money that has been allocated for reform there will be a need to bring in additional staffing that may be somewhat of a political nature under contract to provide advice and direction?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, that is not envisaged at this point in time, but indeed, as we move along, if I sense that it is important that we bring in an outside human resource to help guide that process, yes, I would do that, and the funding for that would come from this appropriation. Certainly, that is not being planned at this moment.

I mean, a significant portion of this, once we hit the line, will be directed towards computer-assisted software design and also building into place some of our pilots, but at this point in time I am not contemplating bringing somebody from the outside to help us with the reform process. I do not think we will need that.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Shall the item pass—pass.

1.(b)(2) Other Expenditures \$91,200—pass.

1.(c) Planning and Policy Co-ordination (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$427,700.

Mr. Plohman: Just to follow up on the discussion we just had, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I find it odd that the minister has a substantial reduction, \$130,000, in this area. Most of it is in Supplies and Services. Maybe the minister could clarify why that is possible and we are dealing with an area of Planning and Policy Co-ordination at a time when major policy matters are being dealt with by the minister according to his opening statement. Why would this area not see more activity?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I do not know how to answer this question without appearing to look too different, but when I was the Minister of Finance, of course, I looked globally. I looked for all of these, and I never got too close to them. So now I am the Minister of Education, and now I know what is in them. In this one I sensed we could strip out \$55,000. It was formally put into

place for professional services, and, of course, a department like this needs that.

I said, well, I think we can make a commitment to the greater good and we can reduce that. We have also reduced telephone expenditures by a slight amount in rentals because, as you know, we are consolidating space with our locations; it allows us then to pay Government Services a reduction of \$32,000 in rent. In Information Systems, we are taking out another \$12,000. So the net combination of the \$55,000 in the provincial services and all the items that I have just referred to totalling \$45,000 allows for the significant reduction of greater than \$125,000.

Mr. Plohman: Yes, well, the minister did not mention professional fees, I guess, some \$55,000, as I read it.

Mr. Manness: That is what I said. I said "services." I used the word "services." It is the same.

Mr. Plohman: So, when we are talking about professional fees, what would be the nature of these professional services that would be reduced?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, a department like this obviously in a planning and policy sense does not know when it is going to have to go out and hire outside expertise in support of some policy changes.

You must remember this department has done a significant number of studies over the years. I can think of the Skills Training Advisory; I can think of also the Legislative Review; and I can think of the High School Review, which we inherited from the former government. All of the money needed in support, or much of the money needed in support, of those activities was housed here.

We have sensed that we do not need it in the same fashion, so that is why we reduced it. Yet we have to keep a presence of it, because we are going to have a response to the Boundaries Commission, and we are going to have a response to our own reform. We also are looking at Planning and Policy Co-ordination, helping with curriculum development, so I mean this is not hard line. This sort of flows back and forth with some of the other divisions that we are going to come up to, and so

that is why this money is set aside in support of the policy development within these other areas.

Mr. Plohman: Yes, well, then I will just ask the minister that the reason he does not maybe see the need to the extent, even though major initiatives are taking place at this time in boundaries and in reform, distance education, is that the need for outside expertise can be absorbed or addressed under the allocations for those initiatives. Therefore, it would not have to be an allocation here. Really, it is just finding it from another source, and perhaps it would even be more, not less.

Mr. Manness: The statement is fair, but again the member has been part of government, he knows when a department like this has lapsed funding of what some years, \$2 million to \$3 million. It happens over a number of these small areas. It is put into place, and it is the seeking of the government of the time to try to ensure that enough is there to deal with the extraordinary planning that goes into a department like this.

We have taken \$55,000 out over last year's line.

Mr. Plohman: My point is that it might present somewhat of a misleading picture in terms of what is really happening, because it is removed from this allocation, and this line does look like a reduction. In fact, the government may be spending more for these services in another line for the same thing. So I will leave that.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I wonder if the minister could give us a report from the Council of Ministers of Education in terms of what has been going on at that particular level.

Mr. Manness: Gee, I wonder how much time my friend the member for Inkster has.

Mr. Lamoureux: No more than a half hour, I believe.

Mr. Manness: I mean, this has been a growing experience. I must again tell the member, coming from another—my first reflection when I was head of Treasury Board, I always was worried, or not worried, troubled, by what really was conducted at CMEC, Council of Ministers of Education of Canada. I was always troubled because I sensed a

very loose association and yet with no legislative head. Yet it is set up like a corporation, is it not? It has an executive so it sort of takes on—it has a corporate entity. When a minister is moved from one portfolio to another, then all the corporate papers have to be done again.

So I have always looked at this entity with kind of a jaundiced eye a little bit, because I wondered how the commitments of individual ministers coming from the various governments working towards a Canadian strategy and for the overall good of education in the country, whether it was working.

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

I went to the first meeting—as a matter of fact, it was the first meeting I attended after I became the minister in mid-September—and at that time, again, because there was, I thought, some pretty fair leadership by the minister from Ontario, Mr. Cooke, I believe his name is, who had taken a pretty strong hands-on approach the year previous, a fair amount of work was done in the Victoria meeting.

* (1600)

Subsequent to that, the reins of power so to speak in a corporate sense were turned over to the Education minister from Quebec—Chagnon. Unfortunately he was only in place for—okay, it was the former one, Robillard—and you could see that she was wanting to take a national lead with respect to education. That is what that body needs; it needs somebody who can sort of pull themselves out of their provincial context and speak for the greater good of Canadian education. She seemed to be really prepared to assume that role.

But then, as things happened in governments across the land, there was a change in leadership of the Liberal Party in Quebec. Mr. Johnson came in and assumed the Premiership, and with that, changed all the portfolios around, and so now there is a new tertiary head of that organization who is brand new to it.

So then somebody has to call into question the continuity through the executive or through the administration. That is Dr. Francis Whyte, and my

theory is this organization has taken on some bureaucracy. Its very nature, it is not in the hands, day to day, of a minister, and the executive council or board of which I am a member now, I am a new member, we do not come together that often either, even by way of conference call. So I am concerned about the governance, to be honest with you.

Now, of course, the big project today of CMEC is SAIP, the School Achievements Indicators Project. As you know it has done one test, that being math, reported on last fall. Just recently, it has done reading and writing, and next year will do science plus—is developing a science test for the year after that. That is almost its main focus today, and yet the last meeting we had—and I will try and bring this to a conclusion—certainly what we are going to be talking about in ed reform within this province is on the mind of everybody, of every one of those ministers, and I dare say, dollars, behind closed doors and even in the larger sessions, are being pushed right to the back because every one of the ministers, regardless of the political stripe, realizes that, fundamentally, some changes are going to have to occur within the public school system across Canada.

Failing that, a federal government, regardless of who it is, will take a much closer, will take a much stronger approach with respect to how it gets involved in education, even though it is mandated, as everybody knows around this table, as a power under provincial constitution. So it is trying to come to grips with the new reality, and the new reality is it had better work closer as an organization, and it had better begin to produce, and that is where it is at right now.

Mr. Lamoureux: Madam Acting Deputy Chairperson, I am wondering if the minister can indicate in terms of what the government's position is on seeing stronger national guidelines, in particular in areas in which the minister just finished referring to—math, reading and writing.

Mr. Manness: Well, I am a staunch supporter of a national vision and am making that representation every moment, every time I have an opportunity, to ministers assembled at CMEC, and certainly, there has been quite a move, a greater move or a

beginning to move in my view to that end, at least in the thinking of many of my colleagues across the land.

So I am one who honestly believes that nationally we have to begin to work to a greater uniformity of standard, and if we cannot do that, at least then regionally we have to do it. The Atlantic provinces are a little bit more advanced than we are, but it has not been Manitoba. As a matter of fact, Manitoba has been pushing western Canada more so than any other province, has been through my predecessors, and will continue to do so. [interjection] No, I am not talking about national standards now. I am talking about a greater approach towards working together towards developing uniformity.

I will use this word "standards" very loosely right now. The focus part of that is education standards, but I am even talking about putting into place a curriculum where there is commonality, and to the extent that we cannot work nationally, well, then, we will work regionally.

Mr. Lamoureux: Can the minister indicate in terms of what efforts have been put in place to work on just that, the curriculum?—because the moment you start going towards some form of national parity and commenting on standards, the curriculum has to be, obviously, a major focus of the discussions. What is taking place currently to address that?

Mr. Manness: Well, again, at the national body, not an awful lot, but, regionally, we have—and again, we may want to move into this in greater depth when we get to that section, but we have certainly signed protocols with other western provinces and the Territories and the Yukon with respect to trying to develop a common curriculum, not only for the sake of resources, but more importantly that there be uniformity.

We have gone some distance in mathematics. It was a general protocol covering all subjects, and we are certainly, again, well along in math, and the protocol, of course, asks us to work collaboratively in developing this curriculum in more subjects, and certainly, we are trying hard to get a process in place for science right now.

Mr. Lamoureux: Madam Acting Deputy Chairperson, I was wanting to move on to my opening remarks, where I made reference to the Parents' Forum and to having the opportunity to have students participate in some way in terms of education reform. I wonder if the minister can indicate how he is facilitating student input into his education reform package.

Mr. Manness: My mind is pretty open on this one right now. I am having trouble without clarity, determining how it is we reach out to students. I mean, I try to go to a school once a week. I have hosted a number of students coming into the building, one large gathering I can think of in particular, and I have asked them for their help. I have asked them to play minister, collectively, and what changes should be made.

What I find incredibly striking, of course, is that what some students want to see is greater structure—have views, in other words, similar to mine. There are other students, of course, who say, no, we want to have the college concept and starting in Grade 10 we want to be able to come to school at 10:30 in the morning. As long as our grades are doing well I want to be able to leave at noon and we want to be held accountable for our own attendance, held accountable for whether or not we have to be in place, which would be determinant upon how our grades were going.

Well, as you can see, you are talking about two solitudes here, and so how is it then, and maybe the member has the magic solution with which he can help, if that is going to represent two diametrically opposed views—I am not saying that they would stack up evenly on either side—but if that did happen, you tell me how we are supposed to decide.

I would say, I can go through the actions of reaching out to students, but I am telling you I have got to sense then—it has got to be pretty sure that there is going to be production at the end of the time, because just to try and bridge that gulf is going to be very difficult.

Now, who does have a great impact on me though, in all honesty, are those students still who are not students in the public school system, who

are students in post-secondary education, who have left the public school system two years, three, six, seven or eight, and they have tremendous influence on my thinking because they report to me individually in a large measure. I ask them to reflect on the public school system and what changes they would consider if indeed they were in my position, and also young parents who have not been students too long ago, again leaving the public school system or the post-secondary education system, who are in their late 20s, early 30s. They also have a fair influence on me.

* (1610)

So we are looking at how it is we might be able to reach out to the students, and maybe one way is doing kind of a random sample so that we are better able to try and see how it is that those who are active participants in the classroom today might reflect upon the present system and comment as to what changes might be of value.

(Mr. Deputy Chairperson in the Chair)

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I was somewhat hopeful when the minister was starting to name the years, two, four, six. I think he got up to six years for those that left school. If he added a few more he might have even hit myself and then I would have thought maybe I have some great influence with the minister.

Mr. Manness: Well, you do.

Mr. Lamoureux: He says I do. I appreciate the influence that I carry here possibly.

The Minister of Education makes reference to, part of the problem is bridging the gap. Even at the Parents' Forum the gap was fairly significant with many of the discussions that I heard, but there was an attempt, and somewhat of a successful attempt, at bridging that gap. I would imagine that—at least I have some confidence in the minister being able to bridge diverse opinions that the students would have about education, and not be overly concerned about how far they might be apart, because I believe a majority of the students, much like the majority of the parents that showed up at Sturgeon Creek, would in fact be able to come up with some very unique and different ideas that might assist in

putting together the blueprint that the Minister of Education is talking about.

Again, I am wondering if the minister has given any consideration, or the Department of Education given any consideration, to the possibility of going one step further from a Parents' Forum to a students style of a forum, possibly, you know, going to the junior high and high schools in the province and inviting students? I would not suggest that you put a cap on it, that you would invite students to be able to come down, whether it is to the Convention Centre or whatever to express much like what we did with the parents' conference.

Mr. Manness: Well, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, again, my mind is not closed. As I said, it is not a new issue with me. It is one that I have been thinking about for some months, but at this point, I have not made a decision.

Mr. Lamoureux: Can the minister indicate to the committee when he is anticipating bringing down the blueprint?

Mr. Manness: I will be extremely angry with myself if this is not public in the month of June.

Mr. Lamoureux: Would the minister agree then, all the more reason why, if we are going to be getting the student input, that we should have it before June comes around?

Mr. Manness: No, because this is a blueprint. I mean, there is going to be an awful lot of reaction to this. There is going to be a lot of discussion and dialogue and I dare say a lot of groups would want to come, and individuals would probably want to come together after the piece I am contemplating becomes public.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I guess this is one of those areas in which we will probably agree to disagree then, because I feel that the student input is, in fact, important before the blueprint comes down, and that the Minister of Education should be providing some form of a vehicle for that real input.

I can appreciate that the minister has indicated to the committee, as I am sure most MLAs have, and talked about education to students, but that in itself

is somewhat finite in terms of the number of students who reside in his riding, or possibly even some students in other members' jurisdictions or constituencies, but it is a very limited number.

I am not convinced in terms of the problems that the students would have, for example, in rural Manitoba versus city of Winnipeg versus Flin Flon that others could not add a lot of positive dialogue which the minister would be able to have ready prior to a blueprint, because once you put into place a blueprint, you are virtually going to be guiding the discussion and future discussion of education reform, and who knows what will be coming out of that?

You could see election platforms developed and so forth, and I believe that you do not want to deny the students that opportunity to have that real input in terms of education. I know that the parents in the discussions that I had at the Parents' Forum were genuinely pleased that in fact they had the input. So why do we not allow the students to have input?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, let us make the record clear here. It is not that I am not having student input. I am talking to an awful lot of students. What we are talking about is whether or not we go to a forum. The issue here is not whether or not I am accepting student input. I mean, I am taking an awful lot of student input, but I am not doing it by way of forum. So that is what we are talking about here.

I can think of one class that has come in and they have given me their views directly by way of essay. It was a class project. They are Grade 11s, and I have read every one of those reports. As a matter of fact, I think I will be going to that school to respond to their input. So, for the record, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, it is very important that the member realizes I am soliciting the views of students, but not in the forum methodology that the member would wish at this point.

Mr. Lamoureux: I guess if it is a question of methodology, I too am soliciting as a local MLA the input from students who reside in my area. I think it is on May 26. The Minister of Education (Mr. Manness) is welcome to attend. I believe it is May 26 when you will not only hear from parents,

you will be hearing from students, professionals and so forth, and I will even be happy to share the results of that. But I am wondering from the minister what, if anything, does the minister have so that if there is a local high school or students' councils or maybe providing some other method to having that input so that it is not as selective, if you like, that there is an open invitation that is made to the number of high schools that we have.

I know that I have taken a bit of flak about mailing out of our caucus, but I do not think you would get too much flak if you sent a nonpolitical-type letter inviting input from local student councils in written format or in presentation, in fact.

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the member makes a good point and it is exactly what I was contemplating doing once I have the blueprint. I sense that through the process, either student councils and/or individuals, I will try and give effect to older students in the public school system to have a chance to reflect on the blueprint and to suggest changes.

I mean, nothing means more to me, as I dare say to the member, than a letter that is written, preferably written well, but a letter that is written which highlights for me, and, yes, I prefer proper grammar, but to the extent that it is not, it is still readable, and that is meaningful to me more than sometimes a group of 40 or 50 people and everybody kind of sensing that they have the magic solution. So I will be reaching out in that fashion.

Mr. Lamoureux: I want to just move on to another issue of policy. I am sure that the Minister of Education would also be happy to see if there are grammar mistakes or spelling mistakes, we would not want to discourage anyone who might want to be able to have some form of influence, especially if they are students.

* (1620)

With reference to the Boundaries Commission, the minister has indicated, and I know I was at one meeting and someone made reference to the Order-in-Council saying that the report had to be back in, I believe in November, and it was

somewhat unclear in terms of when the minister is obligated to table that report. I am wondering if the minister can indicate when we can anticipate, as legislators, having a copy of that report.

Mr. Manness: I cannot answer that definitively. We sense, as of the latest information from the commission, that we still are on the November timetable. In talking with them, they also indicate that they have a lot of work to do. Let us say that it is presented to government in November. At that time I would think that government would need at least a couple of months, if not more, to react to it. Again, I am not going to be held to those times. You see, it is a different commission. I mean, I have no idea as I sit here what it is they are contemplating.

To the extent that boundaries are going to consolidate in the city of Winnipeg more significantly than might be the case in rural Manitoba, I would think that it would be rare to expect that the government, in accepting these recommendations, would accept them as they are. Now, I am hoping that is the case. That would be wonderful, but the reality is, I know and I have been involved in boundary reviews for political purposes a number of times. Of course, my greatest hope was that when we submitted as a political party our view of boundaries the Chief Electoral Officer of the province would accept them. They did not always do that, and I guess I am hoping that this will be purely acceptable to the extent though that some boundaries are going to have to—they might be shiftable in a rural context a mile or two. Then all that has to be taken into account.

The only thing I am trying to point out is that I would see where the government, because of all of the sensitivities—and there are an awful lot of sensitivities around this process—is going to want to take as much time as it thinks proper and necessary to develop its thinking and to react to a commission report of this nature.

Mr. Lamoureux: I know that there is a great deal of concern out there, in particular in the discussions I had with a number of MAST members. Right now there is a lot of uncertainty.

Are they going to be running under new school divisions? Are they going to be status quo?

I am wondering if the Minister of Education can indicate to the committee whether or not this government is contemplating putting into place, prior to the next civic election, new boundaries.

Mr. Manness: I think, as I recall, the next bout of school board elections will be fall of '95. There is no way that recommendations coming forward from Norrie and his commission, ones that we give legislative effect to, can be in any way in place possibly for after the next set of elections unless legislation came forward to extend those, and that is certainly not our thinking at this time.

Mr. Lamoureux: I am sure there will be a number of people who are pleased to hear that in the sense that I am aware of at least a half dozen or so people who have indicated to me they were of the opinion that the government was in fact hoping to have something in place. But I know he was wanting to indicate something else on the record, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, at this time.

Mr. Manness: I stand corrected. I thought that this fall was the fall of '95, not that I am trying to wish my life away. That is right. The recommendation is coming down in the fall of '94.

As I have said publicly, it would take an awful lot of effort and a lot of things to fall into line for legislation to be through and in place to deal with new boundaries for the fall of '95. I guess it is not impossible. That is why therefore I will mellow my statement, but I think it would be most difficult.

Mr. Lamoureux: I am wondering if the minister can indicate whether or not the department has given any thought towards the governance and responsibilities roles, the sort of discussion that the minister has maybe been having ongoing, because no doubt whenever the former mayor's commission reports, he will bring out new boundaries, whatever they might be.

I would imagine in order to respond to that, the minister is going to have to have some sort of an idea whether or not the governance model is going to fit into the boundaries that are being proposed, or does he feel that the commission will adequately represent that important aspect of it?

Mr. Manness: Certainly the Norrie commission is looking at more than boundaries. Governance though is such a wide area of issue and reform, I must say. I am looking at governance, and certainly outside of the Norrie commission. So I will be of course keen to know what it is that Norrie recommends with respect to governance if the commission moves into that area at all. They may or they may not. I have no way of knowing.

But certainly governance issues in themselves are going to take on some scrutiny and review. Indeed, the legislative reform package that government has been dealing with now for the period of what, two years, one of the main focal points of that is governance, so that should come as no surprise to anybody.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the reason why I bring that up, at least in part, is because again one could go look at the Parents' Forum, where there was a lot of talk, and it was interesting. I was actually quite pleased to see the guest speakers that the Minister of Education (Mr. Manness) had brought in. I think it added to a lot of good healthy discussion, at the very least, at the different tables.

One of the concepts that was being talked about was that of chartered schools. If you move or a government moves in the direction of chartered schools, one would think that that would have a significant impact on any sort of boundary redistribution, whatever it might be. There are other avenues that are out there, in particular, if the government is leaning in one direction or the other, that it might be somewhat beneficial for the commission, because no doubt it would have an impact on what it is that they report.

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I am in no position to dictate to the commission what it is they should be looking at. They will read Hansard. [interjection] Oh, yes, and that was more focused on boundaries. If the commission, though, has the time and the energy to find themselves involved in issues like this, I dare say then maybe I should not do anything until I hear from the commission. I say that facetiously, because we have to move on, and to the extent the commission wants to touch on

these issues or does not, of course, they will determine for themselves.

I can indicate, though, that if the member is trying to draw me into discussions as to deal with some of the real new reform within education, I can tell you 98 percent of my focus is within the public school system and the existing model within making it work better. Yes, I have talked from time to time about bringing into place competitive models, as is always the safety valve if indeed the public school system does not or is unwilling to move into closer contact with the community and with the direction the community wants to take. So we will be addressing how it is we provide that greater area of flexibility.

* (1630)

The member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen) talks about philosophies. Yes, I honestly believe the competitive factors make this all better. Indeed, it happens between universities. It happens between other post-secondary institutions. It happens in the marketplace per se. So I sense there has to be some dimension of it that is in place to deal with the public school system, but still, almost all of my thrust will be within the public school system per se.

To what degree the Norrie Commission reflects upon these issues, it is very, very hard for me to say. I only ask you to remember that the reform of education will be a combination of legislative reform, boundaries review, reform of curriculum and education and finance. What I am contemplating is much more encompassing than the Norrie Commission has been asked to deal with.

Mr. Lamoureux: Finally—Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I know the member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen) was wanting to ask some questions also.

The role of the parent is something in which I have heard a lot from the minister, that he wants to enhance that role. I, at least, applaud him on the remarks stating that. I am wondering if the minister can give any sort of indication on what sort of responsibilities he believes parents should have in their local schools.

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I might as well put on the record what I have said several times at meetings elsewhere. I am reluctant, through the reform process, basically, to provide another level of power, in other words another level of governance by way of statute. I am an anti-government type of person, as I have said to many, and building in yet a fourth level of empowerment, on the surface troubles me. Yet, I am one who will try and provide the changes, the moral suasion, the policy statements that will cause those parents within communities where those parents want to come forward and have influence, have a greater role. So I hope I have been able to answer the member's question by saying: something, but certainly not necessarily legislation.

Mr. Lamoureux: The restructuring to the four levels, you are referring to the school trustees, city council, an MLA, M.P.? Is that the four levels that you are referring to?

Mr. Manness: I would say, the minister. The ministry has a lot to say about education. Then you have the delegated to school boards, delegated to superintendents, delegated to principals. I mean, these are delegations that happen all the way along the way, and these are all part of the governance model.

Mr. Lamoureux: I would put the superintendents and the principals at the school board level, so then we would only have had just the two, but —[interjection]

An Honourable Member: Oh, well, but once you get down to delegations—

Mr. Lamoureux: Once you get down to delegations, and the minister has got a lot of delegations within the Department of Education itself.

Can the minister give some sort of indication of what sorts of roles he is talking about specifically? Are you talking of a parent council to be able to administer what sort of policy decisions? Are you talking, for example, of the hiring of teachers potentially? Can the minister give us anything on that?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I cannot. In fairness to the process and in fairness to the discussions I am having with many, I cannot provide an insight at this point in time.

Mr. Lamoureux: So the minister is talking in terms of parental involvement, but he is not prepared to give any sort of indication in what role he believes that they should be playing?

Mr. Manness: That is correct.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Deputy Chair, I had a couple of questions on this same line. The minister talked about competition as being his ideal model, and I wondered if he was extending this to universities. Does he intend the same principle to be part of his consideration, the possibility of charter universities, charter colleges? If it works for the public school system, is the minister prepared to extend the principle to post-secondary education?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, in all honesty, I have not even thought of how that principle might apply to post-secondary institutions. I just sense that in the model we have in place in Manitoba now, where we have basically four universities, some of them providing a choice in a field of study no different from other universities, we have the ultimate in choice.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Deputy Chair, I wanted to draw to the minister's attention that in fact the whole thrust of the Roblin commission was towards co-operation of universities, not competition. Perhaps he might want to look at that in the context of the basic principles he talked about of competition being the most important and effective model for education.

I also wanted to ask him about the Minister of Education of Canada. I wonder if there has been any discussion there of the prospect of university entrance exams or of a standard test being developed for university entrance such as—they are quite common in the United States. Has there been any discussion of that?

Mr. Manness: To this point, no. I say "to this point" because I could not believe my ears at the discussion here at the last meeting. Maybe a year from now, there might be, but it has not been broached by any minister at all. No.

Ms. Friesen: Does this government, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, have any interest in such a proposal? Is this minister, for example—I do not know how to interpret what the minister said, but he anticipates that such a discussion will take place, and I am asking him what his present thoughts are on such a system.

Mr. Manness: No, I am not anticipating such a discussion will take place. I am saying, it would not surprise me. That is not anticipation. Nothing surprises me today, but the reality is, I have no strong views on that matter other than to say that if we do not come to grips with the public school system and put into place some standards of uniformity, it is inevitable that the entrance exams which the member is referring to, in my view, in my simple view of the world, will be coming.

* (1640)

That is a result, of course, as the member knows fully well, being part of a faculty as she is, that finite resources, obviously, cause changes, and there is going to have to be some selection process brought into place. I, though, would much rather put my focus on the public school system so that the piece of paper that an individual has upon graduation or even standing at a lower level, whether it is some measurement at Senior 2 or at some level, has meaning, has full meaning, can be interpreted as having full meaning by post-secondary institutions. To me, that is the preferred course to follow.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I am looking at areas for co-operation nationally in university affairs. One that has been mentioned from time to time is the possibility of entrance exams that are common. Another area of co-operation, obviously, is in shared programs, and there already are some, as the minister is well aware.

So I am wondering what other avenues of co-operation at the national level, in post-secondary education, particularly in universities, the minister has been pursuing. I understand that his interest is primarily in K to 12. All his answers have been in K to 12, but I am suggesting that the minister is also the minister of post-secondary

education. There is a council of education which does look at national issues, albeit, and I do not think his experience is any different than any other minister of any government with that council, and it is always welcome to hear of their progress in any area.

I am wondering if the minister has any agenda that he is going to pursue in his term as minister for national initiatives and post-secondary education. Every university, I think, has a shopping list of that, whether in fact it is disability issues or it is entrance exams or it is shared programs. Where is this government going?

Mr. Manness: Well, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the member poses the question, where is the government going? She puts it in the context of Canada which, in essence, if she puts the two together, she says, where is this government, a population of 4 percent with the universities it has, what is it doing in a leadership role to make this all right for Canada? A fair question, I suppose, but the reality is, as I survey—and I will tell the member—the landscape, I still see most of the focus with reform today certainly in at the public school system and K to Senior 4.

On the post-secondary side and the university side, I dare say that I do not see a lot of leadership today coming from any province in a concerted national approach. Furthermore, I would think that that leadership, for a couple of years yet, is going to pretty well have to find its own direction in the university community. I will be speaking to this in much greater fashion when, of course, we respond to the Roblin report.

The member has made reference to greater sharing, building toward centres of excellence at fewer locations, and it has great meaning to me. Where is the leadership going to come? I think that is the essence of the question. As I survey the scene, and, of course, part of what we have done in our province is to try and take this friendly monster called education and try to split the functions into deputy areas, although as I have indicated before, it is larger than that, but beyond that, that will allow us to give more of a focus in our province.

The leadership nationally for the next couple of years is going to have to come from the university community. It is going to have to come to grips with its own problems and try and sit down within a larger planning sphere and try to lay out a course for itself and move whatever mountains that need to be done.

If it waits for government—and I say this generically—for leadership, then something will give because government cannot do it all. Government cannot focus in at the public school system on the one hand, all the social reforms on the other, and at the same time, be doing university reform by itself. It just cannot do it.

Ms. Friesen: I appreciate the minister's frank response. Obviously, I am looking for public policy in this area. I do believe that universities receive a very large amount of public funding and that there should be a direction of public policy on behalf of the people of Manitoba.

What the minister has said essentially is that he is going to stand aside and let the universities deal with this, as they have been doing as best they can. It seems to me that whereas Manitoba may indeed be 4 percent of the population, around that council of ministers, it is one out of 10 or one out of 12, depending on whether the territories are represented by their own ministers. I think in that forum there is the opportunity to discuss and eventually to move to some co-ordination of post-secondary education policy.

It is not the only forum. Certainly there are things that universities can do and have done by themselves, but it seems to me to abandon public policy in this area is not what any government of any stripe should be doing at this stage.

I welcome the frankness. I can understand that the Minister of Education at this point has K-12 primarily on his mind, but it seems to me that this is an area which does need public discussion, it does need response and it does need some kind of public policy formation on a continuing basis from the people and government.

Mr. Manness: I hear the member's word, and she uses the word "abandon." I react because that is a little strong. I have a hard time digesting that verb.

I can tell her, for instance, CMEC nationally, in partnership with Statistics Canada, we have produced a statistical portrait of universities and colleges akin to what we did in the elementary, kind of as a benchmark—[interjection] Well, that is the—we will get you a copy—trying to set into place a benchmark to begin to come to grips with that. That is not yet policy and that is not particular action, but we are starting.

I only point out to her, I think that one of the reasons why governments and ministers have been kind of reluctant on university policy is, quite frankly—I mean, the model we have been dealing with for 30 years is academic freedom in these institutions, and all you do is you keep moving more and more resources. Anybody that threatened to do anything else, I mean, was challenged in some quarters. That is putting it politely maybe, and the reality is now that we are during a period of time when we know, we can see very clearly that there is going to have to be some rationality brought to university, and I will not define it beyond that, and all of a sudden, people are saying you, government, should have the general view.

Well, you know, I can see why nobody across the land really has a blueprint for change with respect to universities. Yet, I sense that it will become a community effort also and that government will have a role to play. I honestly believe that will happen and will happen yet this decade.

Ms. Friesen: I think that is a different response than the minister gave me a few minutes ago, which was that universities must do this themselves. So is it a question of timing we are looking at, or where is the policy?

Mr. Manness: Well, that is fair, yes. It is a matter of timing. It is not abandoning. We put into place the Roblin commission. We could see the pressures. That was a reaction to the obvious. So that is why I objected to the word "abandoning." We are not. I think the member may quarrel with me when I say, look, I do not think that as government we can have hard policies in place within the year knowing how we are going to deal with it, because that would be unrealistic.

As I survey the land and, again, see what is happening in other provinces, it is kind of breaking out in different directions. So there will not be a response as far as direction within the foreseeable few months, but there will be a response to the Roblin report which will call upon the community to take certain actions. I would think then hopefully within a year, we again, too, will have a blueprint in place for how we think at least the universities should come to grips with not their problem, our problem.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, just to get back, the origin of this was that the minister then does not see the Council of Ministers as a primary route to national co-operation in universities.

Mr. Manness: In all honesty today, as much as we might hope for that, I do not see the focus of attention being directed towards post-secondary institutions today buying CMEC.

* (1650)

Ms. Friesen: Can I ask then on another line? We are under 16.1 (c) Planning and Policy Co-ordination and the issue of interprovincial issues. Could the minister give us an indication of what interprovincial issues are being addressed by the department in post-secondary education?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the question is worded differently, but is similar to the one made earlier and my response would be almost identical. I guess, when we are talking interprovincial issues, it is the measurement, in working with Stats Canada trying to build a benchmark of information is about as far as we are right now. There are information requests from Statistics Canada, CMEC, OECD, UNESCO is the thrust about the game, trying to develop a catalogue of base information with respect to the make-up of our universities.

Ms. Friesen: What I had in mind was not those types of things which you have answered, but have there been any approaches to the province from Saskatchewan, for example? I do not know if the minister or his staff are familiar with the universities review in Saskatchewan which made reference to the purchase of places in

physiotherapy, dentistry and, of course, the continuing veterinary studies.

It does have some implication for both Alberta and Manitoba. Saskatchewan review talked about looking at both provinces. I wondered if an initiative had been brought forward to Manitoba, and where would such an initiative go? Again, we are looking at the relationship between public policy and universities. So I am interested in both the process and the content.

Mr. Manness: Well, generically the answer is yes, probably at the highest levels, even in a generic sense discussed by First Ministers or western ministers. Specific to discipline in our faculty, no. We do have a long-standing agreement in veterinarian science, I know, with the University of Saskatchewan, and we are beginning to explore those areas where we can expand on that model. It is sharing. It is rationalization of resources. It is the recognition that Saskatchewan is one million people, we are one million people, Alberta is two and a half million people, and I am hoping that once we put the challenge out to universities, they themselves will—who would know better day to day what potential there is for greater centralization in that respect, that the universities themselves may come up with candidates. I would say we are still a period of time away from being able to indicate what those trade-offs might be.

Process—and the members now asks the real tough question when she talks about process. I mean, how might that be done, and who is going to have the final authority in that? That at this point has not been discussed.

Ms. Friesen: On the specific question then of the recommendations in the Saskatchewan university review, there have not, to the minister's knowledge, been any approaches to the government on the proposals for dentistry and physiotherapy.

Mr. Manness: We analyzed the report. I cannot give any or reflect at all on the specific recommendations that the member refers to. We saw nothing wrong with the recommendations, but at this point, I am not aware of overtures taking place in a specific area.

Ms. Friesen: On the new midwifery proposal of the government, are there interprovincial discussions on the training in midwifery?

Mr. Manness: Nothing that has come to our attention, no.

Ms. Friesen: I am happy to leave this line myself now. I do not know about my colleague, but I know the minister's interest in grammar, and I would want to draw his attention to page 24. There is a tendency, and I am sure it is common to all governments, to increase the verbiage. I would make a request for plain English in some of this: to increase the objectives of this section or to increase the department's ability to respond to the existing and emerging needs of Manitoba's education and training systems by enhancing the effectiveness of policy and program decision making. There is a case to be made for putting that in, quite simply, English. I know these manuals do get built upon year by year. It would not hurt, particularly in the Education department, to take a look at some of them. Whoever wrote this seems incapable of using one adjective where two will do, I think. Particularly, could I draw the minister's attention under Activity Identification, reviewing and critiquing. Critiquing is not yet a verb.

Mr. Manness: I thank the member for representation but no way, firstly, do I ever hold myself up as an expert in grammar or spelling although—of course, I realize that when I read Hansard, but the fact is I appreciate it when I see it. Yet I can say in fairness to the department, coming through—I will even pay some tribute to the former government. These reports have changed an awful lot since they have looked 10, 12 years ago. [interjection] Well, maybe the supplementary but the annual reports. They have all changed, and I sense they are all easier to digest.

Thank you to the member for her comments.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, with only four minutes to go, we will not be able to get into substantial issues or substantive issues perhaps right now. I would ask the minister whether it is appropriate to call his plan for education reform a blueprint, or would it be more accurate to call it a

sketch, some type of working sketch, as opposed to a blueprint?

When you look at the parallel use of those words, it seems to me that it might be a little strong, unless I am wrong in terms of what the minister's degree of decision making is. A blueprint is pretty well, with minor changes perhaps, the final picture for someone building a house or whatever the case may be. There may be some tinkering with it, but it is pretty well final, and there are a lot of sketches and preliminary stuff done before you get to that.

I was wondering, following on what the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) was talking about earlier, whether we are really at a blueprint stage when it is released in June or whether we are, in fact, going to be at something quite more preliminary than that.

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, it goes without saying, I guess this is an issue of semantics. In my mind, a dimension of this blueprint, the foundation, is a blueprint. That is why I am taking so much time to try and include as many people with as many meetings as possible.

Sure, changes can be made. Changes will be made. Indeed, before we get along very far in the process of building, there could be an election, and somebody may want to build a whole new different house. That is the fact of the matter. [interjection] When the member says it is my choice, obviously somebody has to lead, and I dare say whoever the government is of the day is going to have to lead. So it will be the government's blueprint, anyway around it, when it comes forward, because when you have these views that are all over the place, somebody has to be the final arbitrator, and that will be the government of the day. There is nothing new in that.

Mr. Plohman: It is a significant thing because it deals with the whole issue of consultation. When the member was talking about informal consultation with students, it is a question of whether it is, in fact, too late to consult once the—now I will use the words, since the minister has clearly stated, I think, in his response that blueprint is the word he wants used. They will still have an

opportunity to have some input following the tabling of a blueprint or, in fact, is it still—

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Order, please. The hour is now 5 p.m., time for private members' hour. I am interrupting the proceedings of the committee.

The Committee of Supply will resume consideration at 8 p.m. this evening. Thank you.

HEALTH

Madam Chairperson (Louise Dacquay): Order, please. Will the Committee of Supply please come to order.

This section of the Committee of Supply is dealing with the Estimates for the Department of Health. We are on item 1.(b) Executive Support (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits, page 81 of the Estimates manual.

Would the minister's staff please enter the Chamber.

Item 1.(b)(1) Salaries and Employee Benefits.

An Honourable Member: No.

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Madam Chairperson, I see that the minister and his staff are ready to deal with the questions. I would like to ask the minister, does the department maintain any kind of a central registry vis-à-vis lists for any kinds of hospital surgery, or any other matters of a similar nature? In other words, is there a central registry for various aspects of surgery and/or other services offered by the Department of Health overall?

* (1440)

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): Madam Chairperson, the information the honourable member asks about is something that is available, although not compiled in the way the honourable member might have in his mind. We have in Manitoba the finest health data base pretty well anywhere, and it is a question of whether the Department of Health actually keeps those lists of each kind of surgery. The answer is no, we do not; however, in certain areas where we feel that attention is required, we get involved and we bring committees together, appropriate access

committees and things of that sort. We do not keep a central registry of the various kinds of surgeries and how many and how many per month or week or year. That information is not readily available.

Mr. Chomiak: Does the minister have access to any information that he can share with the committee that would show the breakdown of surgery and the improvements and/or non-improvements that have occurred in the last little while with respect to surgery and surgery waiting lists?

Mr. McCrae: Information like that in a form that is readily usable is usually from the previous year, and that kind of information, you will find some of it in the annual report, but information about past years is more available than what is presently going on.

Mr. Chomiak: Madam Chairperson, the issue arose approximately during this fiscal year concerning heart surgery. At that time there was an announcement from the government, which I complimented the previous minister on, with respect to a central registry for heart surgery in order to co-ordinate surgery. The government made an announcement in that regard.

I am wondering if the minister can at least provide that information to me as to the status of that particular item that I went out of my way to compliment the previous Minister of Health with regard to.

Mr. McCrae: I know the honourable member for Pembina (Mr. Orchard) is busy taking a lot of advice from the honourable member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway) and is quite entranced with the information being imparted by the member for Elmwood, so maybe he did not hear what the member for Kildonan had to say. The member for Kildonan was congratulating the member for Pembina, the Minister of Energy and Mines, for the fine, fine job that he did in pulling together people with respect to cardiac surgery—

An Honourable Member: It is a trick question.

Mr. McCrae: We can see that the member for Pembina deeply appreciates those sentiments.

Madam Chairperson, through the auspices of the appropriate access committee which deals with trouble areas such as cardiac where there is a perceived overimbalance between the demand and the supply, we have the cardiac people in Manitoba working together to ensure that patients are properly prioritized for procedure, and we expect to have something in written form that we can share with the honourable member by September.

Mr. Chomiak: Madam Chairperson, that matter is the subject of the appropriate access committee. It is still not formulated yet so at present there is not a central registry of any sort that is existing with respect to cardiac surgery or other forms of surgery for that matter?

Mr. McCrae: What I was referring to in my previous response was a system to more appropriately co-ordinate this function will be in place by September. Of course, the information that would go with such a system would then also be available.

Mr. Chomiak: Madam Chairperson, when the health reform document was introduced approximately two years ago, there was talk about the various bed cuts. As I understand it, there still have not been announcements with respect to 200 additional cuts to take place in terms of beds. Can the minister inform us as to the status of those cuts?

Mr. McCrae: The honourable member, I believe, in his question referred to reform and moved immediately to the issue of closing hospital beds. Unfortunately, that is sometimes taken to be the only part of reform that is going on and that is something that needs to be enlarged on. It cannot be done in just a moment or two.

Certainly, we are looking at it as a first issue with regard to this whole matter, the issue of efficiency. I referred a little bit to that a little earlier today during Question Period when the honourable member was raising questions. We cannot continue to keep inefficiency operating day in and day out in Manitoba, nor can we deliberately go out and foster more inefficiency. That would be even worse than allowing the

inefficiencies that presently exist to continue to exist.

So the first part of this matter, the first and most important issue has to do with efficiency. Efficiency deals with length-of-stay issues, our ability to provide alternative care in the community, our ability to take appropriate care of people safely in the community as opposed to in hospital and certainly as opposed to high-cost tertiary care hospital beds. This is an area where some people deliberately misunderstand. Some people just misunderstand and all kinds of people in Manitoba support what is going on.

The reason they support what is going on is that the nature of the care being provided in our restructured system is more appropriate to the condition of people who find themselves in need of assistance. So we have to have acute care beds for people who need them, people who need emergency services, people who need to recover from operative procedures. People hurt who are seriously ill need to be placed in acute care beds and we have to have those beds available. We have to have them properly staffed with a properly trained mix of staff people to look after the patients in those circumstances.

* (1450)

So when we point out that there have been beds closed, we also should remember to point out that many, many beds have also been opened, alternate beds, long-term beds, personal care beds and, of course, a 93 percent increase in spending on home care—93 percent. That has to be remembered when we discuss the closing of hospital beds.

If you look back to Quality Health for Manitobans: The Action Plan, the plan set out in the spring of 1992, there was basically universal support, although honourable members opposite set out on a path immediately. Even though they gave verbal support for the plan, they immediately began to be critical of each and every move in furtherance of the plan. That is something that needs to be brought forward, exposed. That is something that the members of the public need to understand, just precisely what honourable members opposite have been doing.

They need to understand that there has not been just a closure of beds, there has been a redirection of funding from acute to nonacute care. I refer, for example, to 60 personal care beds established at Concordia general hospital. That is 60.

Let us do a running total as I discuss these. I think the honourable member referred to some 240 bed cuts at acute care centres in Winnipeg, so we will write 240 down at the top of my piece of paper here. Then we will write down Concordia general hospital, 60 personal home care beds; and Deer Lodge Centre 44 chronic and long-term beds. Then there have been 23 long-term care transitional beds at Riverview Hospital, so that is 23 more there. Then when you include the 120 beds at Kildonan personal care home, and we will add another 120 for River East—I am speaking of Winnipeg only at this time.

I do not know if I have forgotten any beds we have opened up, but I am going to add up the ones that we have. I see the honourable member for Rossmere (Mr. Schellenberg) is here and was a witness at the opening of some of these personal care home beds, so I am not alone in drawing attention to these. So the 240 beds that the honourable member has referred to as having been cut, if that is indeed the correct number, have been replaced or there has been a redirection to the extent, if my arithmetic is correct, to 367 beds opened versus the closed beds.

It sounds like more. I am not sure if the honourable member has included all of the closed beds in his questions, so I want to be careful about that. Basically the point I am trying to make is that you have to count the beds open in the same equation, and then you also have to remember length-of-stay changes. You also have to remember home care increased by 93 percent over the last six years, and it is important to note that.

When we talk about length of stay, let us remember that things like ophthalmology, in previous times, meant a hospital stay of some significant length. Today it can mean almost immediate release after a cataract operation. So when we add up the 367 newly opened beds and put them beside those closed beds, it puts a slightly

different emphasis on the discussion. Let us remember that 360 new long-term beds require people to look after those residents in those beds. In personal care I think the ratio is about one to one, so we are talking significant job creation in the community to replace those acute care beds closed.

This is something that needs to be stressed, I think, over and over again, Madam Chairperson, because if you listened only to the honourable member, you would be left with the impression that the only thing that happened was that beds were closed. I am here to acknowledge that beds have been closed. That is a fact. That is something that has been planned, and it is something that there has been support for. I think the only issue is, are you doing a good enough job in the community? We are able to show that we are doing a job in the community that we believe offsets the changes in our acute care centres.

There is a problem here that maybe the honourable member can help us with because he has connections in the union movement that I do not have. I meet with representatives of organized labour. I work with them as closely as I can. I try to—[interjection] I meet with them, I work with them, I try. I bend significant efforts to work with organized labour and their members, and the honourable member is saying it will be a frosty Friday or some such expression to suggest that I work with them.

Well, I do work with them. I do not claim their support because I will not go in lock step with them. I will not be their mouthpiece as honourable members opposite will be. I will be the mouthpiece of the people of Manitoba. I speak for the people of Manitoba. I do not speak exclusively for the union bosses in this province as the honourable member for Kildonan does. That is why I can only claim to work as closely as I can with organized labour and their members in Manitoba to try to preserve the best of what we have in our health care system and to promote improvements in our health care system.

Sometimes union bosses have an agenda that is a little different from mine or that has a different

emphasis to it. I understand the role of union leadership and that is to represent labour, to represent workers either in our health system or whatever system they are employed in. I respect their role. I know what they are there to do and why they have to do it, but that should not include misleading the public. The public ought not to be misled into thinking that hospital bed closures is the only game in town, because it is not. There are a whole lot of other things going on.

The other part of the question the honourable member raises, and I will go back to that in a minute, but when I raised the issue of the union bosses—

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): I hear you used to be a member, Jim.

Mr. McCrae: The member for Thompson points out I used to be a union member, and he is absolutely right. I was a card-carrying member of the Manitoba Government Employees' Union, and at that time the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer) was my union boss. The only thing different about me and the member for Concordia is that when I entered this House I put the needs of the people ahead of everything else. The member for Concordia—[interjection] I did sign it. I signed my membership card in the MGEU because if the opportunity arose I wanted to have a say. They were taking my money anyway, so I wanted to have a say on how my money was being spent.

There are issues right here in the Contemporary Manitoba about how peoples' union dollars are being used, too. We may even get into that. For example, I do not know what some of these union bosses' wages are. I do not know what their salaries and benefits are, some of those things. As I say, I met this morning with Peter Olfert and representatives of some other unions, and I do not know if the honourable member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) also met with any of those people or heard from any of those people after our meeting today. It is possible that could have happened. In any event, I say to the honourable member that all of these 367 beds that I referred to and the employment that generates, I do not know if it

generates employment for all of these places; I do not know if they are all union shops or not.

Now that may have an impact too, because we need the assistance of the unions with this shift that is going on. We are creating the jobs outside the acute care places, and we need the unions' co-operation in helping us place people who could otherwise be displaced without that help from the unions and from people like the honourable member for Kildonan.

* (1500)

So I look for support. Rather than always talking about cuts and trying to disrupt, I would appreciate it if the honourable member would go by his party's direction, which was basically to support health reform, and basically to support health reform as laid out in the plan put forward by my predecessor in the spring of 1992, but also to help real people who are facing difficult times in their lives by job displacement because of shifts in emphasis in health care. Help us to deal with those shops that may not be all union shops. Help us to make that transition from acute care employment to employment in community care, either long term or elsewhere.

Help us with those things. If you want to argue about closed hospital beds, do that, but at least round out the whole equation and provide a service which you can do, honourable members opposite can do, unless all they do is take orders from the unions. Maybe they listen and talk too, and maybe the unions will take a little leadership from the New Democrats. Now I know there is an organic fusion between the New Democrats and the union movement. That is what Professor Allen Mills said, there is an organic fusion between the NDP and the union movement. Well, why do we not use that fusion in a constructive way? That fusion could be used to help real people who need help out there in the job market.

I think organic fusion means there is a close kind of relationship. This is what Professor Allen Mills said. In spite of that fusion that exists, even that gets tested from time to time.

I know that in Ontario they tried to build a social contract, and as part of that—we have a New

Democratic government in Ontario, and they tried to build a social contract with the union movement in Ontario. Michael Decter used to work here in Manitoba. Michael Decter was the clerk of the Executive Council, the highest office of the civil service here in Manitoba under the Pawley government. The member for Kildonan sat around that table with Michael Decter and the member for Brandon East and the member for Dauphin, the member for Flin Flon and maybe a few others as well, sat around the table cheek by jowl, belly to belly, nose to nose with Michael Decter, and they became very close associates.

In any event, after the Pawley government left office in 1988, Mr. Decter went to work subsequently for the Ontario government, ended up being Deputy Minister of Health. For a time he headed up the effort to build this social contract with the union movement, and all accounts seemed to demonstrate that that whole experiment failed. In fact, they carry signs in Ontario that says: Decter is a four-letter word. That is according to the news coming out of Ontario.

It is different—New Democrats seem to conduct themselves differently when in opposition than when they are in government, because all I do ask honourable members opposite and some of their union friends is to look to the other New Democratic provinces. Do not stop there. Look to the Conservative province of Alberta and the Liberal provinces of the remaining provinces to see what is happening in the health care sector and every other sector. There is a restructuring going on worldwide, industrially, commercially, politically, and that includes the health care systems of many, many countries.

I do ask, plead even, for the support of honourable members opposite, speak with their union boss friends because those people can be helpful. I have had very constructive discussions with them, and yet in fact they do not even sound as menacing as the honourable member for Kildonan. So they do not have to overstate their case to the unions. Let the unions state their own cases. Why do the New Democrats not just speak for the people who elected them? That would be a good idea in my view, because the people who

elected them would say: Work with the government, criticize them when they make mistakes, give them credit where credit is due, and give them a good kick when they need that too. I think that is what the people of Manitoba would say, and I am prepared to accept and acknowledge when my mistakes have been brought to my attention.

I do not know when—I think, for example, the member for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans), and I think he has been in opposition for six years now. The last time he said something positive that is on the record was when he and his colleagues were in government. That is the last time. Check it out. You will not find anything positive that the member for Brandon East has said. That is unfortunate, but that is the way it works. [interjection] You want me to finish?

The honourable member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) wants me to finish, but just before I do, the other issue here, is the issue of restructuring. I do not know where the honourable member stood on the issue of ophthalmology, for example, and centres of excellence, but we can see that by consolidating ophthalmological services to Misericordia Hospital, we have been able to improve service vastly to Manitobans, such that when they talk about the private clinics, the private cataract or ophthalmological clinics, my response to that is, we are not terribly worried because we think even our public system is able to compete successfully with those private operators. It does not mean they are bad. It just means that we are doing a much better job through a consolidated and restructured ophthalmological unit at Misericordia Hospital.

So we are looking also at other disciplines. We are looking at tertiary care through Bell-Wade and having discussions there. We are looking at secondary care as well. There are a number of things yet to be done, and we simply look for support from the honourable member. I guess it is asking too much to ask him to be reasonable, but, you know, do not overstate the case of those with whom you are organically fused because—

An Honourable Member: Why?

Mr. McCrae: Do not overstate their case. They do a pretty good job stating their own case, and let not that fusion confuse you into thinking that you have to yell louder even than the union bosses.

Mr. Chomiak: Madam Chairperson, the minister is clearly following the route of his predecessor by attempting to blame, by attempting to hide behind the facts. I had occasion to speak recently with several groups who met with the minister, who said to me, why does the minister say one thing to us and another thing somewhere else and another thing publicly?

I will not imply what they were saying about the minister's technique, but they said at least the previous minister was consistent in what he said. He did not say one thing to one group and one thing to another group to garner favour with them. At least the previous minister did as much. That is at least two groups who have met with that minister recently. Therein lies the tale because the present minister is so caught up in his defensive maneuvers, because the present minister is so caught up in trying to cover up for the mistakes.

Madam Chairperson, it is not members on this side of the House who are sitting on three-quarters of a million dollars giving it to their American consultant. It is members opposite who are going to give the hard-earned tax dollars of the Manitoba public more to their American consultant.

It is not members on this side of the House who said, 1,500 more positions would be lost at St. Boniface, at Health Sciences Centre. It is not members on this side of the House; it is the government's own targets. It is the government's own guidelines. It is not members on this side of the House who entered into that contract for \$3.9 million plus \$800,000 expenses. We gave them the opportunity, in fact, many opportunities to get out of that contract, but they did not. It is not members on this side of the House that gave the deputy minister an increase in salary while laying off nurses and telling people they were not needed in the system.

* (1510)

It is not members on this side of the House who did that, it is members opposite who will not take

responsibility and who attempt to deflect it and who attempt to categorize it and to say that any criticism—and I understand why the minister is so sensitive to the criticism. I understand the health reform undertaken by this government is in shambles. Everyone in the province of Manitoba knows that this government has botched health reform miserably, Madam Chairperson, miserably.

No matter how much the present minister or the former minister will chant on with their rhetoric, the truth is known by Manitobans. The truth is known about January '93, St. Boniface closes 115 beds; St. Boniface cuts 140 positions April '93; Misericordia confirms 57 positions April '93; St. Boniface announces another 39 hospitals, 230 beds April 30; May 18, Brandon General Hospital announces 20 permanent positions; June 15, '93, St. Boniface lays off 148 nurses; all LPNs lose their jobs at St. Boniface; July '93, Grace General Hospital closes 20 of their psych beds; July 30, '93, Grace announces it plans to close its 25-bed gynecology ward, and on and on and on.

That does not even deal—on top of that, they have the audacity, the former minister, to cut people off home care, to force people off home care, to make people pay user fees for home care equipment, to make people pay user fees for ostomy supplies. In the midst of it all, the saviour comes in from the United States to Americanize the system, to make it like friends opposite want.

How do friends opposite want it? They want to privatize major aspects of our public health care system. There is no question that is the goal, the end goal of members opposite, to cut back the public system and to privatize. We know because we see examples going on all over the system.

Mr. McCrae: Patients like it and the NDP hate it.

Mr. Chomiak: The minister says patients like it and we hate it. I like that comment of the minister's.

You know, it is funny, Madam Chairperson, how sensitive the minister is in defending this particular contract. The study is not completed, but it is completed in his mind. Now he will not do that with any of their other studies, Bell-Wade, Frank Manning, they are all on the shelf; oh, we are

considering those. But when he is sensitive about privatizing to We Care, no, the minister is defending it left, right and centre, going across the province touting We Care when in fact the contract was not tendered.

In fact, it is not completed, but the minister is saying the patients like it. Of course, patients are going to like it when you have dismantled the system, when you have dismantled home care and you have made it difficult. When you have done nothing to improve home care to allow people to get access to that service, of course, people are going to say yes.

Mr. McCrae: Tell us about self-managed care.

Mr. Chomiak: The minister says, tell us about self-managed care as he goes on and on. He has had his study for almost a year now calling for expanding self-managed care. They are waiting. I know what they are waiting for. They are waiting for some announcement. They are going to try to give big PR. The minister will get in front of the pool lights and make another announcement to try to show somehow that they are improving the system, and they are going to expand self-managed care another 30 in Winnipeg, another 30 in rural Manitoba, another 30 in northern Manitoba. Everyone knows that, Madam Chairperson. Everyone knows what is coming, and everyone welcomes an expanded self-managed care.

After they have studied the heck out of it for year, after year, after year, this is going to be their big initiative because I know how the minister operates. He takes something and he runs with it, and he uses that as a front to say we are doing something in some areas.

He ran with the drunk driving initiative in the Department of Justice for years. That was the only initiative undertaken in that department, and every time the minister stands up he says, well, we have the toughest drunk driving legislation. Of course, we have. The minister kept on and on and on because there were no other initiatives undertaken in the department and the present minister, of course, is suffering, as a result of that, from the backlog and the difficulties by the previous minister.

To return to the point, the minister takes a few symbolic gestures, and the minister attempts to show that is somehow moving us in the area of reform, Madam Chairperson.

I did not intend to go this long, but the minister went on his usual 20-25 minute dissertation slamming union bosses and going all around attempting to criticize everyone except accepting responsibility for the actions of the department, except accepting the responsibility and saying, yes, perhaps we made a mistake here, perhaps we made a mistake there. No, the minister does not do that because the best defence for the minister is an offence. You simply attack and attack and attack. Blame the union bosses. Blame the opposition.

It is not us who put your health care reform in the tatters it is. It is the minister, or the predecessor. It is that entire cabinet who sat around and said let us hack and slash here. Let us cut money from the Home Care program. Let us make people pay for user fees. Let us give Connie Curran her runaway money. That is who did it. It was not members of this side of the House who suggested that.

So the minister ought not to go on lecturing in terms of what we should be saying and doing. We are doing our job on behalf of the people of Manitoba, trying to somehow get this health care system back to something that people believe in, trying to get a health care system people have faith in, trying to get a health care system where, when you go knocking on someone's door, you do not fear for their health or fear for the well-being of their parents or their loved ones.

Because what your initiatives have done in the health care field, Madam Chairperson, is raised fear and caused doubt and caused—[interjection] The member for Pembina (Mr. Orchard) says, that is silly. The minister still has not received the message. That is the sad part. Members on that side of the House have still not heard the message.

Yes, they had the minister doing ads in a nice sweater during the last by-election, but, no, they simply did not acknowledge or recognize the serious errors that were made in the health care system, their lack of consultation, the blunders that they had entered into, the bad contracts, the bad

sense of priorities, and now the minister is trying to put a face, trying to change the tone and somehow blame the opposition.

If the minister is seeking to blame the mess on all of us, let him do that, but he does a disservice to both the opposition and to the province of Manitoba by only seeking to blame.

My question to the minister—if the minister could outline for us what the status is of the central purchasing plan that was undertaken by Miss Connie Curran, et al?

Mr. McCrae: Some of the things the honourable member says, Madam Chairperson, would have you believe that his alternative, there being none other put forward, is that we keep people in hospitals, that we make hotels out of our hospitals and staff them as if they were hospitals, but they have well people in them or people who are well enough to be looked after somewhere else, keep them in hospital anyway.

The member asked about central processing. We are working together with all of the hospitals in Winnipeg to make every effort to streamline that process and make it efficient, always remembering that the patient is the one that we want to look after, and if we do everything with the focus on the patient instead of the focus on maybe some model of the way we used to do things, if we put the patient first we will make improvements, and that is where we are at.

Ms. Avis Gray (Crescentwood): Madam Chairperson, I am wondering if the minister could indicate when we might be able to get a list of the grants to the external agencies so that we have an opportunity to review them before we ask questions.

Mr. McCrae: For purposes of planning we will make that available tomorrow for the honourable member, and she could ask her questions after that time.

* (1520)

Ms. Gray: Madam Chairperson, I am wondering, in the area of salaries and employee benefits, if the minister, if there is a salary indication of merit increments, et cetera, for those senior management

who are not part of the union, and if the minister would be prepared to share that with us.

Mr. McCrae: As the honourable member knows, the salaries of all civil servants is public information, and senior management of departments is also public information. It is not all set out in a nice list in contemplation of the honourable member's question, but I am told that we can make that information available for the honourable member. I point out to the honourable member that every employee in the civil service is appointed within a salary range. The honourable member has a background like I do in the civil service, so understands how there are classifications and steps within those classifications.

Just for the honourable member's benefit and, maybe even more significantly, for the benefit of the honourable member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak), when he suggests that people's salary should be rolled back, he is suggesting that 106 clerks in the Department of Health's salary be rolled back, because 106 people—

Point of Order

Mr. Chomiak: I have never ever suggested that all the clerks' salaries be rolled back, only the deputy minister's salary.

Madam Chairperson: Order, please. The honourable member for Kildonan does not have a point of order. It is clearly a dispute over the facts.

* * *

Mr. McCrae: I do not think it is fair to discriminate against the Deputy Minister of Health. I do not think discrimination like that is appropriate, for whatever reason. The honourable member wants to discriminate against one individual, the Deputy Minister of Health, when there are 106 clerks in the Department of Health in exactly the same position in terms—

Madam Chairperson: Order, please. The honourable member for Crescentwood (Ms. Gray) posed a question, and the honourable Minister of Health is attempting to respond to that question.

Mr. McCrae: Madam Chairperson, I did say to the honourable member that the information she seeks will be put together for her and made available for her, but the question does beg the question about discrimination against one individual, like the honourable member for Kildonan is perpetrating.

It is not fair to suggest that one person ought to be singled out when a treatment is identical for that person as with everyone else simply because that person is prominent by virtue of being a deputy minister, after working many, many years in the Department of Health, and working his way to that position. It is not fair, I suggest, that the honourable member—I mean, what he has done is said, we will pick and choose who we do not like; we will make sure that their salaries are rolled back; and if we do not like them enough, maybe ultimately they will quit or some such thing like that. Now that is the kind of governing which this country, I thought, put behind us years ago.

The fair and logical extension of the honourable member's position is that he would roll back the wages of 106 clerks, union people who are paid in precisely the same manner as out-of-scope people like deputy ministers. Forty-three secretaries would not get their increments if the honourable member had his way, because I can tell you, if we are going to adopt that policy—and we will check with the unions and see if they think that is the right approach as put forward by the member for Kildonan.

After all, it is his idea that we roll back the wages of 106 clerks. It is the honourable member's idea that we roll back the wages of 43 secretaries. The honourable member for Kildonan wants us to roll back the wages of 65 service workers, and this is just in the Department of Health. The member wants us to roll back the wages of seven cooks. The member for Kildonan wants us to roll back—the Health critic for the New Democratic Party and the New Democratic Party and his Leader and everybody over there want us to roll back the wages of 24 laboratory technologists. They want us to roll back the wages of 61 nurses.

When it comes to case co-ordinators, public health nurses, mental health workers and resource co-ordinators, the honourable member and his colleagues want us to roll back the wages of 243 people. It this is their position, this is the position that we will be asking the unions whether they agree with the member for Kildonan that we should roll back the wages of nine home economists.

Should we really be rolling back the wages of two audiologists; 16 medical officers; one occupational therapist; three psychologists; one pharmacists; two scientists; three dietitians; eight planning analysts? The honourable member wants us to roll back also the wages of four consultants; 12 administrative officers. [interjection] Yes, the honourable member has just confirmed that he wants us to roll back these wages. He wants us to roll back the wages of 12 administrative officers. The New Democrats in Manitoba want us to roll back the wages of 11 finance officers and three keypunch operators.

You see, Madam Chairperson, these people are people too. They earned their increments. They are in a salary scale and have not reached the top yet. You see, if they had reached the top of their scales, they would not get any further raises, but if you have not reached the top, you get these increments in the civil service. The honourable member wants that stopped certainly for the deputy minister. But if he is a fair man and somebody who does not discriminate against just one person, then his policy has it that 15 computer operators and programmers would have their wages rolled back.

Remember, Madam Chairperson, this is only in the Department of Health. You have to extend this argument that he makes beyond the Department of Health to all the civil servants in Manitoba, all the people who work under collective agreements in the public sector, all the teachers—[interjection] Was he a civil servant too? Oh, sure, he used to work as a political person in one of the minister's offices, the member for Kildonan.

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

The member for Kildonan wants us to roll back the salaries of four equipment technicians, 13 activity instructors. You know these activity instructors, they do valuable work, and the honourable member wants to roll their salaries back without any regard whatever for their contribution to the health of their fellow Manitobans. He wants to roll back the wages of five professional officers, four directors—well, now, maybe this is not so bad—three assistant deputy ministers. I guess the higher you go in the hierarchy, the more of a target you are going to be for the honourable member for Kildonan and his friends opposite, who did not mind at all loading on the benefits and the salaries for senior people in Crown corporations and perhaps in the government too when they were in office. They did not mind at all probably putting in a good word for Michael Decter before he went off to Ontario to get his \$140,000 salary and \$102,000 in benefits.

What about their dear, dear friend Marc Eliesen? What has he been doing lately? The New Democrats' dear, dear friend Marc Eliesen is pulling off a salary in B.C. of \$195,000—if he has not been fired by now—and a bonus of \$58,000. That is all defensible, but, oh, no, do not work within a scale subject to all the rules of the Civil Service Commission and pay a deputy minister a certain level in Manitoba and make sure he is treated like other civil servants that he presides over.

Of course, the last one, and this is the one out of the 716 people the honourable member would have us believe, there is only one in that list whose salary he would roll back. Why does he want to do that? Symbolism. Well, I can hark back to the symbolism of other leaders in this world of ours in the past and what symbolism did and how symbolism resulted in a change to our world. I say to the honourable member that he gets himself onto a pretty slippery slope when he tries to play around with a little bit of symbolism at the expense of one individual.

* (1530)

The honourable member wants me to talk to them; I did talk to them. I spent two hours talking

to them on an open-line radio show last week, and when it became clear, the hypocrisy of the New Democratic Party, the questions reverted to other things like diets in old folks homes, about the way we run our hospitals, and support for health care reform initiatives going on in Manitoba. The honourable member probably monitored that program and knows as well as I what the public is saying and what they are saying about the approach of the New Democratic Party to anything resembling a nonhypocritical way to deliver services.

So much for the merit program. That goes by the boards. Well, that is maybe kind of typical of the New Democratic Party, where there is no merit in the first place; if they had any, they would not want to reward it anyway, and that is why they do not have merit in the New Democratic Party.

I still wonder what the honourable member's colleagues in the union movement think of his proposal to roll back everybody's merit increases or not to give them next year, but if the whole idea of keeping people in hospital when they do not need to be there, which is the policy of the New Democratic Party, I am sorry, I disagree with it. I think that in order for me to disagree appropriately with it, we do have to put in place appropriate supports in the community.

I have tried to go over some of those supports that we have put in. I think the honourable member has forgotten altogether that this is not 20-25 years ago. You do not stay in hospital for a week for eye surgery anymore; it is usually done, and you go home on the same day, but the honourable member forgets about that. If he had his way, we would have all this capacity in our hotels, we would not need to have a Home Care program, we would not need to have personal care, but we would have a lot of hospitals doubling as hotels in our province, and that is not appropriate. That is not the proper way to use our hospitals.

They are \$800 a day in some of them, \$500 or \$600 in others, and that is an inappropriate use of scarce dollars. The honourable member is not in government, so he does not have to respect that, but certainly when he and his colleagues were in

government in 1987, the first, and I will put this in quotation marks, "health care reform" was in Brandon General Hospital where they, without any regard for any supports in the community, lopped off 42 beds in our hospital in Brandon.

I will tell you, the people in Brandon were not very happy, especially when the member for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans), who represents the east end of town, went off and hid. The honourable member for Brandon East, when his colleagues were busy hacking and slashing and closing beds at Brandon General Hospital and calling it health care reform, where was the member for Brandon East? Hiding somewhere.

How come we do not hear any comment from the member for Kildonan when we know that 5,000 beds have closed in Ontario? Who closed them? Michael Decter. Who is Michael Decter and, more to the point, where is he now? Well, the member for Kildonan mentioned Connie Curran as he heckled from his seat. Well, Michael Decter is now the chief executive officer for the APM company, Connie Curran's company here in Canada.

Let us not get any further in this debate until we uncover the crass hypocrisy of the New Democratic Party and the honourable member for Kildonan.

Ms. Gray: I have another question that relates to the overtime line under Executive Support, 28.7. If the minister could tell us who actually is racking up the overtime hours, is it professional/technical staff, or what is generally the breakdown?

Mr. McCrae: I know the honourable member will not sympathize, but I am putting in the overtime and I do not put in for it. But we will check and for those who are getting paid for it, we will make the honourable member aware of that.

Within the office of the deputy minister, there is an overtime amount. During the time of—well, the Health department is hard enough to run, but we are in a transformation mode, and there have been significantly higher levels of work to be done in the deputy's office.

Although the amount is similar to what it was last year, it is still at fairly high levels of overtime,

and that is to take account of various initiatives that the deputy's office is involved in. In terms of specific information, I will make that available to the honourable member.

Ms. Gray: Could the minister also perhaps get the information, if 28.7 is the amount of dollars that are paid out in overtime, what the actual total amount of dollars is, in other words, overtime hours which are not paid out but in fact are used as time off in lieu of.

Mr. McCrae: We will obtain that information.

Mr. Chomiak: I would think that a considerable amount of that overtime might be bought up by the photocopying of articles for the minister from Ontario and other jurisdictions that have absolutely no relevance to proceedings in this Chamber.

Point of Order

Mr. McCrae: I would like to point out that any information I have about Michael Decter has not been photocopied in my office.

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Sveinson): The honourable minister did not have a point of order.

Mr. Chomiak: The member for Pembina (Mr. Orchard) said that he did the photocopying, and that would not surprise me. I mean, that would not surprise me, to see them all huddled around the photocopy machine—all huddled—while the public, while the health care system ticks along and is partially in the state of disrepair as a result of the policies initiated by the previous minister and carried on by the present minister. It would not surprise me to see all of the members huddled around a photocopy machine photocopying the articles.

It is a pity that we have to spend as much time as we do with the minister going off on tangents, referring to matters that have absolutely no relevance to this discussion. Perhaps I feed into this by responding to the minister. I prefer not to, but the minister simply goes on and on and on, irrelevant factors, trying to justify many of the decisions.

Mr. Acting Chairperson, the minister gave probably the most complete answer he has given in this entire Estimates process to the question that was not even asked when he started going through the list of employees in the department and indicating somehow saying what our position is. That is the problem, the trap the minister falls into, because the minister likes to accuse. He did that very well when he was in opposition. He likes to accuse and attack, but cannot defend his own position. The minister only attacks and accuses and does not deal with the issue.

The minister would have a tough time explaining to people in my constituency how the salary for the deputy minister can increase by more than 10 percent in several years while people are asked to take such massive cuts. Whether the minister likes it or not, symbolically it is a very difficult issue for Manitobans to understand. I understand the minister's sensitivity. I am sure I understand his sensitivity, because symbolically it is a major problem, and the minister cannot deal with it.

* (1540)

The minister seeks to hide around, and the minister says, one individual. The fact remains that out of this particular branch is formed the whole strategy and the whole emphasis on health reform. That is why it is important. Because out of here is launched the health reform initiative, out of here is the strategy behind the health reform initiative, out of this particular appropriation is where the direction comes, and it says here: strategic direction in policy development, program determination and administration. Provides for the development and implementation of health system renewal. Develops strategies for the development of healthy public policy, policy development in key areas. Provide leadership to senior executive and management personnel.

It is significant. It is important to the people of Manitoba that they know and they understand what has happened, Mr. Acting Chairperson, and it is unfortunate that the minister does not accept that this is a major difficulty. It is a pity the minister does not understand that this is a problem as

perceived by the public of Manitoba, but nothing I say or do will convince the minister otherwise, since he has got his own agenda with respect to defending this particular matter.

Mr. McCrae: Well, as I was saying, Mr. Acting Chairperson, the honourable member has given us his views of the merit principle and how it has no place in the civil service, and the merit principle has no place anywhere else in there in his view. I am afraid I just disagree—I am not afraid. I disagree with that. I am proud of the fact that I disagree with that.

There has got to be some reward for people who do a good job. In the civil service we often do not even call them merit increases, we call them increments, which happens to you in the civil service as you near the top of your classification. Sometimes there is another classification that you can go to, but ultimately, if you are around in a particular position long enough, you reach the top of your level, and your salary does not go higher unless there is a reclassification process, which is supervised by the Civil Service Commission.

I just want the honourable members to have a bit of an overview of where all of this discussion is taking us. Here we are, because the honourable member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) raised it, spending an inordinate amount of time on one particular person, one particular salary and so on, when really what has been happening in Manitoba has been a phased approach to a reformed health system which is taking longer than it has taken in other provinces but will achieve the same result.

The reason we can afford to take a little longer with this and use the phased approach and try to cushion impacts is because we started earlier than most provinces and because we started with a plan. Other provinces came along, and with the stroke of a pen, reduced the number of hospital districts, for example, in Saskatchewan from something like around 400 hospital districts to about 30, at the stroke of a pen, literally, through the passage of legislation. This happened in other provinces, too, a very, very quick process. [interjection] The honourable member for Kildonan wants to talk. He does not want to listen so I will sit down and listen.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Acting Chairperson, as I indicated to the minister, I can read this particular speech in the Hansard because the minister has delivered it on two or three separate occasions. I can simply read all of the comments that the minister is putting in the record with regard to this, because the minister has made it over and over again. Unless the minister has new information he wishes to bring to this committee, we should probably move on.

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Sveinson): Item 1.(b)(1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$608,600—pass.

1.(b)(2) Other Expenditures \$163,600.

Ms. Gray: Mr. Acting Chairperson, just a couple of questions under Other Expenditures. The Communications, 37.6, could the minister indicate what dollars are spent in that line?

Mr. McCrae: That line refers to costs from the office of the deputy minister; telephone costs budgeted to reduce from \$30,000 budgeted last year to \$26,700 this year. Postage costs are expected to be the same at \$7,400, and courier expenses are expected to be at about the same at \$3,500.

Ms. Gray: Can the minister tell us where the advertising dollars come out of, for instance, the current program against cigarettes and smuggling, or does it come out of specific lines of the department?

Mr. McCrae: The officials tell me that the Department of Health is not financing those, but the Department of Finance is.

Ms. Gray: The Other Operating line, 52, could the minister give us a basic breakdown of what the \$52,000 are used for?

Mr. McCrae: The \$52,000 under Other Operating, Mr. Acting Chairperson, is the same as last year. It accounts for hotels, meals, insurance, publications and other which is not broken down further in the documents that I have in front of me—hotels \$6,300; meals \$15,100; insurance \$500; publications \$4,100; other \$26,000.

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Sveinson): Item 1.(b)(2) Other Expenditures \$163,600—pass.

1.(c) Evaluation and Audit Secretariat (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$340,200.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Acting Chairperson, the nursing five-year resource plan, would it be under this particular appropriation, or would it be under some other appropriation?

Mr. McCrae: It is not under this appropriation, but we can talk about it if the honourable member wishes.

Mr. Chomiak: I will move it to the appropriate appropriation just for purposes of expediency.

The other question that I have with regard to this appropriation is, what is the status of the legislation as it affects dental nurses?

* (1550)

Mr. McCrae: Mr. Acting Chairperson, with respect to dental nurses and the services they provide working with other members of the dental profession in Manitoba, certainly dental nurses' contribution to the overall dental health of Manitobans is and has been significant for Manitobans.

With respect to professional issues between dental nurses and other nursing professionals and other professionals, there remain issues that are the subject of ongoing discussion, perhaps sometimes debate, too. Because of this, and not only in this area, but many other areas as well, we have had and seen over the years of proliferation, of professional organizations in Manitoba and other provinces as well. It raised enough issues for government in Manitoba to prompt the government to ask the Law Reform Commission of Manitoba to do some work on this subject.

Now the honourable member may recall, this Law Reform Commission is a commission that was revived by our government shortly after we took office in 1988. This project that the Law Reform Commission is working on is, I am told, the biggest project it has ever been involved with because of that proliferation of professions in Manitoba.

I am glad we did not allow the Law Reform Commission to die, which was about to happen to it had we not moved back in 1988 to restore to it its

independence and its very existence. Before I took office as Attorney General, the previous Attorney Generals were in the process of winding down the Law Reform Commission. I think they were winding it down. In fact, they replaced—

Point of Order

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Acting Chairperson, I believe that the minister is to confine his responses at least to his own department. The minister is trying to play cheap politics by justifying and dealing with decisions that occurred in a previous department. If the minister would answer the question, we could perhaps get on for the benefit of the public of Manitoba, rather than have the minister play his political games by rehashing and giving of history when he was Justice minister, perhaps when he was—

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Sveinson): Order, please. I would encourage all members sitting here today to try to stick to the lines in the department at hand. At this point, though, the honourable member does not have a point of order.

* * *

Mr. McCrae: Well, I certainly agree with you, Mr. Acting Chairperson, and I do not propose to break any rules, certainly not on purpose anyway.

What I am talking about, the Law Reform Commission, is indeed very relevant to the issue raised by the honourable member. I would not be talking about this if the honourable member had not raised the question. It is very relevant that we have a Law Reform Commission to help us sort out all these things.

Now unlike the honourable Minister of Energy and Mines (Mr. Orchard) who probably misses the honourable member for Kildonan a lot, I do not have that problem because he was my critic before when I was in the Justice department, and now he is still my critic. I just cannot seem to shake him off, Mr. Acting Chairperson.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Sveinson): Order, please. I am having trouble hearing the comments of the honourable minister.

Mr. McCrae: Just to make sure there is no doubt about the relevance of the services provided by the Law Reform Commission in relation to this question about dental nurses, let me explain that if there was no Law Reform Commission I do not know what independent agency we could have turned this matter over to to look for advice, because many of the issues involved in this are legal, many of them are regulatory in nature.

There are many overlapping issues between various professionals. If the NDP had their way and there was no Law Reform Commission, I just do not know who we could have turned to, to seek advice on this extremely important issue of the proliferation of professional organizations in Manitoba.

You know we went so far as to restore the very same commissioners to the commission. The NDP politicized the commission by turning over the commissionerships to senior civil servants. Much as I enjoyed working with those senior civil servants when I was Justice minister, they were not appropriate people to head up a Law Reform Commission which, by its very nature, should—

Mr. Chomiak: You are living in the past.

Mr. McCrae: I am living in the future, as a matter of fact.

Mr. Chomiak: I support the Law Reform Commission. I support it.

Mr. McCrae: Okay, so the honourable member has said he supports the Law Reform Commission. He admits that trying to do away with it was a terrible, terrible mistake on the part of he and his predecessors, because you see the honourable member cannot escape responsibility totally. He was very much bound up with that infestation of New Democrats that we—

Points of Order

Mr. Chomiak: I believe you should admonish the minister and all members of this Chamber to try to stick to the department in question. The minister is reliving his tenure as Justice minister, perhaps happier days, but the point is, he is dealing with—

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Sveinson): Order, please. The honourable member does not have a point of order.

* * *

Mr. McCrae: On a new point of order, I wonder if you would consider admonishing the honourable member for Kildonan, who drives me to distraction by raising so many points of order all the time.

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Sveinson): The honourable minister does not have a point of order.

* * *

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Sveinson): The honourable minister, to finish his comments.

Mr. McCrae: Very briefly then, the honourable member has admitted the failure of the previous government and possibly the failure of any future NDP government as well by extension, so that is not something we should be worrying about very much.

The Law Reform Commission, with respect to the question raised about dental nurses, released a discussion paper in November of 1993 and has requested comments from all interested groups before March 1 of this year. The final report and recommendations we expect will be prepared hopefully later this year.

Those interested in professional status or regulation for dental nurses, as well as the Manitoba Dental Association itself, may submit comments to the Law Reform Commission. I am not sure if they have or not, but on other issues I have been involved in discussions, and one or other of these groups may well have done that already, made their views known to the Law Reform Commission, so that the commission in all its deliberations and using all of the skill that it has at its disposal, because of the excellence of the commissioners that we restored to office back in 1988 after the New Democrats tried to wind down that commission, I am sure they will come forward—

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Sveinson): Order, please. The honourable member for Kildonan, were you up on a point of order or not?

Mr. Chomiak: I am just anticipating finally the end of the minister's long—

* (1600)

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Sveinson): Order, please. The honourable Minister of Health to finish his comments.

Mr. McCrae: Well, I lost my place now, Mr. Acting Chairperson.

An Honourable Member: When in doubt, ask Frank.

Mr. McCrae: I do, I do.

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Sveinson): Perhaps we are ready to move on.

Mr. McCrae: Except I lost my place and I will finish up really quick.

The Law Reform Commission is working on this question, and I expect that later this year they will make their report—I hope it is later this year—and that will be released. Then we will have the benefit of that advice, and we will be able to proceed further. Until then, we encourage groups interested in dental health of Manitobans to continue their dialogue and to continue working together, making the patient the focus of all of their efforts. That is my wish. I have said that to all of the people who I have come in contact with. The honourable member earlier accused me of being inconsistent and saying—[interjection] Oh, he said other people have accused me of being inconsistent, and I would like other people to say that to my face.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Acting Chairperson, I am happy to hear the minister says that he is working on behalf of patients.

Can I take from the minister's long response therefore that the government is not planning to change or amend the regulations as it affects professionals for dental nurses, dental hygienists or any of those other professionals pending the release of this study and/or report from the Law Reform Commission? Can we give assurances to the public out there that given what the minister said, and it is fairly clear, we can expect no changes to that legislation or the ensuing regulations pending the report of the Law Reform Commission?

Mr. McCrae: I am glad the honourable member was able, after that last response of mine which I do acknowledge, Mr. Acting Chairperson, was a little longer than you might have expected, because it was a very important question—I did not mean for it to be longer or I did not even mean for it to be irrelevant in any way.

With regard to people involved in dental care, the answer is no. We do not have any legislation coming this session with respect to that area. The Law Reform Commission work is not designed to put totally everything on hold. There may be some already recognized, statutorily recognized groups that may require change. I do not preclude that, although I do not have anything else immediately in my mind at this point. But certainly this session, the answer would be no.

Ms. Gray: Mr. Acting Chairperson, could the minister indicate for us what program evaluations have been conducted in the past year by this section?

Mr. McCrae: During 1993-94 the evaluation unit of our department has been very busy actually according to the note I have in front of me.

With respect to the Mental Health Division, there has been a base-line survey for mental health reform for Winnipeg. They brokered requests for proposal for impact evaluation for mental health reform in Winnipeg. They project-managed evaluation with respect to the Continuing Care Division. There was a medication administration program review. That was a data collection tool. There was work done with respect to evaluation and monitoring of home support worker activities. There was work done with respect to Winnipeg hospitals and personal care home waiting lists. There was data collection and work done on methodology and analysis.

With respect to the Health Services Development Fund, proposals come in and somebody has to assess and evaluate those proposals based on some specific data that exists out there so that we can make judgments about whether proposals ought to be supported. That is considering the nature of the things we fund from that fund. This is very important work.

There has been relevance ratings of all proposals to Health Canada through their national Health Development Fund. There has been analysis with respect to health professions and employers and resources. There has been work done with respect to patient access to medical records. Those are the kinds of projects that we have been involved in in 1993-94.

Ms. Gray: Mr. Acting Chairperson, could the minister tell us, what was the result of the evaluation that was done or the report or review on the evaluation of monitoring of home support work?

Mr. McCrae: Mr. Acting Chairperson, with respect to home support programs, the data developed, the data discovered as a result of this work was simply turned over to the Home Care program. This branch, one of its functions is the collection of data. That data was made available to Home Care. When we get to Home Care, we can answer specifically questions raised by the member or, depending on how we want to run these Estimates, we can get information sooner.

Ms. Gray: Could the minister provide us with terms of reference as to exactly what this data collection involved, some written information on what they were looking at and what they were trying to collect?

Mr. McCrae: Mr. Acting Chairperson, we can supply that and will supply that for the honourable member.

Ms. Gray: The criteria for the health reform proposals, is there a certain criteria that the evaluation and audit secretariat refers to when they are accepting proposals and judging as to whether they would be viable or not? I am sure there are a number of things they would look at in terms of good proposal writing, but is there also a set of criteria that this government has in regard to what they consider as priorities or important for looking at accepting proposals?

* (1610)

Mr. McCrae: I would like to just put a couple of very brief things on the record for the honourable member. The health reform initiatives that have been embarked on, and that will be embarked on,

will be evaluated not by our internal government branch as funded by the Health Services Development Fund, which funds such agencies as the Centre for Health Policy and Evaluation, which gives us I think what would be perceived as a more independent look, more independent evaluation of things we would do.

For example, I do not think the honourable member for Kildonan is interested in this, but the Centre for Health Policy and Evaluation has demonstrated to me that the results of the bed closures about which the honourable member asked—he did not ask about results, he just talked about closures. The results we have been shown of the bed closures have been no impact on patient care, no impact on condition of patients, no impact with respect to readmission, no impact with respect to death after discharge from hospital.

All of those indicators, that kind of information has been shared with me by the Centre for Health Policy and Evaluation, which is funded from the Health Services Development Fund.

Our department itself has certain evaluation protocols. These people are professionals, and the work that they do is based on professional criteria, but I think the kinds of questions the member is asking about have to do with health reform which is being evaluated more by more independent evaluators.

Ms. Gray: Mr. Acting Chairperson, my question was not who is evaluating proposals, because I did not understand that it was Evaluation and Audit Secretariat. The minister mentioned that there was an involvement of this secretariat in looking at the health reform proposal, so I was assuming that they were involved in, or participating in, looking at the proposals as they came in and perhaps assisting in the determination as to which proposals would be actually funded through health reform.

Is that correct? If that is the case, is there a set of criteria that the secretariat uses in terms of evaluating those proposals to decide if they should be funded?

Mr. McCrae: Mr. Acting Chairperson, maybe it is me doing the misunderstanding. The honourable member is correct about that.

Ms. Gray: Is there written criteria that the secretariat uses in terms of looking at those proposals and judging whether they should be funded?

Mr. McCrae: We can provide the honourable member with the criteria used by our audit secretariat in evaluating proposals and will do so.

Ms. Gray: Mr. Acting Chairperson, I thank the minister for being willing to provide that information.

Could the minister tell us, the medication administration review committee, could he give us a bit more information as to what that committee looked at?

(Madam Chairperson in the Chair)

Mr. McCrae: Madam Chairperson, I will give now to the honourable member the terms of reference for the medication management committee, and then at a subsequent occasion I will give the results because I do not have those in front of me.

By the way, there were 12 members of the committee, and the terms of reference were to review current issues and practice regarding medication management and the delivery of community care for the Home Care program.

Secondly, to review information on practice and standards Canada-wide and make recommendations for change in medication management.

Thirdly, to participate in the development of standards and protocols for the Home Care program according to existing legislation and the provincial standard-setting bodies. Those were the terms of reference.

Also, for the member's information, with respect to the committee, the medication management committee was composed of 12 members. Two of them were physicians, three of them were nurses. We had one more nurse than doctor on that committee. There were four from Manitoba Health and a pharmacist and two from

the Victorian Order of Nurses. That is five nurses and two physicians on that particular committee.

Ms. Gray: Madam Chairperson, the optometrist association, I understand, is interested in some changes to the legislation affecting their practice. Have they met with the minister? Could he bring us up to date as to what his position is on their potential changes?

Mr. McCrae: Yes, Madam Chairperson, I have met with representatives of the optometrists. Their issue, the one they raised with me I do not believe has been resolved to date. Their issue is one where, I believe, there is still a point of view to be shared. The issue is one of some parity among ophthalmologists and optometrists, and the honourable member understands how those issues work I think.

I have been asking the optometrists and the others to resolve as much of those issues amongst themselves, bring solutions to me, and I will do what is necessary by way of legislative amendment. It is so much easier and appropriate, for the most part, to resolve these things amicably and without resorting to the government taking a position which ultimately appears to be taking a side, which is one of the last things I want to do if there are other options available to me.

To this point, I do not believe the professionals involved have resolved all of the issues. I guess it will depend next on what the patient needs. If we can encourage the ophthalmologists and optometrists to work out whatever differences there are, as I say, we can move forward. However, I am interested in getting these things resolved, especially if their resolution can mean improved services for the people who need eye care services.

* (1620)

Ms. Gray: Madam Chairperson, does the minister know if the ophthalmologists are prepared to sit down with the optometrists and look at these issues?

Mr. McCrae: Madam Chairperson, presently I am not able to say. We have encouraged both sides to get together. The honourable member's question reminds me to check to see what the present status

is. Perhaps, an update later on in the Estimates can be brought forward.

Madam Chairperson: Item 1.(c) Evaluation and Audit Secretariat (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$340,200—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$207,500—pass.

1.(d) Finance and Administration (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits.

Mr. Chomiak: Madam Chairperson, I am wondering if the minister could outline what the \$511,000 Communications budget is spent on, just generally.

Mr. McCrae: Yes, as the honourable member points out there is \$511,600 budgeted here for communication functions, which is down about 2.4 percent I guess from last budget. The telephone bill was \$96,200 for '94-95, down from \$108,700 in '93-94. The postage bill is the same for each of the two fiscal years as per the budget, \$291,700; the same for public communications, \$43,600; the same for courier service at \$80,100.

Mr. Chomiak: Madam Chairperson, can the minister indicate whether or not any of the functions undertaken by this particular branch or this department in this appropriation are being contemplated to be contracted out or are in the process of being contracted out or, in fact, have been contracted out in the last little while?

Mr. McCrae: We are talking about the payroll function, finance, personnel administration functions. No, we do not contract any of that out. The honourable member may be suggesting maybe we should, and maybe we could review that.

Mr. Chomiak: The minister has a curious habit of implying a response or a policy initiative from a question that is asked. If the minister had carried that consistently through, then he would have cancelled the Connie Curran contract a long time ago, because I asked that question so often.

The minister is indicating that no function in this area is contemplated to be contracted out or privatized in any way, shape or form.

Mr. McCrae: I am sorry. I think I lumped Human Resources in with this and that is a separate area.

No, this has not been the subject of contracting out. I mean if the honourable member is interested in discussing that further—I just want to serve the taxpayers better. That is all I am here to do.

Mr. Chomiak: Madam Chairperson, don't we all? Can the minister just name who the two managers are by name in this particular area?

Mr. McCrae: Tim Duprey is the assistant deputy minister, and Susan Murphy is the director.

Ms. Gray: Madam Chairperson, under the reduction in the line Professional/Technical, where there is an annotation about workforce adjustment, can the minister indicate how many positions were lost through workforce adjustment, if that is what that means when one reads the line?

Mr. McCrae: Madam Chair, in that area where there were once 27.42 staff years, there are now 24.42, which is a reduction of three, one of them being a financial officer, one of them being a chief power engineer and another being a power engineer class 5.

Ms. Gray: Madam Chairperson, the financial officer, can the minister indicate why that position was deleted? Was there a reorganization, or—why was that position deleted, the financial officer? Was there a reorganization, or was it felt that position was redundant? What was the purpose for that?

Mr. McCrae: Madam Chair, there has been a reorganization of the department. There has been an amalgamation or a consolidation of what used to be known as the Manitoba Health Services Commission in Manitoba Health. No, there was a retirement involved, as well, which assisted in making sure that there was a minimal impact on people.

Ms. Gray: Madam Chairperson, this section is the section that deals with space for the Department of Health. I am wondering if the minister could indicate the temporary space for staff from the St. Boniface district and the East Kildonan district, which is now downtown. It was there to be a temporary space, as indicated by the former minister, and our concerns at that time were that the temporary space would end up being permanent space.

We still have a situation where staff who service the St. Boniface area are actually working downtown, out of their community, as well as staff working in East Kildonan are working outside of their community.

Can the minister give us an update on whether there is a move to return those individuals to their communities so they can provide the community-based service?

* (1630)

Mr. McCrae: These services have been temporarily brought under this downtown route. I think the honourable member is asking, will the field offices or whatever be moved back out? That is presently being examined between the Health department and the Government Services department. It is our hope, however, that the staff will be on the job outside a central location most of the time, though we need, I take it, some kind of field office—I call it field office—situation.

The member is talking about a place to report to, to have you hang your hat and have a desk. I think that there might be some need for that, but for the most part these are public health people, and their function has them outside the office for the most part. But the final resolution as to where they are going to be physically located has not been resolved.

Ms. Gray: I think it has been over two years in these temporary quarters. Is there actually any move to move them back to their communities where not only do they have an office to report to but I understand they provide community services as well, such as prenatal classes, other kinds of educational programs?

Is there really a move to actually get them back to the community, or is it at a standstill? If it is not, what possibly could we be discussing for two years that would make us not able to make a decision?

Mr. McCrae: I think the honourable member is engaging me in a discussion that has to do with internal matters related to where staff of a department are housed as opposed to service delivery to the community. Service delivery, as I understand it, has not been interrupted by any of this. The public health education issues that the

people are engaged in carries on and will carry on whether it has been two years or whatever length of time it is. It is the service to the public and proper treatment accorded to our employees of course.

I was a little confused at the beginning because I thought the honourable member was talking about service to the public. Public service goes on, and the issue whether it has been two years or however long it has been is an internal issue to the department and to our staff. So I too, having been shunted around a little bit in my day when I was in government, understand how it must feel. On the other hand, the clients of the service are the ones who were not interrupted when it was happening to me, and I do not think it is happening now either. We have pretty fine people working for us. I too would like to see it resolved for their purposes, but service delivery is where I was getting confused. I do not think there has been any interruption in service delivery.

Ms. Gray: Madam Chairperson, the reason I am asking the question is that at the time the staff were moved downtown, there were a number of community organizations and groups, particularly in the St. Boniface area, who specifically wrote the former Minister of Health and expressed concern about service delivery and less access to the health professionals. There was a commitment made at that time by the former Minister of Health that it was an interim measure and that the preference was that staff be housed in a particular geographical community area. That is why I am asking the question, so that I can get back to these groups and see if there has been any progress.

I am just wondering, is that still the commitment of this Minister of Health, that the staff be located in the community of St. Boniface as opposed to downtown?

Mr. McCrae: Madam Chairperson, yes, I am just getting a little history on this for myself as to what commitments were made and so on. The issue, I guess, for me is, has there been any impairment of service delivery? If the honourable member knows of that, if she would not mind sharing with me from the consumer's point of view any withdrawal

or reduction or impact on service delivery while we continue to wrestle with this problem of where our staff should be located. Sometimes there is a symbolic thing here too that may be part of it. I do not know.

I am quite prepared to look with an open mind at where the staff physically ought to hang their hats when they go to the office, but do they deliver their services at the office or do they deliver their services in the community? I am willing to be brought up to date by the honourable member on that.

Ms. Gray: Madam Chairperson, I will actually get some more information for the minister from the member for St. Boniface (Mr. Gaudry) who probably has an up-to-date status, and we will share that with the minister. Thank you.

Madam Chairperson: Item 1.(d) Finance and Administration (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$2,408,100—pass;(2) Other Expenditures \$1,573,400—pass.

1.(e) Human Resources (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$1,061,800.

* (1640)

Mr. Chomiak: Madam Chairperson, I wonder if the minister might just table the one brief question what the targets are 1994-95 affirmative action plan.

Mr. McCrae: Madam Chairperson, we do not have a target set yet for 1994-95, but I will tell the honourable member where we are as at March 1994 which is a couple of months ago. We had total employees at that time, and this includes term employees, of 3,045 people. Of that 3,045 people, 77 percent or 2,348 were female persons; 4 percent or 148 were aboriginal persons; 3 percent or 97 persons were disabled; 3 percent—there must be rounding going on here, because the number is not exactly the same—or 107 people represent visible minority groups. That is where we were as of March 1994. I take it through the Civil Service Commission and working in conjunction with them, we address targets and we do not have a target to report today.

The other point to be made is that these numbers that I have just put on the record do not always reflect the whole picture, because a lot of people do not always declare that they are a member of a particular target representation group.

Ms. Gray: Madam Chairperson, the 77 percent that the minister referenced who were women, that is really women who are within the Department of Health. I would imagine that the real statistic would be, however, how many women are actually in positions where those positions have been targeted that Affirmative Action would assist with women.

For instance, we have a lot of clerical staff in the Department of Health, and because most clerical positions are filled by women, those are not considered targeted positions. So really the 77 percent gives us an overall figure. Can the minister tell us how many women, as an example, are in targeted positions?

Mr. McCrae: Madam Chair, I do not think this answer goes precisely to the honourable member's question, but this is broken down a little more now for the honourable member.

I should not start with Administrative Support because it is overrepresented—I should not say that. It is very much represented by female persons. That is a traditional thing that Affirmative Action, I think, may or may not be helping to address.

In Administrative Support positions, female persons represent 92.3 percent. Well, now wait a minute. In that same group, 7.03 percent are aboriginal, 7.18 percent are disabled and 6.73 percent are visible minorities. The reason this adds up to more than 100 is some of these people are the same people.

In the professional group, 75 percent are female, 2.3 percent are aboriginal, 2.1 percent are disabled, 2.7 percent represent visible minorities.

In managerial positions, I do not know what this used to be, but I assume it is getting better: 46 percent are women, 2 percent are aboriginal, 2 percent are disabled, 3.9 percent are visible minorities.

In the technical areas, female persons account for 72.6 percent, 2.5 percent are aboriginal, 1.7 percent are disabled individuals, 2.2 percent are visible minorities.

Then the service area: 74.3 percent are female persons, 14.6 percent are aboriginal, 3.5 percent are disabled people, 2.3 percent are from visible minorities. I will leave it at that for the moment.

Madam Chairperson: 1.(e) Human Resources (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$1,061,800—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$193,300—pass.

1.(f)(1) Salaries and Employee Benefits.

Mr. Chomiak: Madam Chairperson, I wonder if the minister could outline for me what the status is of not the PHIN card, but of the evolution towards the Smart Card or that entire concept.

Mr. McCrae: Madam Chair, I am pleased to do that. A lot of work has been done in the last year or so, a little more maybe with respect to health information issues. I think that a lot of people maybe did not know that until recently when we began to talk about the Drug Program Information Network and the potential extension of that network to include a whole health information system which some people might in the future refer to as Smart Health or Smart Card or some such expression.

Even Tim Sale was—[interjection] Well, he immediately said great. [interjection] He has been described as a lot of things, but right away when he heard about a potential—[interjection] You can ask him yourself. He is a friend of health care. However, I am not referring now to Tim Sale, I am referring to somebody else. Tim Sale responded immediately when he was asked, great idea. I think it was the first he heard of it, and he was supportive. Right there and then I began to wonder if everything was okay, but I think it is.

We are within a few weeks of going live. We are already providing Pharmacard services on a pilot basis. The reason for that is that I think we are up around a hundred or so pharmacies in Manitoba on the system, in that range and growing. If we get everybody on it then we will call that going live. I look forward to going live on the DPIN. However, the honourable member asked about an expanded

health information system which everybody agrees is certainly the way to go. We have the technology available, and we ought to be using it to the benefit of Manitobans.

* (1650)

I am very, very excited, Madam Chair, to say that what began as a drug products information network for pharmacy will now be moving and expanding into something that will include all aspects, hopefully, in the long-term future of our health care system.

I think today we can only imagine, and probably our imaginations do not take us far enough, how valuable smart-health automated system will be in the future, how useful it will be, how it will save lives, how it will improve the quality of our lives. Manitobans are certainly ready. All they need is a government that is ready to catch up to the expectations of Manitobans, and they have that in the present government. This government is partnering and working closely with all kinds of health care partners to put into place a system that will automate information systems that allow professionals from the medical profession, pharmaceutical profession, people involved in delivery of laboratory services, hospital emergency rooms, ambulance services. The whole continuum can be included. All it takes is the will to be included, and the technology is there. We have the will, and how quickly we can move is really only limited by our ability to put in place a system that will serve us all so well. We have to make sure we respect people's rights, and I am a firm believer of that, people's rights as guaranteed under our Charter and under our privacy laws. Relationships between patients and their care providers have a special, special attribute involved, and that has to be respected by an automated system.

As one who does not know very much about computerized systems, I am pleased to know that there are so many partners in the health system who are willing to work with us to ensure all of the good things are derived from a card system and those things that ought to be protected are indeed protected.

Mr. Chomiak: Madam Chairperson, the minister did not outline any sort of a time frame with respect to his answer. Is there a target or a general time frame with respect to the movement towards the smart card, or not?

Mr. McCrae: Madam Chairperson, I do not know how to respond specifically to a time line question when we are dealing with, certainly on the DPIN side of it, as I say, within weeks. The health card, well, let us complete some discussions that we are presently having so we can get a better idea of approximately. I know the honourable member is not asking for a specific date but something within the ballpark. I accept that, and I think that I would ask to allow a little bit more discussion to go on before we get into ballparks.

I know there is very little now, in terms of decision making, to stand in the way of moving forward. In other words, the decision to move towards a totally integrated card system has in principle been made so that we will be moving forward to bring this technology to all Manitobans. I still think, when we do this, we will be at the forefront in all of Canada.

Mr. Chomiak: The technological cost of \$300,000, the subnote says technology investment to support the restructured organization. Can the minister perhaps elaborate on what that \$300,000 expended on a restructured organization refers to?

Mr. McCrae: The line to which the honourable member refers is to improve our ability to communicate with the hospitals in Manitoba with respect to our communications relationship with the hospitals. The line he is looking at refers partly to that; it refers to hardware and software costs particularly.

Mr. Chomiak: Is that part of the technology and the hardware and software utilized in the, dare I say, Connie Curran project?

Mr. McCrae: This did not have anything to do with that. The honourable member—well, I will leave it. He was going to try to link something negative here and there really is not something negative to do with the APM contract and so on. You will not find something under every rock. The honourable member keeps turning them over and

over again. He can keep doing that. All he is going to find everywhere he goes are improvements. He is going to find quality care, appropriate care, for people where they need it and when they want it, too. That is what is happening. That is exactly what is happening.

An Honourable Member: We were waiting for that.

Mr. McCrae: The honourable member says he is waiting for it. It is happening. All he has to do is open his eyes.

Ms. Gray: Madam Chairperson, can the minister tell us, utilizing computers within the department, is it proven that if this software I suppose is appropriate that in fact the use of computers can actually save staff time, save staff resources? Have we directly linked those two?

Mr. McCrae: Some would say that is supposed to be the way it works out, but if you look over the years, the growth in computer technology and the growth in the size of the civil service or the health care community, they have all grown at the same time, so the facts do not always bear out the principle. However, the object is not always just to decrease, decrease or reduce; it is to improve, improve and that is what is happening. We can prove it and we are proud of it. We will continue to work in that direction.

Ms. Gray: The reason I asked the question is because it seems like every year the Department of Health only gets so many dollars that are used to purchase computers, and it seems like we are still feeling antiquated in the department in terms of our computerized system. I am wondering why we cannot go ahead and get the equipment that we need, because I would think in the long run there could be a saving of staff time, overtime, term time if we actually were computerized, because we are not as a department and far from it.

Mr. McCrae: I think I can agree with the honourable member. It may in the past have looked like we were not moving very well with regard to an automated, integrated health system and that includes communications, information sharing and information systems.

We are in a position to make vast improvements to our automated system, and if I could venture into the home care area and say I cannot—I mean I do not know how computers work in every application, but I do know that we can make huge improvements in the home care area through the use of automation, and that does not just automatically replace people, but it does automatically, through this information system, make vast improvements to people. That is what we need to do, and that is what we are poised to do.

Madam Chairperson: Order, please. The hour being 5 p.m. and time for private members' hour, I am leaving the Chair and will return at 8 p.m. this evening.

* (1700)

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Mr. Speaker: The hour being 5 p.m., time for Private Members' Business.

PROPOSED RESOLUTIONS

Res. 4—Drug Patent Legislation

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett), that

WHEREAS the proportion of health care expenditures on drugs and medicines is 16.8 percent according to a recent study by the Canadian Medical Association; and

WHEREAS profit margins of around 30 percent of sales are not unusual in the pharmaceutical industry; and

WHEREAS the Patented Medicine Prices Review Board found that introductory prices for most new drugs are much higher in Canada than in other countries, exceeding the median international prices by 21 percent and leading to an overcharging of Canadian consumers by approximately \$3 million in 1992; and

WHEREAS with the passage of Bill C-22 in 1987 and Bill C-91 in 1993, price competition for medicines in Canada has been severely limited; and

WHEREAS the Canadian Medical Association's report concluded, "With respect to

spending on drugs, system pressures have been exacerbated recently by the federal government's decision to extend full patent protection on pharmaceuticals to 20 years with Bill C-91"; and

WHEREAS it has been estimated that Bill C-91 will cost Canada's health care system \$4 billion to \$7 billion over the next 20 years; and

WHEREAS during the 1993 federal election, the Liberal Party promised to immediately review the provisions of Bill C-91, legislation which extends drug patent protection.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the provincial government to pressure the federal government to live up to its election promise to review the drug patent laws and seriously consider repealing this unfair legislation.

Motion presented.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, I rise with great anticipation in this Chamber, great anticipation because I expect that given the effect that this legislation can have on our health care system, and given the effect that the previous legislation has had on our health care system, that members of this Chamber unanimously will join with us to urge the federal Liberal government to do something about this difficulty.

Mr. Speaker, I do not have to cite a good deal of statistics because they have already been cited, and pointed out dramatically far better than I can in my speech, about the effects that these acts have had on not only the drug industry but on the health industry both in Canada and in Manitoba.

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

I expect to receive support from members on all sides of this Chamber, and I expect it for very good reason, because the federal Liberal government was elected with a promise, Mr. Acting Speaker, to deal with this matter. The federal Liberal government was elected with a promise, and I expect the federal Liberal government to live up to this promise.

I quote from a pamphlet handed out during the election campaign of one Lloyd Axworthy, the

Honourable Lloyd Axworthy, who said, quote: Lloyd Axworthy strongly opposed the changes to the Drug Patents Act which will increase the cost of prescription medication by over half a billion dollars each year.

I expect that that member who now has a key place in the federal Liberal government will live up to his promise. I expect he will do that.

Further, the Member of Parliament for Winnipeg North, July 2, 1993, said, and I quote: My Liberal colleagues and I all oppose Bill C-91. It extended patents to brand-name drug companies and removed the system of compulsory licensing which has permitted generic Canadian-based drug companies to produce quality drugs at competitive prices.

Later on, the member for Winnipeg North, who I anticipate will live up to this pledge, says and I quote: For a Liberal government, unnecessary costs like those created by Bill C-91 will be the first items on the agenda to overcome the problems created by the Tories over their years in office. Mr. Acting Speaker, we are now in a situation where we are wondering how long that agenda of items is. We are wondering how long the first extends, because I take at their word what those members now government are saying now in cabinet. This will be their first item on the agenda.

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair)

Well, Mr. Speaker, I anticipate that all members of this House, and particularly my colleagues in the Liberal opposition, will join with us in urging those colleagues to do something on the first item of business on their agenda to deal with Bill C-91 and the effects of Bill C-22. I am certain that I do not have to spend a good deal of time outlining to members of the Liberal Party the effects this legislation has had on the Canadian health care industry and will have in the future on the Canadian health care industry.

Mr. Speaker, at one time, prior to the passage of Bill C-22, our success at delivering drugs was recognized worldwide. In fact, the New York Times said that, quote: Canada's success at delivering drugs at costs lower than those in the United States is an important feature in its medical

system, which has been a model for many health policy experts seeking to contain soaring costs. It said at that time, at one time, Canada's medical costs were 28 percent lower per capita than in the United States. A lot of that effect has been removed and affected by Bill C-22.

Mr. Speaker, what has happened with Bill C-22, as a result, those lower drug costs helped all Canadians receive just as good quality prescriptions at lower prices. The effect has been quite dramatic on the Canadian situation. In fact, as a result of Bill C-22, we have seen drug prices go up 13.4 percent a year, and that was prior to Bill C-91, which further enhanced the protection of the big companies to receive drug protection. So we saw drug prices go up almost, according in fact to the Winnipeg Free Press, 13.4 percent a year as a result of C-22.

Then we had C-91, Mr. Speaker, which further gave the multinational large drug companies a grip on the system, and we saw C-91, which allowed them to increase their profits, not by one billion, estimated, not by two billion, not by three billion, but estimated to increase from \$4 billion to \$7 billion.

* (1710)

In return, these large multinational drug companies promised many things. They promised jobs; they promised investment, but the track record does not demonstrate that they have delivered. In fact the record shows, after the 1987 bill was passed, they had promised 3,000 new jobs to be created. Did 2,000 jobs materialize? No, Mr. Speaker. Did 1,500 jobs materialize? No, only a fraction of those jobs materialized after the 1987 bill.

Then the disaster. Following an increase in prices of 13.4 percent per year, following a failure to invest in R and D, following a failure to create the jobs, we saw C-91 foisted upon us, and again, we see the drug companies potentially gaining \$4 billion to \$7 billion in profits.

Now this money does not go into Canadians' pockets generally. It goes into the dividends—they do not clip coupons anymore—but goes into the pockets of investors outside of this country. It goes

into the profits of the large multinationals. Whose pockets does it come out of? It comes out of our pockets, Mr. Speaker. It comes out of the consumer's pocket. It comes out of the health consumer's pocket, those people in our society who require drugs to assist them in keeping out of hospital and maintaining a semblance of order in their daily lives or treating their health condition.

Mr. Speaker, this is a tragedy that a country that had stable drug costs, that had an access to lower, cheaper brand generic costs, would give itself away, sign on the dotted line and sign away the opportunity to provide lower costs and quality health care.

You know, Mr. Speaker, it goes without saying that all members of this House want to see better health care and cheaper health care for all our citizens. I know, given the commitment from the Honourable Lloyd Axworthy and given the commitment from Dr. Rey Pagtakhan, surely all members of this House, including the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux), will support this measure, will support us in sending a message to the federal government—proceed on your agenda, yes, we do want lower drug costs.

Mr. Speaker, it goes even further, I might add, then simply lower drug costs and better quality drugs. It deals with Manitoba. We have generic drug manufacturers in this province, in this jurisdiction. They would like to expand; they would like to create jobs here. They would like to see R and D done here, but they are held back by this legislation which took away the opportunity for expansion in Manitoba.

It is not just a case of providing cheaper cost, high quality drugs. It is not just a case of the principle of \$4 billion to \$7 billion going in a siphon into the pockets of the large multinational companies. It is more than that. It is more than the R and D jobs. It has to do with investment, millions of dollars in investment, millions of dollars in job creation right here in Manitoba—right here in Manitoba, which is something that we need desperately in this province.

That is something all members of this Chamber, I know, are in favour of. All members of this

Chamber are in favour of job creation. All members of this Chamber are in favour of expansion to provide jobs for our children to stay in this province, so I fail to see how any member in this Chamber would wish to vote against a resolution as positive as this one.

You know, Mr. Speaker, we often get criticized in this Chamber and in this forum for not bringing forward positive legislation or positive resolutions. But what better and what more positive resolution could be brought forward than a resolution unanimously passed by all members of this Chamber urging the federal government not to do something that they were necessarily responsible for, not to do something they did not promise for they did promise, but to simply live up to their promise to help lower drug costs for all of our citizens, to live up to their promise to help create jobs in R and D in Manitoba and to create jobs for those people in Manitoba that would see the expansion of processing for generic drug manufacturers?

Mr. Speaker, this clearly is one of those rare opportunities in this Chamber, not rare I should say, but one of those positive opportunities in this Chamber, for we have a chance to stand together as Manitobans, to urge on the federal government to live up to their promise. Nothing destroys the credibility of a government as quickly or the credibility of a politician then back-peddalling from commitments and back-peddalling from promises that were made.

Mr. Speaker, I know that the Liberal Party made these commitments recognizing they had the possibility of forming government. I know that the Liberal Party made these commitments in the hope that they could form the federal government. Well, now they are there. Now they can join us.

As the former Minister of Health, the member for Pembina (Mr. Orchard) went off to Ottawa to try to plea against the imposition of Bill C-91; I am sure the present Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) will agree with the former minister to plead of the federal government that they recognize that they must live up to their promise. They must ensure that changes occur so that the effects of Bill C-22

and the effects of Bill 91 are eliminated so that the generic drug manufacturers, many located in Manitoba, will have an opportunity to expand and to provide safer and better quality drugs for our citizens.

It is identified in the government's health reform plan 1992 about the effect of soaring drug costs. The minister cited it this year when the minister increased the deductible and lowered the opportunity for individuals to obtain rebates for Pharmacare. He indicated that it was the cost of drugs, the rapidly escalating cost of drugs.

So, Mr. Speaker, it is recognized by all in this jurisdiction, in this Chamber, what the effects are. So I certainly will ask, and I certainly recognize that my friends will join us in urging the federal government to take these steps that they promised to take.

Further, I know that there is a good deal of talk that somehow this issue is tied up in NAFTA or GATT. But I think that it is not a question of GATT, something could be negotiated, and it certainly was not a question of NAFTA. It is really a question of political will. The question is, does the federal government have the political will to live up to its promise to assist us to try to lower drug costs, to try to improve the quality of life for Manitobans?

I am sure that members of this Chamber, like the member for Pembina (Mr. Orchard) who flew off to Ottawa to plead against the imposition of Bill C-91, members of this Chamber and the Liberal Party will join us in imploring—it will have a dramatic effect, I would suggest, if the Liberal caucus would stand up on this issue to urge their federal Liberal colleagues to go along, to follow their promise, to not break their promise, to not raise the level of cynicism against politicians, but to live up to their commitment that they made, the commitment that they made not just during the election campaign, but prior, to try to repeal C-91 and C-22, to try to decrease drug costs to all citizens, to try to improve the quality of health.

Often I have stated, drugs are a preventative measure. They keep people out of higher-priced institutions. They are an aspect of health reform,

and we should lower drug costs. We had lower drug costs before C-22 and C-91. We can get back to having lower drug costs, and at the same time, we can expand jobs in Manitoba and assist in the welfare of all Manitobans.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Speaker, I am somewhat interested in this particular resolution and somewhat pleased that the minister or the minister-wannabe would in fact introduce a resolution of this nature.

I can recall the New Democrats coming into the Chamber and they talked about Pharmacare. They like to believe that they themselves are the saviour of medicare, that they are the individuals who are going to be there to protect the cost of drugs.

Mr. Speaker, the NDP should be well aware of the fact that it was their government that increased the deductibles for Pharmacare, made it harder for seniors, individuals on fixed income to be able to get access to the medication that they required in order to better their circumstances or their health so that we do not have to be as concerned about the seniors and those on the fixed income in terms of having some problems.

The member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett) talks about honesty from government. For Pete's sake, look in the mirror. Look what the New Democratic Party has done across this country or not further than the east from the province of Ontario.

* (1720)

The member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) talks about a fine Member of Parliament, Rey Pagtakhan. I wanted to quote so that the member for Kildonan knows that his interests are well looked after in Ottawa. This is something that the member for Winnipeg North said in the House of Commons knowing full well how important pharmaceuticals are to the country, not only pharmaceuticals but in fact health care. This is something that he himself had pointed out.

This is what the Member of Parliament from Winnipeg North says: Now, Mr. Speaker, through you to my colleague from the New Democratic Party who would like to pontificate and would care

to forget the lessons of history, I am glad that today he did not say that the NDP started medicare. Once before he did say that. Finally he has learned the lesson that it was the Liberal Party in 1919, Liberal convention, that made the commitment to Canada to introduce medicare. After we conceived the idea, the member for Winnipeg North said, unlike the NDP, we put action into it. We gave birth to it. After having given birth to medicare, we would like to continue to nurture it like a good parent of any child.

This is in fact what the Member of Parliament from Winnipeg North—the man I am sure that the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) gave serious consideration in terms of when he went to the ballot box. Mr. Speaker, I would like to indicate to the member for Kildonan that when it comes to the preservation of medicare—and the pharmaceutical industry is a very important aspect to medicare making sure that the drugs are in fact available to us, very, very important.

I would like to ensure him that his concerns will in fact be brought to his Member of Parliament and hopefully as a commitment that was given. I believe the industry minister, current industry minister, announced on April 29 that he has undertaken a monitoring process of this new legislation to ensure that drug companies do materialize. In addition, Minister Manley is monitoring the regulations and will make changes to the regulations if there are problems.

You know what I think it is? I believe that the New Democrats are a very desperate group of individuals. They sit here, and they are concerned because Manitobans are not going to be fooled like Canadians were not fooled last fall when they saw that the individual, the party that best represents them when it comes to health care is not the New Democratic Party.

If you believe it is the New Democratic Party, take a look at what is happening in B.C. where they are charging user fees like no other province across Canada. Take a look at what is happening in Ontario where they are closing down health care beds, where they are laying off thousands of health care workers. Mr. Speaker, take a look at what is

happening in Saskatchewan where they are closing down more hospitals in that province than any other province in Canada. What hypocrisy this New Democratic Party has in this Chamber to stand up and pretend that they are trying to give a serious attempt at defending medicare in the province of Manitoba. It is a simple resolution. Of course, it is a simple resolution—look at where it is coming from.

I am amazed that the New Democratic Party would not take a strong policy stand in terms of where they would like to see pharmaceuticals in the province of Manitoba.

What about the deductibles? Why do you not change your mind on what you did when you were in government and start reducing it? Maybe that is what we should be talking about in the Chamber. Why do we not talk about the deductible? That is the whole question of affordability for our seniors, individuals that are on a fixed income. If you lower the deductible, they are going to be able to purchase, they are going to be able to have better access to it.

An Honourable Member: How about the resolution? Talk about the resolution, Kevin.

Mr. Lamoureux: That is the resolution. The New Democratic Party is concerned about affordability of medication. The higher you raise the deductible, the more unaffordable it is going to be for our seniors and people on a fixed income. But this party knew that in 1988; they knew it before then when they increased the pharmaceutical deductibles. Did the member from Wellington (Ms. Barrett) support Howard Pawley, the former Premier, when he raised the deductibles? Of course, she did, but now, when a party is desperate, they like to believe that they can overtalk, they can say: No, no, we would not have done that. No, we are going to disown what we have done in the past.

Well, you cannot do that. You have to live up to the things that you have made commitments to and stop being so hypocritical of the positions that you take here, Mr. Speaker.

Point of Order

Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, Beauchesne's Citation 489 states very clearly that "hypocritical" is unparliamentary. Quite frankly, the New Democratic Party, we have some difficulty with Liberals in lecturing anyone on hypocrisy. I would like to ask that you have the member withdraw that unparliamentary and inaccurate remark.

Mr. Speaker: On the point of order raised, I did rule in 1989-1990, Beauchesne's, page 1046, that the word "hypocritical" indeed is unparliamentary. Therefore, the honourable opposition House leader does have a point of order, and I would ask the honourable member for Inkster to withdraw that word, please.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, out of appreciation of the rule book—

Mr. Speaker: Unqualified. Order, please. The honourable member for Inkster, please, to withdraw the word "hypocritical."

Mr. Lamoureux: I withdraw the word "hypocritical."

Mr. Speaker: I would like to thank the honourable member for Inkster.

* * *

Mr. Lamoureux: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I would like to see the official opposition taking more of a responsible approach in terms of what it is that they are in fact saying and to reflect on some of the things that they have done in the past. There is a lot of productivity that can come out of private members' hour, a lot of very good, detailed debate.

What I would have preferred to stand up and talk about is, in fact, the deductibles on something. Something that we have a bit more influence on. [interjection] Well, it is not quite as simple as that, to the member from Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak). He knows that there is a draw process that is in place, and I know this is their first priority—is that what he is saying in terms of dealing with the whole health care issue? But I want to make it very clear, very clear, that the critic for the health care brings in a resolution that deals with the importance of understanding the direct costs and potential

increases in cost to pharmaceuticals and tries to imply that there is going to be that much more of an increased burden on those individuals that can least afford it. [interjection]

The member for Kildonan asked me: How am I defending that? Well, I believe that the member for Kildonan does not understand how the system works.

If the Health critic for the New Democratic Party realized that the deductible has more of a real impact on affordability for the seniors and individuals on fixed incomes or individuals that rely on prescription drugs, if they realized that that is what the real impact is on, then this is what we should have heard from the New Democratic Party, even though this might have been just by the luck of the draw that they got this particular resolution up. I did not hear the critic for Health comment on that whatsoever. And that is equally as important as this when you are talking about the prices of prescription drugs. [interjection]

The member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) says: I thought you were going to support it. And he is trying desperately to get me on the record as saying: I am going to support, or I am not going to support it. He is trying desperately to do that. I think the member for Kildonan has selective hearing. I do not believe that the member for Kildonan heard, in fact, what I had alluded to earlier; I do not think he ever heard it, that the Minister of Industry and Trade has in fact undertaken some of the responsibilities.

In the resolution he says monitor—in the resolution it says: “Therefore be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the provincial government to pressure the federal government to live up to its election promise to review . . . ” To review, Mr. Speaker. Well, the minister is monitoring, reviewing, and we are going to continue to play on those. [interjection] Well, I think that the members of the New Democratic Party have got to start questioning some of the resolutions that are in fact coming into their caucus. [interjection] Well, the member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett) says it is a very simple resolution. If I look at Question Periods, I guess all

questions will be very simple. I know you are very hurt by the fact that the Liberals are in government in Ottawa, and we see that every day when they stand up: It is the federal Liberals that are doing this. It is the federal Liberals that are doing that.

* (1730)

They are finally applauding all the wonderful things the federal Liberals are doing. But, Mr. Speaker, there are a number of things which the New Democratic caucus should in fact be addressing inside the Chamber, and I do not want to belittle the importance of this very serious issue. I concur that the federal government does need to review it; there is no doubt about that. You know, it was indicated to me, unless the critic for health care is otherwise to establish that it is not true, that the federal government is reviewing it, and the critic for Health does not say anything in terms of, no, the federal minister is not reviewing it. So he knows that they are reviewing it. So what is he asking the minister in fact to do?

Is he trying to score some political cheap shots so that he can try to make it once again the connection of the federal Liberals and the provincial Liberals and if whatever the federal Liberals do not do right we are going to bring down the provincial Liberals? I guess I cannot blame them. If I were in the same situation, I would probably be inclined to look at doing the same thing, but I would be more cognizant of the fact that if I were in their shoes you have got to realize you were in government. At least on the things that you are going to take shots at the federal government, make sure you are not so inconsistent with what it is that you are preaching that it makes you look like that you are being somewhat—and it was ruled out of order, the word “hypocritical,” so I cannot use that word—but be very careful in terms of what it is that you are suggesting that we should be doing.

So I would like to conclude my remarks by commenting, Mr. Speaker, because I know that the member for Osborne (Ms. McCormick) also wants to be able to speak on this resolution which is in, I would put it, a bit more detail on the record so that the member—

An Honourable Member: A bit more detail. That is an understatement.

Mr. Lamoureux: A bit more detail, well, unfortunately we have a limited amount of time and my light is flashing. I would be more than happy, I am sure, if they want to give leave to continue talking on it, Mr. Speaker.

An Honourable Member: Question.

Mr. Lamoureux: Well, again you see the NDP asking for the question. I guess they do not necessarily want to hear the truth because of what is actually going on, Mr. Speaker. They are somewhat fearful in terms of knowing exactly what it is that they are voting on. I have tried, the best way I know how, to be able to point out to my colleagues on the right-hand side of me, but on the political spectrum very far to the left, some of the inherent problems that they have, and hopefully they will gain that appreciation. Whether or not this resolution happens to come to a vote today or not, we do not want to limit individuals to have input. I am interested in knowing what the member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett) has to say about Howard Pawley, the former Premier, and what he has done, not necessarily to the pharmaceutical companies—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member's time has expired.

Ms. Norma McCormick (Osborne): Mr. Speaker, I too would like to put some comments on the record with respect to this resolution. Again, I recognize the significant argument here seems to be that the quote from the Liberal Party red book appears to say that there will be an immediate review of the provisions of Bill C-91. What we need to do is to examine what has in fact been transpiring in the federal House with respect to this regulation.

(Mr. Marcel Laurendeau, Acting Speaker, in the Chair)

The record that I have from Oral Question Period makes it very clear, Mr. Acting Speaker, that this is a very complicated issue. The two largest regions of Canada, Quebec and Ontario, appear to be pitted against one another with respect to their preference. Quebec, of course, supports

this patent protection legislation as many of the drug companies who stand to benefit from this exist in Quebec. So in April 29, 1994, Mr. Yvan Loubier of Saint-Hyacinthe-Bagot stood up in the House of Commons to ask a question to the Minister of Industry. His question basically contained a complaint that in fact the minister's intention to reopen Bill C-91, the drug patent legislation, was holding off a \$50 million investment in Quebec.

I note that in responding to this it became apparent that the Industry minister did indicate that he was undertaking a monitoring process of this new legislation to ensure that the drug companies were living up to their promises to invest in Canadian research and development, and to ensure that Canadian drug prices were not allowed to go out of line. In doing so, it is apparent that the Industry minister was at the same time trying to be sensitive to the member from Quebec, but wanting to hold the drug industry accountable for the commitments that had been made throughout the negotiation of C-91.

C-91, which was passed by the Mulroney government, had extracted a commitment from the pharmaceutical industry to invest in the development of this industry. It was a sort of quid pro quo exchange.

The other thing that has to go on the record here is that this is an international as well as a national issue. The U.S. government will be watching these developments with interest as well. Many of the drug companies that are going to be affected are in fact U.S. based, and these U.S. companies stand to benefit from the patent protection extension. I am sure that they would do everything in their power to get Canada to up the protection from 10 to 20 years, as it strengthens their hand in dealing with other international markets, such as Japan and Asia, who also are trying to move in on the patent protection of U.S. drug companies. Now the good news is that the Mulroney legislation put in place, provided for a recall provision which indicates that this regulation must come back for review in 1997.

* (1740)

If we look at the commitments that had been made in the passage of Bill C-91, they were basically twofold. One was to invest in the Canadian economy, and the second commitment was in fact to hold the prices and to ward off any untoward increase in drug price costs.

Again, I think that one of the things we have to recognize here is that this is not just a national issue in fact, but it is also an issue of international significance. I think it is important to recognize too that the provincial government in Ontario is going to be impacted by whatever decision is made, given that the generic drug industry appears to be clustered around Toronto.

I guess I really have to question, whose agenda are we debating here? It appears that the provincial NDP might be fearing the same descent into oblivion that has been experienced by their federal colleagues at the hand of the Liberal government in Ottawa, and perhaps the same fear is being experienced by the provincial government in Ontario.

So what is at issue here is whether or not there is sufficient protection offered to the Canadian public by a 1997 review of the legislation. As well, what is at issue is whether or not Mulroney was in fact correct when he passed the regulation or the law indicating that there would be a substantial investment in research and development.

What is at question here is whether or not we are prepared to let the regulation or the law play out until 1997 and go for the mandatory review which was called for, or in fact pre-empt the process and allow the generic companies to take expired patents and sell drugs for less.

There is a fundamental issue here, as I see it. One of the things is how much we ought to encourage the research and development by private companies. This is one of the things that has been troubling me with respect to many of the initiatives that I have seen by this government in Manitoba. It seems that we really have an obligation to encourage industry to do its own research and development and that we ought not always be looking at this as something that is to be done on the ticket of the taxpayer.

If in fact this legislation does—[interjection] I do not know whose principles we are talking about here. Perhaps it is NDP principles that we are debating and not Liberal ones, but I do want to go on the record that I do believe that industry and business have an obligation to do their own research and development, that we ought to be encouraging and not—[interjection] Right, yes.

I think, though, what we want to do is to look at this in the perspective of whether or not we want to encourage investment in the Canadian economy by Canadian business. If the effect of allowing this bill to run out until 1997 does result in substantial investment in research and development in Canada, then maybe in exchange your protection is a reasonable thing.

The other thing that we need to examine is whether or not there are other ways of ensuring that we do gain control and find ways of saving money on drug costs. Maritime governments were brought up by a previous speaker. In fact, the bulk purchase of drugs through the Maritime health care initiatives are—joint purchasing is in fact something that we in Manitoba could explore.

Just in conclusion, Mr. Acting Speaker, I want to say I suspect that we are not debating something which is seriously of primary concern to this Legislature. It appears simply to be a ploy to try and drive a wedge between our provincial and our federal party.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laurendeau): Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): Mr. Acting Speaker, I am pleased to join in the discussion this afternoon. Although I am tempted to just continue to sit and enjoy the discussion going on between our New Democratic friends and our Liberal friends here in the Manitoba Legislature on the issue of drug patent legislation and to watch the two parties try to argue for the higher ground, the higher ground unfortunately eludes both parties here in Manitoba. Such ground can exist and does exist in the delivery of pharmaceutical services.

I want to use the opportunity this debate accords me as a provincial Minister of Health whose

concern is to maintain viable programming, to maintain as affordable programming as we can make our programming, perhaps to point out that red books do not always live up to their expectations or promises.

I do not know, maybe some of my friends in the Liberal Party here in Manitoba can confirm. Has there been a revised red book produced since the election? I cannot think of anything more cynical than printing up a red book for the purpose of getting yourself elected and immediately after the successful election campaign to revise the red book. It strikes me as—I am looking at a couple of quotations here from federal Liberals with respect to the promise made in the red book that everybody is so familiar with now.

I have a quotation from senior Quebec cabinet minister Andre Ouellet who has said that even though the Liberals found the drug patent legislation repugnant or objectionable when they were in opposition, they will not change it now. This is what Monsieur Ouellet has said, quote: It will not be changed, because we cannot change it.

Well, last time I checked, the Liberal Party has a fairly healthy majority in the House of Commons. To say that they cannot do anything is more or less saying, well, what did you elect us for? We cannot understand how it is we went out, we ran for election, we achieved a majority government, and now we do not want to do anything about that. We do not want to follow up on our promises.

Ouellet said this to the Canadian press: We fought the law and tried to amend it, but now it is on the books, and we have to respect it. We are not flip-flopping. Does it mean that because we are against the law and do not like a law, we should disobey this law? I have a little trouble with Monsieur Ouellet's thinking here. He also said it would not be changed when it comes up for compulsory review in 1997. That is my information. It cannot be changed because we cannot change it.

* (1750)

I know the drug patent issue is a very important issue to Canadians on all sides of the issue, but this debate has more to do with hypocrisy than it has to

do with drug patent legislation. I learned early in my career, as a member of the government with a government of the same name operating in Ottawa, that when that government messes up, you should call attention to it. When something is wrong or something is inconsistent or something is hypocritical—and I think in this context, Mr. Acting Speaker, I can use that word—when that happens, something should be said about it so that people can understand precisely your position.

One of the flaws, if I may be so bold, in the strategy of our provincial friends in the Liberal Party is that they have decided that no matter how good or bad the federal government, no matter how many times they transgress their own rules as laid out in the red book, they will be supportive of the federal government. It is a policy. You have to be darn confident that wherever this federal government is going to go, you want to go there, because if you are going to make that as your policy, come hell or high water, we are going to do what the Prime Minister and his colleagues want us to do. If it is in the area, the honourable member will do it.

The honourable member the House leader for the Liberal Party (Mr. Lamoureux) today referred to Dr. Pagtakhan. Now he is a nice man. I agree with the honourable member. But I had to do a little debating with him one day on the radio with regard to tobacco taxes, and as a medical doctor, I was having a little trouble following the man's reasoning. He was talking something about side effects and some very, very circumlocutory argument with respect to how ultimately the changes in taxation brought on by the federal government in response to the Province of Quebec's demands was the right thing to do. Frankly, he lost me.

Maybe it is my own density of thinking here, but I had to observe on the air that what I was hearing from the good doctor was gobbledegook because there is no way on God's green earth that a medical doctor can go on the radio and defend, in that case being a card carrying Liberal and a Member of Parliament representing the Liberal Party and all that. I guess it was his duty that day, but better strategy would have been to get somebody other

than Dr. Pagtakhan to try to defend that, because first of all, it is indefensible, and for a doctor to do it is absolutely ridiculous. I guess they could have used Dr. Jon Gerrard, but they did not use him either.

This kind of strategy will only last for so long, I suggest. I think the federal Liberals, granted all governments get a little honeymoon period, but if they keep this kind of stuff up, showing their inability to make a decision and stick with it and go with it, or their inability to lead, are going to find themselves in trouble. Provincial Liberal Parties that want to follow that particular approach and defend it are going to get into some trouble. That is just some words of experience on this particular point, because I happen to know what happened to the last federal government, and I know what might happen to this federal government if it does not smarten up.

An Honourable Member: Boy, do you know what happened to the last federal government?

Mr. McCrae: Boy, do I ever know what happened to the last federal government, and I know what will happen to this provincial Liberal Party if they tie their future onto a wagon that is going very—well, maybe not too quickly yet but may speed up down that hill to oblivion, too. If it happened to that once powerful Progressive Conservative Party, which is the party of Confederation, and they have been humiliated to the extent they have, do not think it cannot happen to a Liberal government and has in the past. It could happen in the future.

I remember as an employee in the House of Commons observing some of these Liberal people who are presently back in government and some of them were there then and are now, people like Andre Ouellet, Lloyd Axworthy and others, they have not really changed.

They promised change, but I have noticed in the past six or so months—[interjection] The honourable member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) says I am biased. He is absolutely right. Let me put my credentials on the table. I have never been a Liberal. I thought about it once or twice. [interjection] Sure, over the years we all do these

things, and each and every time, because of the performance of the Liberals in my generation, I just could not do it. It was not there for me. What is distressing sometimes is to see that so many of them are back and so little has changed that it is a little bit distressing.

Before I finish, and I did not want to spend all my time just observing my experience with watching Liberals over the last number of years, honourable members in the New Democratic Party already know some of my feelings about some of their philosophies and will no doubt have further opportunity in Estimates and elsewhere to discuss those things further.

I did want to talk a little bit about the patent legislation itself. You see, this may be an area where the New Democrats and we part company, and it has to do with Bill C-22. We recognize there has to be a fair kind of a balance in relation to patent protection and the property of people, and that balance has to be the right kind of balance.

Bill C-22 was a balance that we think brought the balance that was needed. Bill C-91 brought in a further protection that was not necessarily conducive to maintaining an appropriate balance. So it is the reference to Bill C-22 in the honourable member's motion that causes a little concern, and if the honourable member would agree to delete that reference, I could see my way clear to—if the honourable members opposite would agree to that, I could see my way clear to supporting the amendment. I see the honourable member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) stating his agreement, and that is being done as I speak.

In the meantime though—now I have gone and given my colleague my speaking notes which is not a good idea to do when you are making one of your better contributions. While I am at it, I just wanted to say a word about the efforts we are making here in Manitoba to preserve a very good program. There are some honourable members who have been critical of our approach, and I just want to say that we have worked very hard to maintain a program that will last us for many, many years. Some people have called in to question our commitment to Pharmacare, and they

should not do that because we brought in the Drug Program Information Network, which I believe will be up and running very shortly and will demonstrate our commitment to a quality Pharmacare program that will be sustainable for many, many years to come.

Having said that about our own commitment to Pharmacare, I would like to move an amendment to the honourable member's resolution as follows:

I move, seconded by the honourable member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Pallister),

THAT the resolution be amended by deleting the words "Bill C-22 in 1987 and" as it appears in the fourth WHEREAS of the resolution.

Motion presented.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laurendeau): Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the amendment?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laurendeau): Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion as amended?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laurendeau): Agreed and so ordered.

The hour being 6 p.m., I am interrupting the proceedings. We will resume at 8 p.m. in Committee of Supply.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, May 9, 1994

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