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First Session - Thirty-Sixth Legislature
of the
Legislative Assembly of Manitoba
DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS
(Hansard)

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Speaker*



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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Sixth Legislature

Members, Constituencies and Political Affiliation

<u>Name</u>	<u>Constituency</u>	<u>Party</u>
ASHTON, Steve	Thompson	N.D.P.
BARRETT, Becky	Wellington	N.D.P.
CERILLI, Marianne	Radisson	N.D.P.
CHOMIAK, Dave	Kildonan	N.D.P.
CUMMINGS, Glen, Hon.	Ste. Rose	P.C.
DACQUAY, Louise, Hon.	Seine River	P.C.
DERKACH, Leonard, Hon.	Roblin-Russell	P.C.
DEWAR, Gregory	Selkirk	N.D.P.
DOER, Gary	Concordia	N.D.P.
DOWNEY, James, Hon.	Arthur-Virden	P.C.
DRIEDGER, Albert, Hon.	Steinbach	P.C.
DYCK, Peter	Pembina	P.C.
ENNS, Harry, Hon.	Lakeside	P.C.
ERNST, Jim, Hon.	Charleswood	P.C.
EVANS, Clif	Interlake	N.D.P.
EVANS, Leonard S.	Brandon East	N.D.P.
FILMON, Gary, Hon.	Tuxedo	P.C.
FINDLAY, Glen, Hon.	Springfield	P.C.
FRIESEN, Jean	Wolseley	N.D.P.
GAUDRY, Neil	St. Boniface	Lib.
GILLESHAMMER, Harold, Hon.	Minnedosa	P.C.
HELWER, Edward	Gimli	P.C.
HICKES, George	Point Douglas	N.D.P.
JENNISSEN, Gerard	Flin Flon	N.D.P.
KOWALSKI, Gary	The Maples	Lib.
LAMOUREUX, Kevin	Inkster	Lib.
LATHLIN, Oscar	The Pas	N.D.P.
LAURENDEAU, Marcel	St. Norbert	P.C.
MACKINTOSH, Gord	St. Johns	N.D.P.
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	N.D.P.
MARTINDALE, Doug	Burrows	N.D.P.
McALPINE, Gerry	Sturgeon Creek	P.C.
McCRAE, James, Hon.	Brandon West	P.C.
McGIFFORD, Diane	Osborne	N.D.P.
McINTOSH, Linda, Hon.	Assiniboia	P.C.
MIHYCHUK, MaryAnn	St. James	N.D.P.
MITCHELSON, Bonnie, Hon.	River East	P.C.
NEWMAN, David	Riel	P.C.
PALLISTER, Brian, Hon.	Portage la Prairie	P.C.
PENNER, Jack	Emerson	P.C.
PITURA, Frank	Morris	P.C.
PRAZNIK, Darren, Hon.	Lac du Bonnet	P.C.
RADCLIFFE, Mike	River Heights	P.C.
REID, Daryl	Transcona	N.D.P.
REIMER, Jack, Hon.	Niakwa	P.C.
RENDER, Shirley	St. Vital	P.C.
ROBINSON, Eric	Rupertsland	N.D.P.
ROCAN, Denis	Gladstone	P.C.
SALE, Tim	Crescentwood	N.D.P.
SANTOS, Conrad	Broadway	N.D.P.
STEFANSON, Eric, Hon.	Kirkfield Park	P.C.
STRUTHERS, Stan	Dauphin	N.D.P.
SVEINSON, Ben	La Verendrye	P.C.
TOEWS, Vic, Hon.	Rossmere	P.C.
TWEED, Mervin	Turtle Mountain	P.C.
VODREY, Rosemary, Hon.	Fort Garry	P.C.
WOWCHUK, Rosann	Swan River	N.D.P.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, June 15, 1995

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Committee of Supply

Mr. Marcel Laurendeau (Chairperson of Committees): Madam Speaker, the Committee of Supply has considered certain resolutions, directs me to report progress and asks leave to sit again.

I move, seconded by the honourable member for St. Vital (Mrs. Render), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Manitoba Builder Bonds

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, I have a ministerial statement for the House.

Madam Speaker, on May 3 of this year, I announced that due to the continued success of Manitoba Builder Bonds and the desire of Manitobans to invest in their province, the third issue of Manitoba Builder Bonds would go on sale May 23.

It gives me great pleasure to rise in the House today to announce that over 23,000 Manitobans have purchased in excess of \$370 million of Builder Bonds Series III.

A combination of HydroBonds and Builder Bonds has now raised in excess of \$2 billion for the province and has generated in excess of \$350 million in interest for Manitobans. Proceeds from the sale provides a local source of funds and goes to work right here in Manitoba for Manitobans.

I would like to extend our thanks to the people of Manitoba who have again shown pride and confidence in their province by investing in Manitoba Builder Bonds. Thank you.

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Madam Speaker, we were expecting a different statement from the government today, one which we could have been more critical about.

I would like to say that we support the concept of Manitobans investing in their own province. We think the Builder Bond concept is a good idea, and we are certainly pleased to see, again, 23,000 Manitobans investing in their province.

We do not have a record of the exact interest rates paid by the province, et cetera, but we will leave that for questions at a later time.

The government has mentioned \$370 million of Builder Bonds staying here in the province of Manitoba. I think the government should turn its attention to how much money is leaving our country in terms of pension investments and how much money is leaving our province in terms of pension investments here in the province of Manitoba.

The recent report indicated that over \$5 billion in public-sector pension plans was available here in Manitoba, but our review of that pension plan money indicates 88 percent of that fund goes out of the province, out of the community, out of the economy of Manitoba, out of the job market.

So we applaud the \$370-million announcement today of the Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson), but we would ask him to think more about keeping our money here in our province and look at the \$5-billion amount of money that should be invested properly in our communities, in our future and in our children.

Thank you very, very much.

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Northern Affairs): Madam Speaker, I wish to table the Supplementary Information for Legislative Review for the Department of Northern Affairs for the 1995-1996 Estimates.

Introduction of Guests

Madam Speaker: Prior to Oral Questions, I would like to draw the attention of all honourable members to the public gallery, where we have with us fifty Grade 5 students from Souris Elementary School under the direction of Mr. Glen Walmann and Mrs. Theresa O'Brien. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Tweed).

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

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Canadian Wheat Board U.S. Exports

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

When we were told a year and a half ago that the changes in GATT would not eliminate the Western Grain Transportation Act, we were somewhat sceptical on this side of the House.

Unfortunately, the provisions of the WGTA according to the federal government have gone from non-GATTable to GATTable as the reason for eliminating those investments in western Canadian producers.

A year ago we were told that the federal government would take on the United States and not allow any capping of our wheat sales to that country. Regrettably, after that date, we saw a capping of Canadian wheat sales to the United States, unilaterally suggested and unfortunately agreed to by the federal government to cap the sales for a year to 1.5 million tonnes.

We now hear again that vital programs for western Canadian producers and Manitoba producers are on the table with the International Joint Commission on Grains, and they are reviewing the option of eliminating the Wheat Board as the marketing agency into the United States.

I would like to ask the Premier (Mr. Filmon), is his government opposed to the option of eliminating the role of the Canadian Wheat Board in sales to the United States?

* (1340)

Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Agriculture): Madam Speaker, first of all, I am delighted and I am pleased that the Leader of Her Majesty's opposition acknowledges the importance of the American market to the farmers of Manitoba and western Canada.

I certainly concur with him in his concern that he expressed and I expressed, my government expressed, in the clearest and loudest terms, that any interference in that trade, including the cap that was arbitrarily imposed on it and agreed to, I might say, regrettably, by our government in Ottawa last year, last September, was done so against the vigorous opposition from this minister and from this government.

I can report more up to date that just as late as last Thursday, I have had the opportunity to have a lengthy private discussion with the federal minister in Ottawa. I am led to believe that he will resist any attempts to extend the cap that currently exists, that the Leader of the Opposition referred to, that is due to run out on September 12 of this crop year.

So, to that extent, we see eye to eye, and I certainly am pleased to hear this kind of support for that kind of free movement of goods and trade which has been so important, particularly to agriculture.

Since the signing of the Free Trade Agreement with the United States and since NAFTA, Madam Speaker, our trade has increased by 35 percent, 45 percent and 50 percent in certain commodity groups. That is extremely important to the agricultural producers of this province of Manitoba.

Madam Speaker, the commission's reports have not been made available to either governments in Washington or in Ottawa. There has been no release of what the commission's supposed recommendations to either government will be, and in my opinion, it is idle to speculate at this moment about the kinds of rumours that the member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk) raised in the House yesterday and the ones that are being repeated today by the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Doer: Madam Speaker, my question then is to the Premier, because I asked the government to respond to the option of eliminating the role of the Canadian Wheat Board in marketing grain to the United States.

Madam Speaker, under the recent listing by the Financial Post in Canada, the Canadian Wheat Board is the largest corporation in Manitoba. It is the only corporation here in this province that is in the top 50 in that listing. The Wheat Board is a positive instrument of marketing for farmers here in western Canada, and it also represents a tremendous financial asset to this community and to this province.

I would like to ask the Premier to show the same kind of effort that he is now showing for a hockey team. Would he now get involved and oppose the elimination of the Canadian Wheat Board as an option in terms of marketing grain to the United States?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Madam Speaker, lest anyone be misled by the kinds of figures that the member throws around, the Canadian Wheat Board is shown as such a large corporation because of the fact that it sells all of the wheat for Canada to the world, but in terms of employment numbers or payroll or any of those, it would not be nearly as large as many of our corporations. Perhaps there are as many as 10 or more that are much larger than the Canadian Wheat Board, so let him not try and play games with the rhetoric and the figures.

The fact of the matter is the Canadian Wheat Board has served the agricultural producers of Canada very well over the years. I believe that any survey of western Canadian producers would say that they would support the Wheat Board, and this government and this administration continues to support the Canadian

Wheat Board. We make no bones about it, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Doer: Madam Speaker, we are very worried on this side that every time Mr. Goodale—[interjection] Well, maybe the Premier is not worried about the last time—[interjection] Well, let us talk about elections.

We have been informed that the federal Liberal Minister of Agriculture does not want to release the interim report until after the Saskatchewan election. There is a great deal of support in Saskatchewan, Madam Speaker, for the Canadian Wheat Board. We would hope there is a great deal of support for the Canadian Wheat Board, not just with farmers here in Manitoba but by members across the way.

I would like to ask the Premier, will he definitively state today that he and his government are opposed to the elimination of the Canadian Wheat Board as the marketing agency to the United States?

Mr. Filmon: I just said, Madam Speaker, that this government supports the Canadian Wheat Board and the job that it does on behalf of Canadian farmers.

* (1345)

Winnipeg Jets Private-Sector Funding

Mr. Tim Sale (Crescentwood): Madam Speaker, the government and Spirit have apparently agreed that the public sector and the private sector will each contribute approximately \$111 million to the arena-Jets project.

Spirit confirmed yesterday in their press conference that they have raised to date approximately \$60 million, of which \$13 million is from the grassroots campaign. In other words, Spirit has actually raised \$47 million to date, yet they say they are only \$20 million short on their fundraising campaign. Even counting the grassroots money, Madam Speaker, they would appear to be \$51 million short. Can the Minister of Finance explain the arithmetic?

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, the commitment of the Spirit of Manitoba, the

private-sector investors, is to raise \$111 million to sustain the Winnipeg Jets here in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Winnipeg Arena Provincial Funding

I am not sure what point the member is making by discounting the grassroots contribution of some \$13 million. That was done in a public way with everybody being aware that this was going to be a contribution to retaining the Jets here and part of the funds being raised by the Spirit of Manitoba.

So, again, as is common from across the way, we know they oppose keeping the Jets here. We know they are trying to find every way to scuttle keeping the Jets here in Manitoba, and they quote statistics that are absolutely inaccurate.

The grassroots campaign, Madam Speaker, is part of the money that has been raised. They have raised in excess of \$60 million. They require another \$20 million to close, and they will continue. They have a confidence level that they can then conclude by raising the entire \$111 million.

Mr. Sale: Madam Speaker, is it the intention and understanding of the government that, given that the grassroots has raised \$13 million and the private sector has raised \$47 million, for a total of \$60 million, as Spirit said, both parties the private sector is talking with will have to raise \$111 million in total before this project is committed? Is that their policy?

Mr. Stefanson: I continue to be baffled by the member for Crescentwood not agreeing that the grassroots always was, always is, a part of the contribution towards keeping the Jets here, and it forms a part of the funds being raised by the Spirit of Manitoba. That has always been well-known. Spirit has always talked about that in an open, public way.

If the member takes the time to read the press release that was issued yesterday by Spirit, they refer to why they are setting \$80 million as the minimum threshold that they have to have added by August 15, with confidence at that point that they can raise the additional \$31 million through a combination of continued private-sector investors and through some other charges that would be put in place as it relates to having the facility here in Manitoba, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Tim Sale (Crescentwood): Will the Minister of Finance and his government then make the contribution of \$111 million a matter of public policy prior to the commitment to construction of the arena?

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, when Spirit indicated yesterday that they are prepared to accept and close on the option and move forward now with an August 15, 1995, closing date, they clearly outlined that there were at least three conditions that have to be met during this next two-month period. One is the approval of the NHL, one is a satisfactory ruling from Revenue Canada, and another one is raising an additional \$20 million which will take them to in excess of \$80 million.

They refer to the fact that they will continue to pursue private-sector user grants, as well as other advances from the private sector, as well as other private-sector contributions to ultimately achieve the \$111 million.

That is how things will move forward, and those are the three conditions that have to be met for the agreement to conclude on August 15.

* (1350)

Granville Lake, Manitoba Social Assistance

Mr. Oscar Lathlin (The Pas): Madam Speaker, my questions are directed to the First Minister (Mr. Filmon).

Members will be aware that two weeks ago I asked the First Minister and his government questions regarding the people at Granville Lake and, unfortunately, of course, those questions started off a rather unfortunate debate, where the First Minister made some remarks about us.

My question is, Madam Speaker, what is the current status of negotiations over social assistance responsibility for the people of Granville Lake? Is the

First Minister going to do anything, or is he going to just let those people live there with nothing?

Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister of Family Services): Madam Speaker, I thank my honourable friend for that question.

Indeed, we have experienced over the last number of years, since the federal government has offloaded its financial support to Status Indians off reserve, some \$70 million that Manitoba taxpayers have had to pick up, and we know that they continue to put health, education and social services for people very low on their priority list, just looking at their recent federal budget and where the reductions have been made, Madam Speaker.

We are firmly of the belief that the federal government has a special financial responsibility to Status Indians throughout our Manitoba community and right throughout Canada.

My honourable colleague the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Praznik) and I have had the opportunity to meet with ministers right across the four western provinces, and a letter of support for our position by all four western provinces has gone to the federal minister, Madam Speaker.

We believe that the federal government will live up to its obligation and provide support to the residents of Granville Lake.

Mr. Lathlin: Madam Speaker, my second question is again directed to the First Minister (Mr. Filmon).

In the meantime, however, while these negotiations are going on, what is to happen to these people who are living at Granville Lake? Is the First Minister planning to meet with the chief and council of the Mathias Colomb First Nation or the people at Granville Lake? What is he prepared to do?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Indeed, officials from my department have met with Chief Muswagon and the federal government, and the dialogue is ongoing around what the federal responsibility will and should be to the residents of Granville Lake.

Madam Speaker, I have written to the Minister of Native Affairs federally, copied to the Minister of Human Resources, requesting a meeting. As a matter of fact, when the Honourable Ron Irwin was in town yesterday, my office called. We found out at the last minute that he was arriving in Winnipeg. After several requests for meetings with him which he has not responded to, we did call his office and asked whether he could take a few minutes just to meet with us around this issue yesterday.

He did not have the time, Madam Speaker, but he has committed to meet with me and with my colleague the Minister of Northern and Native Affairs (Mr. Praznik) and with the Honourable Lloyd Axworthy before the end of June to try to resolve this issue.

Reserve Status

Mr. Oscar Lathlin (The Pas): My last question, Madam Speaker, then, is, are there any negotiations going on right now between the provincial government and the federal government with regard to setting aside some Crown land for designation as a reserve by the federal government?

Are those negotiations going on, and, if so, could the minister give us a report as to what progress has been made to date?

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister responsible for Native Affairs): Yes, Madam Speaker, the member raises a very important part of this issue, which is the possibility of reserve status for the land at Granville Lake in which the federal government will accept that responsibility.

As the member, I am sure, is very well aware from his past experience with these issues, they are very much part of the treaty land entitlement process. There are also some issues as to whether or not the community does, in fact, want that to happen, as opposed to being a Northern Affairs community.

I know there are resolutions. There is also other information that the member may not be aware of that has been provided recently through our staff in the area, and we are trying to sort that out.

Obviously, if that is the desire of the people in both Mathias Colomb who have the claim as the band and the people in Granville Lake who are band members, we certainly would not stand in the way of that happening.

I would just assure him we are very cognizant. We are very supportive of that, but there are parts to this that have come to light in the last while in terms of position that are not quite as clear as they may have been some time ago.

* (1355)

SmartHealth Agreement Tabling Request

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Madam Speaker, the other \$100-million deal that this government is negotiating is with the Royal Bank of Canada for SmartHealth.

Madam Speaker, since the minister has indicated that this \$100-million deal will shortly be signed by the government, will the minister today undertake to table the agreement or at least the essential terms of this \$100-million agreement with the Legislature, so we can review it prior to the signature of the government on this document?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, we have been discussing the essential terms of this contract for the last two or three months and in great detail during the Estimates process, and when the contract is ultimately entered into, that would be the time to address the issue of making it available to members of this House.

Mr. Chomiak: Madam Speaker, my supplementary to the minister: If this is such a good deal, why is the minister not undertaking to provide us with copies of the terms of this agreement prior to the signing, not after the signing, since it is the largest deal ever entered into by the Department of Health?

Mr. McCrae: Well, Madam Speaker, as I said in my last response, the honourable member and I have been discussing in quite finite detail the nature of the terms,

what we expect out of this arrangement, and we spent 35 days of an election campaign castigating our honourable colleagues on the other side for being opposed to health care improvements that SmartHealth will bring to us.

I am sorry they feel that way, but I believe that the people of Manitoba have given us a mandate to move forward, to move forward in a cautious and consultative way, which we will do, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Chomiak: My final supplementary: Can the minister explain why they have engaged the services of a name familiar to all of us, Duncan Jessiman of the firm Pitblado & Hoskin, at the rate of \$150 an hour, to negotiate this contract on behalf of the government?

I will table the untendered contract, Madam Speaker.

Mr. McCrae: Madam Speaker, the honourable member is the one who said this is an important contract. We felt for a long time that it was important that we get on with the development of this sort of a health information system in our province.

You do not enter into important contracts without good legal counsel. It is not unusual that legal counsel be retained to assist in the development of our contractual relationships.

Workforce 2000 Guidelines

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): Madam Speaker, the last Minister of Education finally recognized that the guidelines for Workforce 2000 were inadequate to prevent public money flowing to projects which even he believed were offside, and I use his word.

Could the present Minister of Education explain to the House the new guidelines that have been put in place which will prevent further offside use of education dollars?

Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Education and Training): The member and I have been talking about a number of things in Estimates. Workforce 2000 is coming up in the line, hopefully this afternoon. I

would be pleased to go through those specific details with her at that time.

But I do thank her for raising this issue again, as she has so many times in the past, to allow me once again to indicate that we have approximately 135,000 employees who have been trained over the four years through Workforce 2000. About one in five of all of our employees have had the opportunity to receive upgrading, onsite training.

We applaud and approve onsite training. I know we have a philosophical difference on this between the two sides of the House, but if she wants to go through all of the criteria for the Workforce 2000 program, we can do that in Estimates. We have been sitting there for many days. We will be meeting again in about half an hour to go through them, and we will do that line by line.

* (1400)

Standards/Outcomes

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): Would the minister undertake to table in the House the standards and outcomes that are anticipated from the human relations training which has been offered to 99 employees of McDonald's restaurants and Chicken Delight?

Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Education and Training): I have provided the member with a list of all of the grants. I am sure she has received them by now. She knows from the size and listing of the grants that there are pages and pages of companies and programs listed for people to take advantage of in the workforce.

I can get the specific details of that one for her. I do not have them here. I do not have in my memory the details of pages and pages and pages of companies that have participated in this program.

I would venture to indicate, however, Madam Speaker, that I hear inherent in her question a disdain for the types of jobs that people have when they are employed in the fast-food industry, and we do not need job snobs in this Legislature.

Point of Order

Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader): On a point of order, Madam Speaker, I believe our rules are very clear in Beauchesne's about the fact that answers should relate to matters that are raised and not result in debate.

The member asked very specifically about a payroll tax break to McDonald's, and we would appreciate an answer on that, rather than the kind of irrelevant debate we are receiving from the minister.

Madam Speaker: On the point of order by the honourable member for Thompson, indeed the honourable member has a point of order.

I would remind all members that answers to questions should be as brief as possible, should deal with the matter raised and should not provoke debate.

I would also like to remind all honourable members to pick and choose their words very carefully, so as not to cause disruption in the Chamber.

* * *

Ms. Friesen: Madam Speaker, could I ask the minister again to table in the House the results of these grants, what has been learned, what was the standard, what was the outcome, exactly what the minister is asking of the public system?

Mrs. McIntosh: Madam Speaker, for the record, I am delighted to hear the first real indication I have heard from the member that she supports standards and outcomes measured in education, and I thank her for that.

Of course, Madam Speaker, we do apply those same kinds of standards to all of the things we do in Education and Training.

I say to the member—and I apologize to the member for calling her a job snob—that we do have training for companies that have, through the course of their background of experience and their record—

Point of Order

Ms. Friesen: On a point of order, Madam Speaker, I did not have my earphone in, and I did wonder whether, in fact, the minister called me a name which was perhaps not parliamentary.

I wonder if perhaps Hansard caught that and ask that the Speaker ask the minister to withdraw that.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. On the point of order, I will check Hansard; however, I was of the understanding the minister was apologizing for a previous comment, but I will check Hansard and, if necessary, report back to the House.

**Economic Growth
Employment Training**

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Premier.

This government has done a very poor job in terms of ensuring that individuals have acquired the skills in order to match the challenges of the economy. Madam Speaker, there are 2,000 jobs that are there today that are going unfilled because this government has failed to meet the challenge. You could look at the transportation industry and the garment industry alone, and you will find those 2,000 jobs.

Can the Premier, Madam Speaker, indicate to this Chamber what is the estimate of losses to this economy, to tax revenue, as a direct result of this government and this Premier not living up to the challenge?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Madam Speaker, I am delighted that the member opposite is acknowledging the tremendous growth that is taking place in this economy and the tremendous growth in job creation that is resulting in the fact that, of course, we have had, as of the Statistics Canada report last Friday, 14,000 additional jobs in the past year alone in this province, all of that growth in the private sector. As a matter of fact, in the first five months of 1995, our employment has grown by 13,000 jobs or 2.4 percent over the same period last year.

Certainly, that is cause for optimism, and in the manufacturing sector to which he refers, 6,000 of those jobs have occurred in manufacturing. So, certainly, it is understandable that many of our employers are unable to keep up to the hiring requirements that they have because of the tremendous growth that is taking place.

There is a particular instance in respect to the garment industry, and there is a history in the garment industry—my own parents met and married working in the garment industry, my father having emigrated here from eastern Europe and having taken that job.

The fact of the matter is it is an area in which, traditionally, we need to have open borders and opportunities to hire immigrants with skills.

It is an area in which we do not seem to be getting any support from the Liberal government in Ottawa. In fact, all of the restrictions that they are putting on immigration are going absolutely counter to the needs that are there for Manitoba to acquire some of the skills that would fill the skill shortages that we have in employment, and I say that it is absolutely ridiculous that he should try and blame that on this government, when all he has to do is pick up the phone, phone Mr. Axworthy and get the job done, Madam Speaker.

**Garment Industry
Immigrant Employment**

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): How can the Premier indicate what he has just said when the Deputy Premier (Mr. Downey) in committee had indicated that, in fact, he was not necessarily looking at immigration to resolve one of these particular issues?

I am pleased to hear a commitment from this government, and I want a confirmation on this commitment, that the Premier is now looking at having immigrants fill garment industry jobs. Is this what the Premier is saying?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Now looking, Madam Speaker? I just told him that the history of this industry all the way back to the time of my own father working in the garment industry was that immigrants with skills

often went into the garment industry as an opportunity in coming to this country. It remains a major opportunity.

All he has to do, as I did during the election campaign, is visit a number of these factories, talk to the people there, and he will recognize how dependent they are on immigration from many of the countries that supply very, very valuable citizens to our province.

This is an issue that does require a co-operative immigration policy, and it does require co-operation from Ottawa. All we have had is roadblocks in the last year since we have had a Liberal government in Ottawa, and it is time that he went and talked to his federal counterparts and say, now is the time for them to re-examine their policies and to make sure that we get the immigrants we need to fill the skill shortages in our province.

* (1410)

Employment Training

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Madam Speaker, one of the biggest roadblocks is individuals—

Madam Speaker: Order, please. I would remind the honourable member for Inkster that this is his final supplementary question, and there should be no preamble. Would the honourable member please pose his question now.

Mr. Lamoureux: Can the Premier then indicate to this House what short-term and long-term policies does this government have at training individuals, the thousands of Manitobans who are, in fact, unemployed, in meeting the demands of these two particular industries?

Hon. James Downey (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism): Madam Speaker, it is interesting how mischievous the member is trying to be today in trying to indicate that our policies differ.

The garment industry is extremely important to this province. There are many, many jobs and many, many people needed for those jobs. It is what I indicated and what this government believes in, and we are, in fact,

providing training programs for those individuals. But, as well, Madam Speaker, where there cannot be people trained and achieved for those jobs, there are opportunities for people to come to this country, as the Premier (Mr. Filmon) has indicated, and fulfill those job opportunities. That is what we believe in, and that is what we are doing.

Canadian Wheat Board Export Enhancement Program Comparison

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Madam Speaker, the International Joint Commission on Grains in their review has been comparing the Export Enhancement Program with the Canadian Wheat Board.

Since the Wheat Board does not distort the international market, while the Export Enhancement Program has many times driven world prices of grain down and negatively impacted on the farmers, I want to ask the Minister of Agriculture whether he agrees that it is unacceptable to compare the Export Enhancement Program with the Canadian Wheat Board because of the negative effects that the Export Enhancement Program has on farmers, whereas the Wheat Board has a positive effect for farmers.

Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Agriculture): Madam Speaker, one thing that Manitoba and Canadian farmers know all too well is that, regrettably, partly because of the ongoing decade-old subsidy war between the European Economic Union and the Americans, Canadian grain farmers have found themselves in a crunch that was an extremely difficult decade for them.

Thanks to some very forward-looking programming and a tremendous amount of support, both at the federal and provincial levels, programs like my colleague my predecessor in Agriculture introduced, such as the GRIP program that has poured hundreds of millions of dollars into helping to stabilize that industry during this period of stress, numbers of them managed to overcome this particular period.

What the member is referring to, whether it is the American EEP program or indeed our WGTA program to an extent, these were in the minds of some,

particularly in the grain industry, trade-distorting subsidies that made it difficult for us to allow the kind of normal trade that could be so beneficial between our two countries.

While they are not equal and it is not appropriate to compare a specific program like the Export Enhancement Program, the American EEP program, and put it up against our Canadian Wheat Board program, let us be clear. One of the problems that the Americans have with the Canadian Wheat Board's system of selling is the lack of transparency in terms of how the Wheat Board does business.

This is what the commission is trying to resolve, Madam Speaker.

Ms. Wowchuk: Madam Speaker, since the Wheat Board is, in fact, known for their good negotiations and for playing a role which has a positive effect on farmers, can the minister indicate if he has considered the negative impact that will be on farmers if the Wheat Board is lost and the negative impact on the economy of Manitoba if it is gone?

Mr. Enns: Madam Speaker, the Premier has answered for this government. Nobody is suggesting on this side to pack it in with the Canadian Wheat Board.

What is the issue, Madam Speaker, is the Wheat Board's ability to move into the market that will be most attractive to us, namely, the American market. If that calls for some modification, some flexibility in the manner and the way in which the Canadian Wheat Board does business, if it accomplishes the end goal of moving grain to what has rapidly become in the last few years one of our most significant customers for grain, then they will continue to enjoy the support of the Manitoba producers and Canadian producers generally. That is the issue.

Let us not get hung up on the structure, Madam Speaker. The issue surely is to move grain into a lucrative market.

Ms. Wowchuk: Will this government make a statement to the commission that it is unfair to compare the Wheat Board to the Export Enhancement Program?

The minister himself indicated that the Export Enhancement Program should be compared to a transportation subsidy, not to the Wheat Board.

Mr. Enns: Mr. Speaker, we have—Madam Speaker. I apologize. My memory keeps going back to my colleague from Gladstone who occupied that chair for a number of years, and old habits are difficult to overcome.

Madam Speaker, we have five eminent Canadians who comprise the Canadian portion of that commission that she is referring to, along with five American experts. These were appointed by the federal government, not by any provincial governments.

Their report has not been released. They have not held open or public hearings on this issue. They have judiciously and selectively sought out the various experts in the grains industry, both in the American industry and in the Canadian industry. They have, at their invitation, sought audiences and briefs from various individuals.

It was not an opportunity—nor can I impose myself on the commission. My understanding is the commission's work is done. We are awaiting their report. It is done.

Youth Court Backlog

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

For over a year now, we have been hammering away at this minister for the horrendous backlog in the youth court, backlogs which destroy the link in the mind of a youth between a wrongdoing and a consequence and which, in fact, do teach young offenders that the youth justice system in this province is not up to the job, and, by the way, which belie the minister's tough talk.

Would the minister explain, especially to the record number of victims of youth crime under this government, why she is incapable of dealing with this backlog, given advice today that the backlog remains for up to longer than a school year, Madam Speaker,

and as one lawyer told me today, it is slower and more clogged now than ever before?

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Madam Speaker, we have certainly been working with the chief judge and courts to make sure that our courts are efficient and are effective.

I am very surprised to hear the numbers that the member has given, because he certainly knows that there are court dates available well before that time. He also is aware of the fact that we did put into place a night court specifically targeted to deal with youth, so that youth cases may be heard when young people are not in school and so that families may attend with them.

Madam Speaker, we are constantly in contact with the chief judge to look at making the whole court process the most efficient it can be. Frankly, his numbers are wrong.

Mr. Mackintosh: Madam Speaker, will the minister tell us whether these backlogs, a fact of life under this minister, are in any way responsible for Manitoba staying 43 percent of the charges against youth? This is the highest percentage in all of Canada.

Mrs. Vodrey: No, and the member also knows that in the process of Estimates, we will have the chance to, in great detail, go through the exact numbers, the most recent information that is available regarding the amount of time that it takes to take a case through court.

He also knows very well—we have been through this many times in this Chamber—why, in fact, there are delays, what additional information is asked for and who has asked for that, and, Madam Speaker, the member knows very well that there are court dates available, certainly within a four-month period, for youth.

Mr. Mackintosh: Would the minister explain, particularly since I have waited one year for statistics from her department on the detailed breakdown of the backlogs which go up to one year, why the court is so

backlogged that it takes up to two months for a youth to even appear in court for the first time following a wrongdoing?

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Speaker, the member knows full well that in the process of Estimates last year, he received very detailed information on exactly what time it took to process a case through any one of our courts.

However, Madam Speaker, I am very happy to tell the member today and will add to it in the process of Estimates that the chief judge in my department as recently as last week had discussions regarding particularly youth court and Domestic Violence Court, because we are always interested in making sure cases progress through as quickly as possible, and we have an additional plan now, which I will be glad to elaborate on for the member, by which we expect to speed the cases up even further.

But, certainly, the dates are nothing like the member has been saying. An additional plan is in place, and I would like to say, Madam Speaker, we have the full co-operation of the judiciary of the court side and of our Crown attorneys. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Time for Oral Questions has expired.

NONPOLITICAL STATEMENT

Golf Tournament—Eden Mental Health Centre

Mr. Peter Dyck (Pembina): Madam Speaker, I ask for leave to make a nonpolitical statement.

Madam Speaker: Does the honourable member for Pembina have leave to make a nonpolitical statement? [agreed]

Mr. Dyck: Madam Speaker, on Sunday, June 11, I was able to participate in a golf tournament which was followed by a steak barbecue at the Southland Mall in Winkler.

The golf tournament involved 150 golfers who were raising money for their very worthwhile organizations.

A total of \$8,000 was raised to support Eden Health Care Services, Big Brothers and Big Sisters organizations.

I would like to briefly highlight some of the work done by Eden Health Care Services. Did you know that 1,300 people annually come to Eden Mental Health Centre for help? People come to the centre for help from more than 120 different communities across Manitoba.

The centre has a geriatric service working with the elderly in 24 health care institutions in south central Manitoba, and Eden Health Care Services is currently working on projects concerning addiction treatments and long-term residents.

Madam Speaker, these are only a few examples of what Eden Health Care Services is involved in, and I would encourage all members to learn more about Eden Health Care Services, which is located in the southwest corner of the town of Winkler.

At this time, I would like to thank and pay tribute to all those involved with this worthwhile fundraising campaign and wish them well in the future. Thank you.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Hon. Jim Ernst (Government House Leader): I wonder, Madam Speaker, if I might have leave to revert to Presenting Reports by Standing and Special Committees.

Madam Speaker: Does the honourable government House leader have leave to revert to Presenting Reports by Standing and Special Committees? [agreed]

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Special Committee of Seven Persons First Report

Hon. Jim Ernst (Government House Leader): I beg to present, Madam Speaker, the First Report of the Special Committee of Seven Persons.

Mr. Clerk (William Remnant): Your Special Committee of Seven Persons, appointed to prepare a list of members of the standing committees ordered by the—

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: Dispense

—House, presents the following as its First Report.

Your committee prepared the following list of members to compose the standing committees ordered by the House:

Agriculture (11)

Hon. Mr. Derkach, Mr. Dyck, Hon. Mr. Enns, Messrs. Evans (Brandon East), Evans (Interlake), Hon. Mr. Findlay, Messrs. Penner, Struthers, Sveinson, Tweed, Ms. Wowchuk.

Economic Development (11)

Mr. Ashton, Hon. Mr. Driedger, Mr. Dyck, Hon. Messrs. Enns, Ernst, Findlay, Messrs. Lathlin, Newman, Radcliffe, Reid, Sale.

Industrial Relations (11)

Messrs. Ashton, Dyck, Ms. Friesen, Hon. Mr. Gilleshamer, Mr. Martindale, Ms. McGifford, Mr. Newman, Hon. Mr. Reimer, Mrs. Render, Mr. Sveinson, Hon. Mr. Toews.

Law Amendments (11)

Ms. Cerilli, Mr. Chomiak, Hon. Mr. Cummings, Messrs. Lathlin, Newman, Radcliffe, Reid, Rocan, Sveinson, Hon. Mr. Toews, Hon. Mrs. Vodrey.

Municipal Affairs (11)

Ms. Barrett, Hon. Mr. Derkach, Ms. Friesen, Messrs. Helwer, Jennissen, McAlpine, Ms. Mihychuk, Messrs. Penner, Pitura, Radcliffe, Hon. Mr. Reimer.

Private Bills (11)

Messrs. Dyck, Evans (Brandon East), Evans (Interlake), Helwer, Laurendeau, McAlpine, Pitura, Mrs. Render, Messrs. Robinson, Sveinson, Ms. Wowchuk.

Privileges and Elections (11)

Mr. Ashton, Ms. Barrett, Hon. Mr. Ernst, Messrs. Helwer, Martindale, Hon. Mrs. Mitchelson, Hon. Mr. Pallister, Messrs. Penner, Pitura, Hon. Mr. Praznik, Ms. Wowchuk.

Public Accounts (11)

Messrs. Dyck, Evans (Brandon East), Lamoureux, Laurendeau, Maloway, Penner, Hon. Mr. Reimer, Mr. Santos, Hon. Mr. Stefanson, Messrs. Sveinson, Tweed.

Public Utilities and Natural Resources (11)

Ms. Barrett, Hon. Mr. Ernst, Messrs. Evans (Brandon East), Kowalski, Laurendeau, Pitura, Hon. Mr. Praznik, Mr. Reid, Mrs. Render, Messrs. Rocan, Sveinson.

Rules of the House (12)

Hon. Mr. Derkach, Messrs. Dewar, Lathlin, Mackintosh, Hon. Mr. McCrae, Hon. Mrs. McIntosh, Hon. Mr. Praznik, Messrs. Radcliffe, Reid, Rocan, Tweed.

Statutory Regulations and Orders (11)

Hon. Mr. Derkach, Messrs. Dewar, Lathlin, Mackintosh, Hon. Mr. McCrae, Hon. Mrs. McIntosh, Hon. Mr. Praznik, Messrs. Radcliffe, Reid, Rocan, Tweed.

All of which is respectfully submitted.

Mr. Ernst: I move, seconded by the Minister of Education and Training (Mrs. McIntosh), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

House Business

Hon. Jim Ernst (Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, would you call for second reading Bill 10, followed by Bill 15?

SECOND READINGS**Bill 10—The Development Corporation Amendment Act**

Hon. James Downey (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson), that Bill 10, The Development Corporation Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la Société de développement, be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Mr. Downey: Madam Speaker, I will take a few minutes to use my prepared notes, and then maybe we will have to further explain it a little more afterwards in the Arthur-Virden tradition.

* (1420)

The proposed amendments set out in Bill 10, which I have just introduced, are aimed at providing a more efficient and effective board of directors for the corporation in the streamlining of the corporation's administrative responsibility to better reflect its current operations.

The proposed amendments are as follows: Firstly, under existing legislation, the board of directors of the corporation must be comprised of seven to 12 members, all of whom, except one, must be dealing at arm's length with the government.

Since 1977, the Manitoba Development Corporation has been acting solely as an agent for the government, and all its activities have been at the approval and direction of the government through Orders-in-Council. For these reasons, a board of this size and constitution is no longer considered necessary. Therefore, this bill proposes that the board of directors be reduced in size

to a minimum of three members and a maximum of five members with no restrictions in its make-up, except for the exclusion of elected officials of this House or members of the Senate or House of Commons of Canada.

It is also proposed that the act be amended to reduce the corporation's loan committee to three members of the board of directors and that the act be simplified to reflect that a majority of directors constitutes a quorum for both the board of directors and the loan committee.

Secondly, existing legislation permits the same individual to be both the chairperson of the board of directors and the general manager of the corporation and provides specific rules for dealing with a vacancy in the position of chairperson. The current practice of the corporation is such that the positions of chairperson of the board of directors and general manager are held by separate individuals, and it is proposed that the act be amended to reflect this practice.

In addition, it is proposed that the legislation be simplified as to which members of the board of directors may sit as chairperson when the person is absent or the position becomes vacant.

Thirdly, existing legislation contemplates the corporation employing its own staff who are not members of the civil service of the government of Manitoba.

Since 1992, for efficiency reasons, the corporation has used the services of employees of the Department of Industry, Trade and Tourism. It is therefore proposed that the act be amended so that as to not restrict employees of the government from acting as officers of, or performing services for, the corporation.

Lastly, this bill provides that the routine operation of approving by-laws of the corporation be changed from Order-in-Council to the minister responsible for this act.

The amendments presented within this bill will allow the Manitoba Development Corporation to operate more efficiently and effectively on behalf of the Province of Manitoba. I commend them to the House,

and I hope the House sees it fit to support this bill and moves it forward in an expeditious manner.

Madam Speaker, I thank you very much for the opportunity to move this bill forward.

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): I move, seconded by the member for Broadway (Mr. Santos), that debate be adjourned.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 15—The Agricultural Producers' Organization Funding Amendment Act

Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Agriculture): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Downey), that Bill 15, The Agricultural Producers' Organization Funding Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur le financement d'organismes de producteurs agricoles, be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of the House.

Motion presented.

Mr. Enns: Madam Speaker, I am delighted to reintroduce this particular amendment to The Agricultural Producers' Organization Funding Act. I say reintroduce because it was my privilege to have presented it at an earlier occasion prior to the last election to this House. It was important then and is important today.

Allow me simply, in the tradition of second reading of the House, to deal in essence with the principle of the bill and not in its detail. That is why it is being referred to the committee where honourable members will have that opportunity to deal with the details of the bill questioning members of staff or call on members of the public to comment on the advisability, suitability or indeed any amendments that may be thought advisable for this particular piece of legislation.

Madam Speaker, the principle motivation behind this bill, and one that I strongly support, is that perhaps even with greater urgency now than when I first introduced this bill in this, what I call, the post-WGTA

era it is extremely important that we give our agricultural organizations the wherewithal so they can organize themselves, they can present themselves, they can promote their specific agricultural commodity to the markets of the world. To do so it is my contention that they need to, like any other organization, have the ability to modestly contribute to their own organization and provide for that kind of fiscal stability to that organization. That is the essence of Bill 15, and amendments brought to it, at this particular time.

Madam Speaker, I appreciate the bill in itself is difficult to read unless you have it in the context of the bill that it is amending, the parent bill, Bill 15. What it really does is it tidies up and tightens up, I suppose if you want to take a critical point of view on it, the method of the collection of the fee or levy that the agency that is established by the original act that determines which organizations should be able to come under the purview of this act.

Madam Speaker, an important feature of this bill, one that quite frankly I recommend to my colleague the Minister of Labour (Mr. Toews) that he might want to look at, there is a highly visible democratic aspect to this bill. Anybody that chooses not to contribute or to belong to the organization need only write a letter once a year and demand a full refund of any of the membership dues that may be collected. It is still very much a voluntary participation on the part of the effected members of any agricultural community that are involved.

* (1430)

We were advised and we acknowledge that by leaving it in a very loose way it created problems within the industry. For instance, the different elevator companies, the different grain companies, they have said to us, look, government we do not mind knocking off this levy or this check-off for you then to use and to apply and send to the agricultural producer group that is duly credited to receive it but, he said, make it uniform.

What was happening on the landscape is some farmers would exercise the privilege they had under the old act to indicate at delivery point that they did not

want to contribute to the check-off, others did not indicate that. There were differences between grain companies. The grain companies in consultation with us this past summer have said, you know, we are neutral to this situation. It is easier for them, particularly in this modern day and age where they do all their billing, all their invoicing, all their costs associated with that point of sale on computers. They just lock in the computer the very small percentage point of the total sale of any given delivery that automatically is checked off, the payment to that farmer, and then forward it on to the appropriate agency that then distributes these funds according to the regulations that have been established.

Madam Speaker, I commend this bill for some very specific reasons. As I have said, now more than ever, partly because of the budgetary pressures on all governments, including provincial and federal, which we are very keenly aware of and not just affecting agriculture, it is important to provide these organizations with the kind of necessary fiscal means that they themselves can do some of the things that perhaps in past times the Department of Agriculture carried on as a normal part of its support for various agricultural endeavours in the province.

Madam Speaker, the honourable member spent the last part of her examinations and her critical comment of me directly as Minister of Agriculture during the course of the examinations of the Estimates of the Department of Agriculture decrying the fact that sufficient attention was not being paid to the important aspect of research in agriculture. The honourable member should be aware—all members should be aware—that is it very often hindering our agricultural organizations and commodity groups from taking advantage of research dollars that are there, because in most cases they are there on a matching basis. If the organization that is asking for the research can put up \$10,000, \$20,000 or \$30,000 of their own monies, then the federal government and/or other agencies will match those kinds of dollars and a research project is underway.

This is particularly the case with the new research monies available through the federal government through Agriculture Canada. They have provided, for

instance, a \$35-million fund available to various agricultural commodity groups for research. Those organizations that have the ability to raise the money are getting the advantage of this research and tying into these research dollars.

Let me be more specific, Madam Speaker. We, in Manitoba, can take some special pride in the research that led to the development of what truly has become the Cinderella crop on the Prairies.

I am referring to canola. Quite frankly, without canola, we would have seen a far different scene on the landscape in these last few years, particularly in some of those more difficult years where traditional wheats and feed grains have been priced far too low.

Our province, Madam Speaker, our research, more specifically research done at the Faculty of Agriculture at the University of Manitoba, can take a tremendous measure of pride in having made that contribution to western Canadian agriculture in the development of the canola crop as we know it today.

Look at what is happening, Madam Speaker. The canola growers in Alberta, the canola growers in Saskatchewan, the canola growers in Ontario all have the benefit of the kind of legislation that I am proposing to this House—except the Manitoba canola growers.

The Manitoba canola growers have come to me on a most urgent basis, and I know they have visited the offices of members of the opposition. They have asked—and I have and I can read into the record the most recent letter dated June 5, 1995, from the canola growers, a letter that I know that the honourable member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk) has also received—stating that, without this check-off we are in jeopardy of losing several things, No. 1, the very existence, because canola was born in Manitoba, we are pleased and proud to house the canola institute of Canada in Manitoba, in Winnipeg.

Let us not fool ourselves, greater acreages of canola are being grown in Saskatchewan and Alberta. They are providing more money and support because they have the check-off legislation in place. Our canola growers in Manitoba feel themselves to be poor

cousins, and they feel themselves embarrassed that they cannot contribute in the same way.

Furthermore, the canola crop, unlike other crops, moves in bulk, 60 percent of it is forward contracting. Canola does not move like wheat or barley or other things that move throughout the year, and I know the honourable member for Swan River is aware of this.

Madam Speaker, I believe very strongly that for us to be able to support our agricultural groups we look at this piece of legislation and we look at it expeditiously. I know the honourable members may wish to drag it out and not deal with it till the fall session, but let it be clearly understood—and I want to put this on the record—there may well be millions of dollars of research lost to the province of Manitoba if the opposition takes that attitude. We may well lose the canola institute and have it move to Saskatoon if the opposition takes that attitude, and that is hypocrisy.

The Leader of Her Majesty's opposition talked about his concern about the Canadian Wheat Board today. Madam Speaker, here is an opportunity for his party to act responsibly and move this bill onto committee and pass it so the canola institute, the canola people can have their check-off. I commend it to the House.

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): I move, seconded by the member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk), that debate be adjourned.

Motion agreed to.

House Business

Hon. Jim Ernst (Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, on a matter of House business, I would advise that Bill 3, The Maintenance Enforcement (Various Acts Amendment) Act and Bill 7, The City of Winnipeg Amendment Act are both referred to the Committee on Law Amendments which will meet on Tuesday, June 20, at 7 p.m.

* * *

Mr. Ernst: I move, seconded by the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Downey), that

Madam 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 La Verendrye (Mr. Sveinson) in the Chair for the Department of Family Services; the honourable member for Sturgeon Creek (Mr. McAlpine) in the Chair for the Department of Education and Training; and the honourable member for St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau) in the Chair for the Department of Health.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY (Concurrent Sections)

FAMILY SERVICES

* (1440)

Mr. Deputy Chairperson (Ben Sveinson): Order, please. Will the Committee of Supply please come to order. This afternoon this section of the Committee of Supply is meeting in Room 254 to resume consideration of the Estimates of the Department of Family Services. When the committee last sat, it had been considering item 1.(d)(1) on page 56 of the Estimates book and on page 29 of the yellow supplement book.

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): I am going to try and go into speed-up here, although the emphasis is on the word try. Going back to the Social Services Advisory Committee and the processes that it uses, can the minister tell me if the committee provides reasons for their findings when they correspond with social assistance recipients?

Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister of Family Services): Yes, they do.

Mr. Martindale: Could the minister tell me if she would be in favour of changing the current process whereby only decisions of law are eligible to be appealed. I am wondering if the minister would favour an amendment so that matters of fact as well as law could be appealed.

Mrs. Mitchelson: I think we would have to look at that very carefully, and we will.

Mr. Martindale: I take it from the minister's answer that she is saying that she will look into it?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Yes.

Mr. Martindale: Thank you. I understand that there is a problem when recipients want to appeal on a matter of law, and there are two problems here. One is that they have to go to the Court of Appeal; they cannot go to the Court of Queen's Bench. The problem with that is, I am told, that the Court of Appeal is putting barriers in the way of people whereby they will only hear cases that affect a number of people, not just an individual. They have set up their own rule which basically limits the number of appeals, which concerns me, and have said that only if it is a matter of public importance will they hear an appeal. I am wondering, first of all, if the minister is aware of that and second, if she shares my concerns.

Mrs. Mitchelson: I guess I would ask if there are specific cases or details that could be provided. I was not aware of the circumstances, or the department is not aware of the circumstances behind the question of my honourable friend. Maybe if there was case-specific detail that could be provided we could look into it, but it sounds like it might be an issue that would need to be discussed with the Department of Justice and looked into. So I would ask for some clarification or maybe some specifics around instances where there has been a problem.

Mr. Martindale: Mr. Chairperson, I thank the minister for that answer. I will write a letter to the minister to follow up on that.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Thank you.

Mr. Martindale: Could the minister tell me if benefits are provided to people during the appeal process currently?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Chairperson, it is my understanding that we look on cases on an individual basis, but if it was a change in the rate of payment there

would not be suspension of all total benefits. If, in fact, it was a suspension of total benefits and it was a hardship case, for instance, the department in most instances, I understand, would cover the benefits through the appeal process, but it is on a case-by-case basis, and that does not happen in every circumstance.

Mr. Martindale: My understanding is that benefits are supposed to continue as a matter of practice, but I know from a public meeting of tenants, public housing tenants, most of whom are on social assistance, held just last night, when they were told that assistance was supposed to continue, they just laughed, because their experience is that assistance is discontinued. So what I am hearing in the community is different than what I am hearing the minister say. I wonder if you could comment.

Mrs. Mitchelson: I certainly would be interested in getting some information and some detail, and I would look into that and get back with an answer.

* (1450)

Mr. Martindale: Mr. Chairperson, I will get more information in writing to the minister.

Could the minister tell me if there are recipients of social assistance or people who are members of advocacy groups such as MAPO or the Welfare Action Line who are on the Social Services Advisory Committee?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Chairperson, I do not think so, but I could certainly check that.

Mr. Martindale: Would the minister consider appointing such persons to the advisory committee?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Chairperson, from time to time members of committees throughout government have membership changes, and I do not think it is normally the practice to put someone necessarily representative of an advocacy group, but representative of the community at large, and so I will look very carefully at reappointments as terms expire, but as far as a commitment to specific representation for an organization, that is not usually the practice.

Mr. Martindale: Well, I suppose that all the people who are appointed could be considered people from the community at large. The minister seems to be rejecting the category of advocacy, so I will narrow the focus of the question and ask, would you consider appointing a social assistance recipient?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Chairperson, I would not discount anyone, and I guess I was not saying, if you are a member of an advocacy group we will not appoint you to a board.

What I was saying is, we do not make it normal practice that you go to different advocacy or community organizations as such and say, we must have a representative from this organization or that.

It could happen that an appointment would be a social assistance recipient or could be a member of a group or organization in the community, but for this particular board and for many others throughout government we do not specifically require a member of a certain organization, but that does not preclude any member from any organization from being appointed.

Mr. Martindale: Mr. Chairperson, I have more questions on the Social Services Advisory Committee and particularly its processes, but I wonder if it would be acceptable to the minister if I write to her with my questions and hear back from her.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Absolutely. That is a good idea.

Mr. Martindale: I am ready to pass this line.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Item 1.(d) Social Services Advisory Committee (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$143,600-pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$157,900-pass.

1.(e) Management Services (1) Financial and Administrative Services (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$1,857,700-pass; (b) Other Expenditures \$481,100-pass.

1.(e)(2) Program Budgeting and Reporting (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$451,200.

Mr. Martindale: Mr. Chairperson, I see that Salaries and Employee Benefits are up here. Could the minister give a brief explanation of the increases.

Mrs. Mitchelson: It is for merit increases and benefits.

Mr. Martindale: I see some of it is in indirect salary costs. What are indirect salary costs?

Mrs. Mitchelson: That is for overtime.

Mr. Martindale: Oh, that is interesting, Program Budgeting and Reporting are working overtime. I wonder what is keeping them so busy.

I wonder if the minister is prepared to table the list of external agencies receiving public funding and the amounts. It is traditional that we get this list during Estimates. I wonder if it is available now.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Yes, we do have that available, and we will provide it almost immediately.

Mr. Martindale: The minister will ensure that the member for The Maples (Mr. Kowalski) gets a copy?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Absolutely, in the spirit of co-operation I think we want to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to peruse the grants list.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Item 1.(e)(2)(a) \$451,200—pass; (b) Other Expenditures \$97,800—pass.

1.(e) Management Services (3) Human Resource Services (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$778,700.

Mr. Martindale: I am sorry, what page are we on now?

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: On page 57, (3)(a).

Mrs. Mitchelson: This is in the main Estimates.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: The blue book. You are in the other book. Page 35 of the yellow Estimates.

Mr. Martindale: And the line was \$778,700.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: That is right. 1.(e)(3)(a)—pass.

1.(e)(3)(b) Other Expenditures \$101,900.

Mr. Martindale: I see under Expected Results, it says, finalization of an organization review at the Manitoba Developmental Centre on the development of an enhanced model of service delivery. I presume that since the Estimates book uses the word "finalization" that it is completed, and I wonder if the minister can provide any information or table any documents on that.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Chairperson, out at the Manitoba Developmental Centre they have gone through a fairly lengthy process of reorganization and restructuring to better enhance the delivery of service to clients, and Human Resources within the Department of Family Services has been out there and helped them through that process.

Mr. Martindale: Is the minister prepared to make any of this public or is it an internal process?

Mrs. Mitchelson: There is a document, their strategic plan, that can be shared. It is a public document, and I will attempt to get a copy just as quickly as possible.

* (1500)

Mr. Martindale: Since I have already asked for and received—and I thank the minister for giving me the copy of the external agency's funding—what would be a good line to ask questions where you would have staff at the table?

Mrs. Mitchelson: I think that it could be any time, and we will try to accommodate. I think there is staff available for different areas of the department, if the grants pertain to different areas, and I also have the strategic plan for the Manitoba Developmental Centre.

Mr. Martindale: Thank you for the strategic plan. I think I will probably wait until I have had a chance to compare last year's list of funding with this year's before I ask a question, so it may not be till tomorrow morning.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Item 1. Administration and Finance (e) Management Services (3) Human Resource Services (b) Other Expenditures \$101,900—pass.

1.(e)(4) Information Systems (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$1,150,100—pass; 1.(e)(4)(b) Other Expenditures—

Mr. Martindale: I am sorry. I was asleep at the switch here. I should not admit my faults in public, should I?

Under the (a) part, indirect salary costs, there is an increase. Does that reflect more overtime worked once again?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Yes, that is primarily overtime.

Mr. Martindale: I see one of the expected results is implementation of the Child and Family Services Information System in the Winnipeg agency. Could I ask the minister if that refers to computerizing their records?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Yes, it does.

Mr. Martindale: It seems to me that this has been underway for about five years.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Yes, it has.

Mr. Martindale: I guess that raises the question of what took so long?

Mrs. Mitchelson: I guess it has taken longer than we anticipated, but it is very complex, the technology and getting everyone up to speed and on the same wavelength. I think we have had more success in the smaller agencies, and they are up and running. Winnipeg, because of the nature of the agency and the amalgamation and all of those things, has taken just a little longer. But I think we are getting close to the final product.

Mr. Martindale: I have talked to some staff in Winnipeg Child and Family Services who are supposed to be using this system, and they are not very happy with it. I wonder if the minister could tell us if she

feels that the implementation has been successful or whether they are having problems, whether they are still orienting and training the staff.

Mrs. Mitchelson: I understand it has been a difficult process. It is a process of change, and it is a matter of getting everyone up to speed and trained, and there have been some kinks in the whole process that we have now looked to some outside help to ensure that the training and the system gets up and running as quickly as possible. So there have been some problems, I will not deny that, and we are trying to work co-operatively to get them resolved.

Mr. Martindale: Can the minister tell us who pays for the outside help? Does that come out of this minister's departmental budget somewhere? Does it come out of the budget of Winnipeg Child and Family Services?

Mrs. Mitchelson: It is new technology, and we have had to contract externally for some of the expertise to help get it up and running, and it does come out of our department's budget, not the agency's budget.

Mr. Martindale: I was not the critic when this started, because it started quite a while ago, so [interjection] You were not the minister, either. Just going by memory, it seems to me that there were a number of reasons for computerization and that part of the rationale was to track families from one area of the city to another. I think the minister at the time indicated that it would reduce costs, but, correct me if I am wrong, could the minister tell me why computerization was undertaken in the first place.

Mrs. Mitchelson: My understanding is when the concept of computerization was first approved or acknowledged that there was a need. It was not necessarily a cost-saving measure. The primary concern or goal or objective was to provide better client service so that we could track families and children from one region of the province to the other or one agency to the other and provide direct service in a more co-ordinated fashion. So that was the primary goal of computerization.

Mr. Martindale: Could the minister tell us if the new computer system has been effective in tracking families

from rural to city or city to rural or within areas of the city?

Mrs. Mitchelson: It has been working in Brandon and in Portage. Once we have it up and running completely in the city of Winnipeg, there is the expectation that it will do that.

Mr. Martindale: I guess we will have to revisit this issue next year.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Item 1.(e) Management Services (4) Information Systems (b) Other Expenditures \$109,900-pass.

1.(e) Management Services (5) Policy and Planning
(a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$769,600.

Mr. Martindale: Under this section I would like to ask questions about the Canada Assistance Plan and the new Health and Social Transfer Act.

I must say I am disappointed there are not more members of the Liberal MLAs here to hear this discussion because there are some major changes taking places and the changes have been initiated by the federal government and I am not sure that this minister was even consulted very much.

I am going to be asking some questions about that. In fact, that reminds me that in the legislation, I note that the legislation in the old act the regulations are quite thick and the new legislation is a lot thinner, although it includes references to a number of different acts, not just the area that refers to social assistance, community living and child daycare. It even uses the word "consult" in the act which is really quite amazing. I am just going by memory because I just glanced at it about a week ago.

It seems to me that new legislation that talks about consulting the province would seem to be pretty wishy-washy legislation. Maybe I should give the minister a chance to talk about the Canada Health and Social Transfer Act.

Do you have concerns about this new legislation and how it is going to affect Manitoba?

Mrs. Mitchelson: It is almost like my honourable friend can read my mind. I think I have expressed in private conversation and probably in answers to questions too, my concern, our concern, our government's concern. I do not think we are the only province across the country that has concern with the direction that the federal government has taken.

* (1510)

I think they have, I suppose in their minds, very wisely looked at rolling a whole bunch of old programs into new programming under a new heading and then reducing that amount of money and the amount of funding in that pot and then saying to provinces—and I have had it said to me by the Minister of Human Resources for Canada—that now we have got this great big pot of money, it is up to you to determine how you are going to spend it, like they have really done us a big favour.

No question in my mind that there is going to be competing priorities when you look at what has been rolled into the pot. It is programs for child care, for community living and rehab, and I think there are some very legitimate concerns that have been raised by members of the community around what the future will hold for funding for programs. Social allowance, I guess, what else from the education side?—oh, the training programs.

I do not know if I have the two funds mixed up in your mind or in my mind. The social transfer will include funding for social allowances, the social transfer, and for training and health. That is all the EPF funding that was available before, and CAP; a lot of the things that were funded are in CAP, like social allowance. In the Human Resources Investment Fund we will see child care funding, funding for vocational rehab, strategic initiatives, and in both instances we are seeing reductions in the amount of funding for services for people.

A very grave concern on how that is going to be allocated, it is one big pot for the whole country. There has been no indication of what resource allocation will be available for provinces, and how that will be transferred or delivered, and there is no sense of any

specific allocation for daycare or for vocational rehab or for training programs. So it is really difficult to know what we can expect.

I have written to the Minister of Human Resources, and I am prepared to share copies of that correspondence. We are just trying to find it right now, and a very interesting response back from the minister saying, you have asked very good questions, I do not have the answers, but we should know later on in the summer.

It seems to me like we have a process that has been fiscally driven by the Minister of Finance at the federal level with no input or no long-range plan or design in place, and they are ad hoc trying to figure out what allocations will be there without any sense of really knowing any of the detail, and he has indicated also that once he has the detail he will share it with us.

Well, it is very difficult for us to look at long-range planning provincially when we have no sense of what we can plan on. All we do know is that it is going to be less.

Mr. Martindale: I presume we are talking about correspondence between this minister and the federal Minister of Human Resources Development?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Yes.

Mr. Martindale: Is the minister willing to table copies of this correspondence?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Yes, I am, and we are just trying to get them right now, and I am prepared to share those letters.

Mr. Martindale: The minister has mentioned child care training programs and vocational rehabilitation. Could the minister tell us how she thinks child care will be affected because of the new legislation and transfer of monies?

Mrs. Mitchelson: The money that we presently receive under CAP for child care is in the Canada Health and Social Transfer pot, and we know that is being reduced, not only child care, but social

allowance, and all of those things that we get CAP cost-sharing for in that pot.

In the other pot, the Human Resources Investment Fund, Minister Axworthy has said that there is new money for child care, but in conversations and dialogue with all of my colleagues across the country, from other provinces, nobody seems to know what new money is there because there is less money overall for a lot of the programs that we are presently delivering.

So my sense is not what I am hearing from other provinces, and the only message I seem to be getting from the federal government is really there is no money, and if, in fact, any province should move into discussion or dialogue or new programming for child care out of that fund, it would have to come at the expense of other social programs that are presently being delivered, that it is not new money. We know it is not new money, it is less.

Mr. Martindale: Well, if my understanding of the Canada Health and Social Transfer is correct, less money is being provided with less strings and requirements. So then the question becomes, how will this province determine its priorities—and I am wondering if the minister has thought about that, particularly for next year, the next financial year.

Mrs. Mitchelson: It is pretty difficult. If we have committed to our priorities budget after budget, I mean the only funding that has been preserved in any government department budgets are health, education and family services at the expense of budgets in every other department right across government. So we have set those areas as priorities.

Obviously, with less money coming from the federal government, we are going to have to determine what we are doing now that is worthwhile, what we are doing now that maybe needs to be changed. We are going to have to look at re-allocation, redirection of resources.

It is very difficult, as I said in my earlier answer, to determine where the dollars will be allocated, for what programs, when we do not even know how much we are going to be getting from the federal government.

The sooner we can get some clarification around what allocation will come to Manitoba, the sooner we will be able to set out those priorities.

Clearly, we have tried to preserve, at the cost of other programming throughout government, services for health, education and families.

Mr. Martindale: If, as a result of Bill C-76, you have less money for health, post-secondary education and social programs, what are you going to do?

Mrs. Mitchelson: I guess those will be the difficult decisions and choices we will have to make as we come up to the next budget process and budget cycle. We will have to be evaluating absolutely every program. We are committed through legislation that was just introduced yesterday, I believe, for a second reading on balanced budget that we are not going to go to the taxpayers of Manitoba for more money. We can all see that there needs to be very careful consideration of trying to integrate and co-ordinate services in all areas of delivery of services to people and determine our priorities and fund accordingly. I guess it is no different from any other province right across the country.

I listened to my honourable friend from the Liberal Party today talking about—he is sort of on both sides of the issue, and I guess that is where the Liberal Party tends to be. He talks about living within our means and getting on with business and working with what you have. Yet, on the other hand, he asks for more resources and more money for certain things. Reality is we are not going to have more money. We will have less money. There will probably be some difficult decisions to make through our budget process, but we are not into that process as yet.

* (1520)

We need clarification, and clarification soon, from the federal government on what we will have to work with next year and then we will have to make those decisions and those choices, bearing in mind that the taxpayers of Manitoba have told us that they do not want us to dip into their pockets any more. We are going to have to try to stretch the dollars we have

presently to provide the most service, and that might mean looking at streamlining and co-ordinating and ensuring that every available dollar we have goes to the people who need the service.

Mr. Martindale: I have heard this minister and other ministers in her government use the same language before, the language of tough choices. We heard it a lot during the budget debate in 1993 when there were a lot of cuts. I think that this means, in fact I predict that it means next year there are going to be big cuts. I think that is this government's synonym for tough choices or maybe a euphemism for cuts, saying tough choices. I think there will be reductions in funding to child care and training programs of vocational rehabilitation. Would the minister agree with that or not?

Mrs. Mitchelson: I would only have to reiterate that we, as a provincial government, have maintained support at cost to all other program areas within government support for Health and Family Services and Education. I would not venture to guess that you would see provincial dollars reduced terribly significantly in those areas, but I cannot guarantee to my honourable friend, or to anyone, that we are going to be able to pick up what the federal government is not funding. When you look at provincial dollars that we have allocated to our priority areas, I would sense that our budgetary process will still maintain our commitment to vital services for people in Manitoba, but I could not, with any comfort, indicate to you that we would be able to pick up the share of funding that the federal government has traditionally put into areas of service to people.

Mr. Martindale: If I was a social assistance recipient or worked in a child care centre or even used a program provided by funding from Community Living, I would be very concerned and very worried about being able to access a program or receive the same benefits next year as this year or in the case of child care workers even having a job next year.

I would like to follow up on the budget process the minister referred to. It is my understanding that next year's budget process begins shortly after this year's budget process is over. Is that correct?

Mrs. Mitchelson: That determination is not my determination but normally speaking, I think, in the past we have sort of looked to the fall, or late winter, early spring, to finalize the process. We start working together as departments internally in departments and together with other departments to determine what the priorities are for the following year.

Mr. Martindale: So how can this minister start the budget process within her department this year when she does not know how much money her department is getting from the federal government next year?

If I were this minister, well, I guess I share this concern. I do not feel like agreeing with this minister too often, but obviously when the federal government reduces funding for social programs, we should all be concerned.

I notice in Part V of Bill C-76, Canada Health and Social Transfer, the first clause says, subject to this part a Canada Health and Social Transfer may be provided to a province for a fiscal year. So it sounds like the federal government does not even have any statutory legislative responsibility to provide money. It just says may; it does not say that they must provide funding under the Canada Health and Social Transfer. Does the minister agree with my interpretation of that clause of the act?

Mrs. Mitchelson: It will be a difficult process, but I guess Finance ministers are trying to get some answers. We do know approximately what we might be receiving from the Canada Health and Social Transfer. Under the Human Resources Investment Fund, we do not have any indication.

I guess the word "may" is in there. My understanding is that the federal government may determine that they can hold back funding from provinces if, in fact, they do not meet basic standards.

Now, we have no idea what, at this point, those standards might be. We are trying to get some clarification around that. I guess that is something that Finance ministers will be seeking input from the federal government on. There are those allocations that will be provided as we start into the next budget process.

Mr. Martindale: I would like to thank the minister for providing the paper from the Department of Family Services titled the Summary of 1995 Federal Budget Provisions. There are some figures in there and it has been very helpful. I have quoted it in Question Period and used it in speeches, and it has been a helpful briefing.

I guess I share the minister's concern about what national standards are, especially since Bill C-76 is pretty vague. Under the Canada Health and Social Transfer, Part V, Clause 13(c), it says maintain national standards where appropriate in the operation of other social programs. It invites the representatives of the provinces to consult and work together to develop through mutual consent a set of shared principles and objectives for the other social programs, which all sounds pretty vague to me.

We also know that all the provisions of cost-sharing under the Canada Assistance Plan have been withdrawn except the one that prohibits provinces from having a residency requirement. So if provinces like Manitoba want to get rid of all the other provisions, they can. So I have some questions about that as to what Manitoba's intentions are.

The minister this morning said that she would plan to continue the appeal process for social assistance, but what about the former Canada Assistance Plan requirement that social assistance recipients may not be required to work or take training as a condition of receiving assistance? Will the minister voluntarily follow that, or will there be a change in this area?

* (1530)

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Chairperson, for me to say we would follow that requirement or restriction that was previously in place under the Canada Assistance Plan, it would be very difficult indeed. I think you just have to look right across the country and look to innovative new ways of delivering service and look to our social allowance programs that in many instances have not been conducive to work but have held people back, kept them dependent on a system rather than creating an independence or a desire to move off of welfare and into the workforce.

I would say that all provinces are examining how we change and look at the programs that obviously have not served us well, because we are seeing higher instances of welfare cases right across the country. I do not see any province that has seen a major reduction, except maybe Alberta, and I do not know if they have experienced some reduction.

Mr. Martindale: The recipients in Alberta moved to B.C.

Mrs. Mitchelson: But the reality today is that we have a system in place that is not necessarily a system of last resort, and I think it is incumbent and important for people to feel good about themselves and feel that they are contributing something to our Manitoba community, our Manitoba society in some way.

I think that it would be unrealistic to think that the status quo will be maintained, that we are going to have to look to new and innovative programming. You just take the Taking Charge! program which I am sure we will get into some detail about a little later, but what that program does is look to creating an independence plan for individuals rather than the dependency that has been created with our programs to date.

I suppose the short answer is no, I cannot guarantee that provision will be in place, and I think it is important that we dialogue with Manitobans to see what they feel the best approach would be to changing the way we deliver our social allowances.

Mr. Martindale: I think that is a yes. I think a year from now we will see work for welfare, training for welfare or education for welfare in Manitoba—

An Honourable Member: Except for Workforce 2000.

Mr. Martindale: Or, as my colleague says, except for Workforce 2000. In fact, if the minister is looking for money to meet the needs of Manitobans, our government should consider scrapping Workforce 2000 and using that money in much more appropriate ways.

The other provision of CAP that I would like to ask about is the provision that services are cost-shared if

the clients can demonstrate a budgetary need under a needs test or show that they are likely to be in need under an income test. Does the minister plan to continue that provision in Manitoba?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Chairman, I would like to have a copy of the briefing note in front of me, because I would like to read that through for a second myself.

Mr. Chairperson, I want to indicate at the outset that there will always be those people within our Manitoba or Canadian society that will need government support for whatever reason, certain reasons, and I think we always want to keep in mind that the basic needs of people will be met.

We are certainly not going to not provide assistance where it is needed, so there will be a test of sorts that will determine what individual needs are, and I think we want to ensure that the most vulnerable in our community are provided with support. But it is unrealistic to think, as things are changing so dramatically right across the country, that things will not change here in Manitoba.

Mr. Martindale: Does the minister think, as a result of having to make tough choices, which I interpret as cuts next year and in succeeding years and I acknowledge that part of the reason will be the Canada Health and Social Transfer provisions of Bill C-76 that in Manitoba will see more homelessness, will see more people begging on the streets, will see more people falling through the cracks, will see more people who want to access programs but the programs will not be there.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Chairperson, no, I am very optimistic that we are going to see a new era in the province of Manitoba where in fact we as a Manitoba community will—I want move back to accepting some responsibility for ensuring that we have a healthier community. I know that my honourable friend—I just have to go back in history. We do go back a considerable length of time. I think both of us grew up in the north end of Winnipeg.

Mr. Martindale: Well, the minister did. I just live there.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Oh, you just live there. All right.

I was born and raised in the north end of Winnipeg, and you know, I look back to my upbringing and the quality of life that we experienced with a father that worked at an ordinary job and a mother that stayed at home and looked after her three children and provided—I am not going to take long. But I think my honourable friend just—did you lose something or are you—

Mr. Martindale: No, I am looking up my rebuttal.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Oh, all right. You know, I think that if we judged my upbringing and the level of income that came into our household in those days and we compared it to what Stats Canada now compares the child poverty guidelines, we probably in those days, if those statistics were gathered, would have been living below the poverty line. I do not consider myself a child that was brought up in poverty. You know, I think we have to rethink the definition of what child poverty is, because in my mind you could grow up in the wealthiest household in the city of Winnipeg and still be a child in poverty if you are not loved and nurtured and cared for in a manner that I was cared for and many of us were.

I felt I had a great quality of life, and I had much opportunity although, you know, there was not a lot of financial resources available. I was maybe one of those—maybe that is why my husband criticizes me for spending too much money on clothes these days—but I was one of the few girls in our school in junior high that probably wore the same skirt and maybe had two different blouses to wear to school and had some insecure feelings about not being able to afford some of the things that other girls could afford. But I realized and recognized, and I sure do realize it today, that my parents provided for me what they could provide. The most important support that I got was the love and the caring and the nurturing and the understanding that has led me, I think, to be a fairly successful woman, mother and professional. So I really think we have to redefine and take another look at what we consider poverty and what we consider quality of life.

I have every confidence, and I know back then that the church community, and still today to some degree,

the church community was a focal point for many of us as families where, you know, those that were members of a church congregation looked out for each other. Those living on the same street looked out for each other, and had a real sense of commitment to community and to people.

If you look at things as they have evolved and as we became a more affluent society and through the '60s and the '70s when things were booming and governments kept implementing new programs on top of old programs and had no expectation that those programs had to deliver any measurable outcomes we found that our community sort of moved away from helping each other and moved to expectation that government would be all things to all people.

* (1540)

We are now having to face reality and recognize and realize that, you know, the rubber has hit the road. We are at the end of the line, and we have either got to tax people more, which people do not want to see, or we have got to try to find other ways of delivering services in our community. I think we have to go back to that concept of neighbours trying to provide the supports for neighbours, communities and churches. I have had many conversations with many of our church leadership right throughout the province. What they have indicated is, I guess, we are maybe both at fault, that, you know, government has said to the church and to the community, this is our problem to solve and have almost pushed that caring community away.

I have also heard from members of our church community that care about people that maybe they have moved away and they have become involved in other things that have taken priority rather than that caring and serving and community spirit that was there many years ago. I think there is a realization and recognition that we have to get together again. We have to say, how can we all work together to ensure that our fellow human beings in our Manitoba society, which we want to build and to grow and to develop and improve the quality of life? How do we start to work together, taking that volunteer community and commitment and the government resources that are available, and see whether we can do a better job with the money that we

have available? We are reaching out, and I think it is time we all started to say, how can we collectively find the solutions to a society that, in my mind, has gone downhill since those days of where people were thankful for what they had and wanted to work together to see the betterment of Manitoba society?

Mr. Martindale: Mr. Chairperson, I think this minister is living in the past. She is living in never-never land. Things have greatly changed since the time that this minister reminisces about. I would like to read about this from an article in The Globe and Mail from June 22, 1994. In the space of just two decades, the picture of the dual income family has undergone a complete revolution. In 1970, 30 percent of two-parent families with children under 19 had both parents in the workforce. By 1990, as more and more mothers took paid jobs, that number had climbed to 70 percent. This is from the Vanier Institute.

So, while it is true that people of the minister's generation and it was true of many people in my community and my generation, there was only one income earner. That is no longer true today. I think one of the major reasons, besides women's equality, that so many families have two parents working is economic necessity. People feel a need to have two parents working. Obviously, it makes a significant difference to their income. We know that, I think it is in Manitoba, approximately 76 percent of single-parent mothers are living below the poverty line. Obviously, two incomes make a big, big difference. You cannot blame people for making that choice if they are going to be economically better off.

As for neighbours looking out for neighbours and churches looking out for people in their neighbourhood, I would like to make two points. One is that they are; and, secondly, where they cannot, it is partly because things have changed.

For example, the place that I used to work, Northern Community Ministry, used to have a very good program whereby volunteers from churches in the suburbs used to come to inner city schools, at one time, about seven schools, including William Whyte and Strathcona and David Livingstone and King Edward, schools in the north end. They used to volunteer half

a day a week or more, usually one-on-one with students, reading with students, or whatever. That program lasted for four or five years, but what happened was, the volunteers were growing older, many of them had ailing parents that they had to spend time with and they dropped out. When we tried to recruit new people, we found it almost impossible, and one of the reasons was that so many women in that age group were in the paid workforce because things change over time.

Regrettably, that program is no longer in existence. Now, fortunately, we have got some very innovative programs going at schools like William Whyte where they are drawing in people from the community to do similar things. But the volunteers that used to be available, in many cases, are not available anymore.

When it comes to the churches, the church that this minister went to when she was young and the church I attend, which I will not name because I do not want them swamped with requests for groceries, they have a grocery cupboard, and it is increasingly being used. But this kind of charity response to the problem of poverty is totally inadequate. I worked interviewing people and handing out small quantities of food and helping to supervise a food distribution place for Winnipeg Harvest for 10 years before I got elected. I can tell you that that kind of response to poverty is totally inadequate.

The largest donations to the dozens and dozens of places that hand out the food on behalf of Winnipeg Harvest are doughnuts and stale bread and then whatever else is in season. One of the reasons why this is such an inadequate response to the problem of poverty is that the nutrition is not good.

Frequently, people are being given food that is high in carbohydrates, high in fat and low in protein. There just are not donations of high protein items like meat or milk or fish or eggs or anything like that. What people get is everyone else's leftovers. There is no choice in what people get.

It is a very inadequate response, but it seems that it is the kind of response to poverty that this minister endorses, that she would want to see more of this, and

I do not think that is a caring response on behalf of our society at all. So I think we will have to agree to disagree.

Furthermore, churches who are involved in this kind of response to the problem of poverty are also cognizant of the problems of people in poverty, not just the fact that their budget will not go far enough. One of them corresponds regularly with, I believe, this minister and the local member of Parliament, an MLA, and myself as critic.

And when we get to Income Security, I am going to read excerpts from a couple of letters from St. Matthews-Maryland Community Ministry, where they talk about problems that people on social assistance have and people who are unemployed have, and the recommendations that they make to this minister's department. They sure are not recommending more food for people, and they are not lobbying Winnipeg Harvest for more food. In fact, they put geographical restrictions and numerical restrictions on the amount of people that they serve every week. The amount of people that they are serving is considerable, and they always put that in their letters as well.

I know the minister wants to rebut some of this, so I will let her in at this point.

Mrs. Mitchelson: I guess we will agree to disagree, because I sense that we have many resources out in the community that remain untapped, and yes, there are two-parent families with both parents in the workforce, and I do know, too, that on one income and one salary it is much more difficult to make ends meet. But I do want to indicate that with new advanced medical technology we have seniors that are living much longer today than they did in the past. I know that with early retirement we have young seniors. I mean, we are looking at 55-year-olds now that are retired and some even before that, that I think we need to tap into to a greater degree than we are right now.

I think there is opportunity to use some of those people with some skills and some time on their hands as mentors or people that can work with some of the more disadvantaged people in our society, in our community. When we talk about the food banks and

the kinds of food that are available, and we talk about them not being nutritional, I would venture to guess that many parents that are feeding their children maybe are not feeding them the kinds of nutritional food that they need for a healthy mind in a healthy body. So it is not just the food banks that are providing that.

I am not sure that in all instances parents are using the small resources that they have in a wise fashion. I think we could probably all relate or indicate some experience where, for whatever reason, children are not receiving the proper nutrition, and it might not be lack of food. It might be lack of the right foods.

* (1550)

I think there is opportunity. I tend to disagree that the church community is doing all that it can do or all that it wants to do, because from the meetings that I have had—and I have opportunity for discussions and dialogue in my community, for example, with women that are very much a part of the evangelical movement and indicate very clearly that there is more work to be done. I have met with groups and organizations of our church community that have said point out where the trouble spots are, challenge us, and we will come up with some solutions and some answers.

So I really think that there is a willingness on behalf of our community to work together. I believe there are lots of resources that are untapped out there, and they might not be the second parent working in the family, but there are those out in our community that may be single parents, that may be able to be trained to mentor other single parents, to work with other single parents, trained to look after each other's children, trained in better nutritional skills and preparation.

I think there is opportunity. I believe there are new ways of trying to pilot programs and projects that will improve the life and the status of many of those that are living below the poverty line, and I do not think we just can sit back and say there is not any resource out there. I think we have got to reach out to our community and try to find the resources that are available, and I am going to continue to meet with people and ask for the kind of support and the kind of innovation that I believe can be harnessed in our community.

Mr. Martindale: Two more questions on this line. Under Expected Results it says: The undertaking of social policy review and analysis in support of departmental priorities. I would be interested in knowing what you have reviewed in the last year and what you are going to review in the next year and if any of that is in document form and if it is available to me or not.

Mrs. Mitchelson: The one area of priority this year was helping in the development of Manitoba's perspective on the social safety net reform, and you have received that document. It was tabled in the house. That was a major piece of work that was done.

Mr. Martindale: Another Expected Result is systematic program evaluation within the department. I would be interested in knowing what programs you have evaluated and with what results.

Mrs. Mitchelson: We are in the process of evaluating the Community Living pilot project, In the Company of Friends, that is underway now. We are working with the Department of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship to develop an inventory of departmental programs and services for immigrants. We are underway with an evaluation of the City of Winnipeg's Community Services Projects. Last year we announced a doubling of the program for the Community Services Projects that the City of Winnipeg runs under Making Welfare Work. We are evaluating that, and we are also developing an evaluation process for the Taking Charge! initiative to measure outcomes.

Mr. Martindale: I thank the minister for that information. I think I am ready to pass this line.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: 1. Administration and Finance (e) Management Services (5) Policy and Planning (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$769,600—(pass); (b) Other Expenditures \$244,900—(pass).

1.(e)(6) Residential Care Licensing (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$311,100.

Mr. Martindale: I am looking at the 1993-94 annual report of the department and it is a little bit different, which is a little confusing because the headings are

either different or slightly different and so is the numbering. For example, in the Annual Report there is a 09-1E-7 Agency Relations Bureau. I do not find that title, Agency Relations Bureau, in the current Estimates book, so I presume there has been a reorganization and it is under some other line.

Mrs. Mitchelson: The Agency Relations Bureau no longer exists. It has been blended into program areas within different divisions in the department.

Mr. Martindale: I have some questions about the 21 service purchase agreements, and perhaps would it be appropriate to ask that question and other questions when I ask questions about the grants to external agencies?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Yes, that is probably the best time.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: (6) Residential Care Licensing (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$311,100—(pass); (b) Other Expenditures \$26,500—(pass).

2. Income Security and Regional Operations (a) Central Directorate (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$1,273,200.

Mr. Martindale: I wonder if it is okay with the minister if I ask questions about municipal assistance. It is maybe on the next page, but if her staff is here could we do municipal assistance now?

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Is it the will of the committee to move onto 2.(b) Income Maintenance Programs? [agreed]

Mr. Martindale: I have questions about, I guess, what is now just negotiations between this minister and her department and the City of Winnipeg Social Services department. It is my understanding that there is going to be a report on the minister's desk in June.

(Mr. Peter Dyck, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair)

I will begin by maybe giving the minister a chance to start off and tell me about the status of the negotiations and when she expects to have a report.

Mrs. Mitchelson: I guess I can indicate that there was a meeting with the mayor and the chair of the committee at City Hall that deals with social allowances, but I do not know the name of the committee at City Hall, but anyway we met and have had discussions. There has been some sense that the city has wanted us to look at taking over the responsibility for delivering social allowance to all residents of the city of Winnipeg. I think I have indicated to my honourable friend in the past that the City of Winnipeg is very supportive.

* (1600)

The Union of Manitoba Municipalities has not been supportive of a one-tier system mainly because they feel they could deliver the services better. They are closer to the people in their communities. The numbers are not nearly as great as the city of Winnipeg. They have expressed a desire to maintain the two-tiered system of social allowance.

The City of Winnipeg has asked whether there was a willingness for us to take over the responsibility for delivering the service to all citizens of the city of Winnipeg. We agreed that would be the right way to go. I think it is critical that overlap and duplication be reduced. As a result the maximum amount of dollars available can go to those people that are in need of the support and the services. We have opened the dialogue and had some initial meetings with the City of Winnipeg. What I am expecting in the month of June is a preliminary report, sort of laying out what some of the issues might be.

There are many issues. I cannot say I am going to be announcing within the next couple of months a new process or a new delivery service. I think it is going to take some time and some more dialogue. There are some issues that are outstanding that are going to have to be discussed in great detail before we can move ahead with a one-tiered system. But we are committed to it and I think we can work through the details. It is just that some of the issues will take a little longer to resolve.

Mr. Martindale: It seems clear from the minister's answer that the provincial government is going to take

over city social services. I have some detailed questions then. I would like to ask how the transfer to provincial responsibility will affect programming. For example, the city currently delivers or provides quite a few different programs for its clients. In fact, there is a couple of reports that I have about this. For example, the minister must have a copy of this one called Working and this is just about infrastructure renewal. I think I have another one. I am sure the minister has this one, City of Winnipeg Social Services department, employment, training and education services, '94-95 initiatives and partnerships. They describe their training programs. Will the province take over all these programs?

Mrs. Mitchelson: That question is quite premature at this point in time. We need to understand exactly what the City of Winnipeg does clearly. It is obvious when you are amalgamating two systems into one we are going to have to find a process that ensures that we are providing the best service possible to the clients that we are going to serve. It is premature at this point to take every program and indicate that those programs are going to be there and exist in the future. I think that part of the restructure and the reorganization is to look at what is working and what is not and maybe pick the best of both systems and try to implement and bring them together so that we have got a better one system rather than two with some components of maybe both that are not maybe the best solutions.

Mr. Martindale: Well, surely the minister would agree that the purpose of training and employment programs is to get social assistance recipients off social assistance and through training to get a job and through work programs to be gainfully employed, instead of sitting at home and collecting social assistance. So surely this minister would not entertain the idea of dropping a training program or dropping any work programs.

Mrs. Mitchelson: I think the days are gone when you just look at training programs as training programs. What we want to do is have training programs with the opportunity for a job at the end of that training. I think you will see governments right across the country that have in the past and will continue to evaluate programs, and we are going to have to look at where the jobs will

be, identify those areas and ensure that the training that is done is training that will lead to meaningful employment. And I think that is the end result that we all want.

Mr. Martindale: Well, I am not sure that I totally agree with the minister on this. For example, the city has run the Dutch Elm Disease Control Program, and the province has contributed to that. So that is a good example. Obviously, the minister supports that. And they have hired the heads of households of large families, and they have paid them a decent wage, and the result has been that actually they are making less money on the Dutch Elm Disease Control Program than they are if they were sitting at home doing nothing and collecting welfare. And yet there is no guaranteed job for those individuals at the end of this program. In spite of that, many of them have received on-the-job training which has resulted in them going to work for tree service and nursery companies or for city and provincial departments.

So that is an example of a program that I think the primary goal is to control Dutch elm disease, and the benefit is that people are working. I have met some of these people. They feel good about themselves because they are working. I think they are being good role models for their children, and some of them have had the added benefit of getting a job at the end of it. So surely the minister would not limit programs or training to only the ones where the participants are going to get a job at the completion of it.

Mrs. Mitchelson: The Dutch Elm Disease Program, and I have indicated that it has been a good and a very successful program, but when you are talking about training, it was on-the-job training for that program, and there was training to do something, the kind of training that I think we have to look at and evaluate. We could go through program by program, but I do not have the expertise or the understanding of absolutely every program that is being run by the City of Winnipeg presently, to indicate which ones we would keep and which ones we might not keep.

If you are looking at many of the training programs that have been in place in the past, have been training for a course in, I will just take an example,

hairdressing, when there is not a requirement for hairdressers at the end of the day, and I am only using that as an example. I do not know if there is a need or a requirement for hairdressers today or not. But those are the kinds of training activities that I do not think we would be supportive of, if in fact there is not a need, and we are going to spend resources and time and energy and effort on training when there is no question that probably all it will lead to is unemployment or welfare at the end of day.

So, off the top of my head, I do not have a list of all the programs and evaluation of all the programs that the City of Winnipeg runs, but certainly if we have got something that is working and creating activity and opportunity for work experience, those are the kinds of things that we are going to look at very positively.

Mr. Martindale: Well, I do not like beating a dead horse, but surely the minister will agree that it is worthwhile for those individuals, while they are engaged in the training program, to be working rather than sitting at home doing nothing, even if there is no guarantee that a hundred percent of them are going to find employment at the end. The success rate is quite reasonable, according to the City of Winnipeg report. Since the inception of the Dutch Elm Disease Control Program, a total of 236 recipients have been selected for the program, and to date—and this is March 1995—approximately 112, or 47 percent, of former participants of this program are currently employed with the City of Winnipeg.

So I would hope that the minister would agree that even if a hundred percent of the people in that program did not get jobs at the end of it, it was still a worthwhile program.

* (1610)

Mrs. Mitchelson: I think we are saying the same thing, only in a different language. I mean, I have no problem with a program like the Dutch Elm Disease Program, and it is on-the-job training. It provides a bit of work experience.

There sometimes is a long-term job opportunity at the end and sometimes not. I have no problem with that

kind of program. I indicated in my previous answer, it is the 10-month training program for a hairdresser or whatever it might be, if in fact there is no opportunity for work experience in any way and there is no opportunity for a job at the end. Is that the kind of training we want to do, or do we want to look at meaningful training like the Dutch Elm Disease Program that could lead to permanent job opportunity at the end of the program? I think we are on the same wavelength. I have no problem with that kind of training, but we have to look at where the job opportunities will be into the future if we are going into long-term training.

Mr. Martindale: The minister is aware that the City of Winnipeg recipients are mostly employable and that provincial recipients are mostly unemployable, although that is not entirely true because it includes single parents, many of whom are employable. With the new one-tier system within the City of Winnipeg boundaries, what will happen to these categories? Will there still be a short-term employable category, an unemployable category?

Mrs. Mitchelson: I cannot give any assurances or any guarantees today of what categories there will or will not be. I can indicate to you that we are one of the provinces that are a little behind and we are going to have to think very seriously about our term "unemployable" for single parents. I think it sends the wrong message out, and many other provinces, including the province of British Columbia, are changing the definition of unemployable.

Some of them have an NDP government, but they have changed and maybe have been a little more progressive than we have in that they do not consider single moms unemployable. They have to look for job opportunities when their youngest child turns six; in Manitoba it is 18. They have moved considerably in that direction. I think it is something that bears looking at in dialogue and discussion, and we will probably be making some changes in that respect in the near future in Manitoba. But, as far as knowing what categories there will be or will not be, we are not at that stage yet to determine what the future will hold.

(Mr. Deputy Chairperson in the Chair)

Mr. Martindale: I am told that the City of Winnipeg has a superior computer system to the provincial. I am wondering if you have thought about this, and whether you would keep the best system or change over.

Mrs. Mitchelson: The information that I am getting is that neither one of them is very good. Is it the best of a bad situation? Do we take the best of two bad ones, or do we look at a new integrated system? Those are all issues that have to be discussed in greater detail before we can make a final decision.

Mr. Martindale: That begs another question. Will you be spending big bucks on a new computer system?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Can I say, Mr. Chairperson, your guess is as good as mine? I do not know, and we have not investigated—or we do not have any sense or indication or cost analysis done of what might be needed to integrate the system. It is critical that we have a system that deals with—for a one-tier system, we should have one system that deals with all the people who are on our social allowance rolls. What that system will be—I suppose what we would have to do is evaluate the cost implications for moving our caseload onto the city's computer or moving theirs onto ours or developing an integrated system. We would have to look at the cost implications and the feasibility and determine what would be the best method or process of getting a system up and running.

Mr. Martindale: I would like to ask the minister if she would consider making some changes in categories. Let me use some examples. I am talking here about employability, unemployability. I know a number of recipients who are receiving the city's social services benefits. They are 55 years old or slightly older. They have very low education levels, maybe Grade 8. They have very low skill levels, and their chances of finding employment are almost zero. They are on the city system because they are deemed employable.

The individuals I am thinking of are single people. I know that the city is putting almost no pressure on them to find employment. I know that the minister will be distressed at this, and I know that they are supposed to be looking for work. But I think there is a reality

there that is being recognized by city Social Services, and that reality is that there just are not jobs available for people who are 55 years old, with no skills and very low levels of education.

Another example, and this comes, I think, from the director of city Social Services, who says that once people have been unemployed for two years or more, their chances of getting employment in today's job economy are almost zero. The reason is that when employers have a choice, and there are 40,000 to 50,000 people unemployed—well, let us use just the city of Winnipeg, 16,000 employable people on the City of Winnipeg assistance available—employers are going to take, obviously, the best candidates.

They are going to take people with the most recent employment history. If they can hire somebody who has only been unemployed for three months, rather than two years, they are going to take the person who has been unemployed for three months every time.

I am wondering if the minister would consider changing the categories to make them a little more realistic and to recognize some of the reality out there. I guess the other possibility would be to get rid of categories altogether and just expect everybody to be looking for work, although when it comes to disabled people or severely disabled people, maybe that is not realistic either.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Chairperson, I thank my honourable friend for those comments, because I think he has painted a realistic picture of what does exist out there today. Most of the comments that have been put on the record are very accurate and do present a set of problems and challenges for us to overcome.

So I will certainly, in our dialogue around how we integrate the services, look at the best way to treat individuals, and it is almost groups of individuals in certain circumstances that are going to have great difficulty finding jobs.

We also know, too, that it is critical that what we do into the future has to look at trying to deal very quickly and aggressively with those who are just coming onto social allowances because, as my honourable friend

indicated, once they have been on social allowances for two years, it is very difficult to reverse the trend, so I think a lot of our energies and efforts have to go into the front end and aggressively pursue options and opportunities at that level.

Mr. Martindale: Integrating two systems obviously has a lot of implications for staffing. I think these are important and sensitive and maybe even difficult issues, and I have some questions about them. For example, would the sick time of municipal employees be carried forward if they become part of the provincial system?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Chairperson, those are all issues that would be under negotiation and consideration as we moved into a process, and I certainly could not give an answer to that today.

* (1620)

Mr. Martindale: Would seniority be incorporated within the provincial system?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Chairperson, I think a lot of the questions, or this line of questioning, will probably lead me to repeat the same answer that I gave with the first question, and that is that those are details that would have to be worked out through a process of negotiation and dialogue and discussion, and we are not into those kinds of discussions at this point in time.

Mr. Martindale: It is possible that people in one system, as opposed to another, might enjoy their jobs more or might have a better work environment or a more positive work environment. Would the minister be prepared to review the quality of the work environment and maintain a positive work environment when the employees are absorbed into the new system?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Chairperson, I always think if the work environment is a positive work environment, you have more productive employees and people who are happy about doing their jobs.

I have not had the opportunity to visit as many of our offices as I would like to, but I am planning to get out into the community and meet with front-line workers

and seek their input. Very interesting comments do come from those who are dealing on a one-to-one basis on a daily basis with people who are on social allowance. There are some great ideas and suggestions out there that I think we need to be listening to and considering as we move forward.

I would certainly like to hear what employees who are working for the City of Winnipeg have to say and what recommendations they might make on how to better serve the needs of the people they are serving and make a positive difference, so I am very supportive of a positive working environment.

Mr. Martindale: If fewer staff or employees are needed, would buy-out packages or retirement packages be offered to surplus employees?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Chairperson, these are all hypothetical questions at this point in time, and I know there is a lot of concern. I knocked on doors just recently during the election campaign. In my constituency I talked to several City of Winnipeg employees who worked for the Social Services department, and we discussed quite openly the issue.

I think we are just going to have to work through the issues, one by one, trying to recognize and realize the sensitivity around some of the uncertainty that is always felt when a change occurs and try to be as sensitive as possible to those issues.

Mr. Martindale: What are the differences in pay scales? How would they relate to civic employees under the auspices of the provincial government?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Chairperson, the Civil Service Commission is presently compiling all of that information and looking at both of the agreements and trying to give us an analysis of what is happening presently, and that will all be part of the information that we take into consideration with the amalgamation.

Mr. Martindale: What protection would there be once the current WAPSO—that is an acronym, all capitalized—agreement expires in 1997? Would Schedule M still apply if the province felt that management employees should be eliminated?

Mrs. Mitchelson: I am aware that there are, I think, two unions at the City of Winnipeg, WAPSO and CUPE. So those are issues that are going to have to be resolved. You are asking a question and some detail. I do not know what the agreements entail but I think those are discussions and information that needs to be pulled together. I think we are looking at that through the Civil Service Commission, and it will all be part of labour negotiation and process as we move towards a one-tiered system.

Mr. Martindale: What type of training would be available for displaced staff? What system would they be in, civic or provincial in terms of placement?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Again, I probably should just say ditto. Very, very premature questioning. Hypothetical. I do not know who is going to be displaced or what the whole process will be for integrating the two systems. That remains to be seen. We are not anywhere close to that determination.

Mr. Martindale: Mr. Chairperson, I already said I think these are important questions and sensitive issues, but, obviously, the minister is not in a position to reply to them. I think I should just give up on this line of questions and maybe I can write to the minister or maybe the unions will write to the minister and ask these questions.

Mrs. Mitchelson: I think we have opened the dialogue and discussion and those requests have been there for meetings. I just want to say that we are not here to make people's lives miserable through any process. I think what we want to do is try and find the best way to deliver service to the people of Winnipeg, through this process, who need our service. In my mind, the client, the recipient of the service comes first. We want to ensure that there is a sensitive approach to the amalgamation process so that there is as little disruption for those who need services as possible.

Mr. Martindale: I am going to switch to a different line of questioning although on the same topic.

I have heard that there might be a trade-off, that in return for the province taking over social assistance, the city might get jurisdiction for health from where it is

currently now just the inner city, in fact to the whole city of Winnipeg. Has there been any consideration of that?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Chairperson, to my knowledge there is not consideration, but I would imagine that should more appropriately be addressed to the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae).

Mr. Martindale: Another issue that I would like to raise is that there are differences in the staff qualifications for hiring between the two systems. It is my understanding that the City of Winnipeg Social Services department hires people with Bachelor of Social Work degrees. In fact, one of the students who I taught in a class at the University of Manitoba was hired by City Social Services. My understanding is that the provincial Department of Income Security does not hire Bachelor of Social Work graduates. I am wondering if there will be some sort of job guarantees for the Bachelor of Social Work qualified staff.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Chairperson, I have a difficult time guaranteeing anything right at this moment without understanding what the caseload will look like with an amalgamated system and how we can best deliver that service to the people that need the service.

I think we would want to use the best qualified people possible to deliver that service. It might be a combination. It could be any mix of—I would hate to indicate that one group of staff might be any better than another group or that a background in one profession might better enable you to deliver a service than another group. I think we probably have very qualified staff in both systems, and I would want to see that we have the best people possible to deliver the best service possible to the people we want to deliver that service to.

Mr. Martindale: Since the minister cannot guarantee anything, which is reasonable, I will phrase my next question a little differently and ask, would the province consider changing its hiring qualifications and hire BSW graduates or individuals with BSW degrees?

* (1630)

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Chairperson, I happen to think, from just meeting many of the front-line workers that deal with the issues of social assistance, that we have very competent people delivering that service. I cannot see any reason for wanting to get rid of them and change the qualifications at this point.

As I said earlier, I think we have to, first of all, look and figure out where our priorities are. Our priorities are to deliver a service to people that are in need of a very basic and necessary service. To me, the client comes first, and we want to have qualified staff and caring staff that can deliver that service.

I think probably in both systems, we have very caring and qualified people.

Mr. Martindale: I am pleased to hear that statement by the minister, because in the past I thought that the minister's only concern was efficiency.

I wonder if the minister can tell me what all the reasons are that they want to take over city social services.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Chairperson, I think we want to see the dollars that are available in the future go to the people that need those dollars, in the most efficient and effective manner. I believe that we have caring staff people in systems throughout government that will deliver that service.

Mr. Martindale: Well, of course, if the minister really wants to be efficient, the easiest way to be efficient is to reduce the rates—

Mrs. Mitchelson: Get rid of the opposition.

Mr. Martindale: Well, if the minister is interested in authoritarian governments, fascist governments, that is what they would do, of course.

That raises the question of the rates. As this minister knows, the rates for the food allowance, in particular for children from birth to 18 years of age, are considerably higher for city social services recipients than for provincial social assistance recipients. What

does the minister plan to do about the rates when the two systems are integrated?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Chairperson, I do want to put on the record the fact that the rates for children in the city of Winnipeg are the highest rates across the country, not taking into consideration the higher costs of living in formerly NDP Ontario and presently NDP B.C., where in the city of Vancouver the rates for children are lower under an NDP administration than they are here and the cost of living is certainly higher. The same would hold true in the city of Toronto, where for the last four years an NDP government has been in power.

I want to indicate that the rates are the highest, bar none, across the country, and the cost of living in Manitoba or in Winnipeg is not nearly as high as other major centres across our country. So that fact will have to be taken into consideration when we are looking at a one-tiered system, and I am not sure what the eventual outcome will be.

I think it is critical that the dollars that are going to those that need support from social allowances are going with some input and some support from us, ensuring that the dollars are being spent in a manner that is going to ensure proper nutrition and support for basic needs of those children. So I cannot indicate right now what the eventual outcome will be, but I can indicate that there are other provinces across the country that do not provide the same kind of support that has been provided here.

Mr. Martindale: Well, I cannot believe that this minister will not provide assurances that she will not reduce the food allowance for children on social services in the city of Winnipeg, given how far below the poverty line children and families are in every city, in every province across Canada. That is just unbelievable.

In fact, I would like to make a prediction. I think amalgamation is going to mean standardization of the rates and that is going to mean a reduction for the food allowance for children in Winnipeg. If that is true then this minister and her government should be ashamed of themselves.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Chairperson, I do want to indicate that there will be a standard rate for the citizens in the city of Winnipeg with the one-tiered system and that is a reality.

Now I hear the comments about the food allowance, and I would like to reiterate and would like to comment that what we need to do is to be ensuring that the dollars that are provided for nutritional support for children and for people on social allowances—and that might be some young pregnant moms—that we are working in a co-ordinated and co-operative fashion to ensure that children are nourished. Whether it be prenatal, whether moms are eating and ensuring that child will have a healthy start to life, we are going to have to ensure that happens in some way, and we will want to work with young people.

I do not know whether it will be in the form of a food allowance or whether it will be in the form of some type of nutritional support, some educational support, some assurance that parents have the tools to make the right choices and the right decisions around the nutritional input for their children. I cannot indicate today exactly what the process will be but we do know—and we have all kinds of statistics, information and research that tells us that proper nutrition is extremely important prenatally and in the first years of life.

A guarantee of more money for food does not necessarily mean proper nutritional support for young children. We have to find a way that we can work with families who need help and support to ensure that the dollars are going into the areas that are going to create a more positive beginning and early years for those children. Just because there is more money for food does not necessarily mean that children are going to get the nourishment and the support that they need.

Mr. Martindale: I would hope, and I recommend that the minister and her staff consult with the home economists in the Department of Agriculture. I know that they put out a brochure on the cost of raising a family. They have lots of detail in that brochure, and they have checked out the costs for food, clothing, school supplies and all kinds of things. I hope that the minister would take those into consideration when she looks at the rates in the one-tier system.

A final question in this area has to do with the city's share of the financial assistance for their recipients. In 1995, according to the fact sheet that I have, it was \$16,850,336. Will the city property taxpayers be spared this burden after integration of the two systems?

As this minister knows, property taxes are amongst the most regressive kinds of taxes because they are not based on the ability to pay as income tax generally is. Because we still have a two-tier system in Manitoba, and I think it is only one of three provinces in Canada, it means that city property taxpayers are sharing the burden of the social assistance cost, which in most provinces in Canada they are not. So will the province be assuming this cost of \$16.85 million or does the minister have some other plan?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Chairperson, on the premise of developing a one-tiered system run by the province, the discussion and dialogue with the City of Winnipeg has always been that it will be revenue neutral, so that if in fact we are taking over the delivery of the service and paying the cost that in some way will be compensated for in another manner. That has always been the premise and the understanding from one level of government to the other.

* (1640)

Mr. Martindale: I think that probably means if the welfare cost is reduced by \$16 million for the City of Winnipeg that the Minister of Urban Affairs (Mr. Reimer) will probably subtract \$16 million in their grant to the City of Winnipeg. So then I can tell taxpayers in the Burrows constituency that this government is not willing to lighten the tax burden on property taxpayers even though there are only I think three provinces in Canada where municipalities have to cost-share municipal assistance. Is that correct?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Absolutely correct. I think if we have a system and a service delivery that is streamlined and more effective and more efficient, taxpayers of Manitoba and taxpayers of Winnipeg will both benefit.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Is it the will of the committee to take a five-minute recess and leave the clock running? [agreed]

The committee recessed at 4:41 p.m.

After Recess

The committee resumed at 4:51 p.m.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Item 2. Income Security and Regional Operations (a) Central Directorate (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$1,273,200.

Mr. Martindale: Mr. Chairperson, I think we are on page 45 of the Supplementary Estimates book, is that right?

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: That is right.

Mr. Martindale: I would like to begin by asking the minister some questions about the welfare fraud line and also about the investigation unit.

First of all, could the minister tell me how many employees there are in the investigation unit?

Mrs. Mitchelson: There are six employees in the investigation unit.

Mr. Martindale: Can the minister tell me what kinds of things those staff do in the investigation unit?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Chairperson, they do handle the fraud line calls. They deal with information sharing among provinces on fraud investigation. They do case investigations. They give advice to the field staff and they liaise with the Crown around prosecutions, to name a few things they do.

Mr. Martindale: Do the staff in the investigation unit do home visits, or is it the frontline workers that do home visits while investigating fraud?

Mrs. Mitchelson: It is both.

Mr. Martindale: Could the minister provide me with some statistics on the number of cases of fraud investigated and the number of cases where charges are laid, that sort of thing?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Chairperson, if the question was how many calls were received on the fraud line, it was 3,605 calls. Of the calls received, 2,900, or a little over—I round the numbers off—were active files or recently active files, and all of those cases have been reviewed.

Staff have dealt with 2,255 calls; 1,794 were unfounded or upon further review did not have enough information to pursue follow-up. Corrective action has been taken on 461 cases; 356 of those were closed and 105 remain open, but there has been some adjustment to the amount of support to them.

To date, 37 cases are being considered for prosecution and some are with the police or the Crown at various stages.

Mr. Martindale: Could the minister repeat the number considered for prosecution?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Chairperson, 37.

Mr. Martindale: Could the minister tell me how many have actually made it to court?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Chairperson, they are all in process. There are none that have gone to court as yet.

Mr. Martindale: Could the minister tell me what those people would be charged with if it went to court?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Chairperson, it would be misinformation and not declaration of income with deliberate intent to be fraudulent.

Mr. Martindale: Does the minister consider that this is the same as welfare fraud?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Chairperson, it is welfare fraud.

Mr. Martindale: My understanding is that fraud would be a criminal charge under the Criminal Code of Canada. Is that correct?

Mrs. Mitchelson: A decision is made whether to prosecute under The Social Allowances Act or under the Criminal Code, and there are some of both.

Mr. Martindale: How many are being charged under the Criminal Code, and how many under The Social Allowances Act?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Chairperson, we do not have that detail here, but we will get it.

Mr. Martindale: Thank you for that. Would the minister agree that a charge of misinformation would be roughly comparable to a traffic summons?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Chairperson, I do not think you can make a general statement. I think each case is individual, and it would depend on the amount and the kind of activity. It goes to the Justice system that helps to make the determination on what type of case it is and what the recourse should be.

* (1700)

Mr. Martindale: I am sorry that I am not very familiar with the legal system. Perhaps I should have consulted with my colleague beside me beforehand, but would the correct legal language be that this is a summary conviction?

Mrs. Mitchelson: I guess a conviction under The Social Allowances Act would be a summary conviction but it would not be under the Criminal Code. It is the justice system that makes that determination. We provide the information and they make the determination on what the course of action should be.

Mr. Martindale: We are really talking about two different things here. We are talking about fraud which is a Criminal Code conviction, and we are talking about a summary conviction which is under The Social Allowances Act and is something quite different. Would the minister agree with that?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Yes.

Mr. Martindale: Out of 3,605 calls, some 37 might be considered fraud?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Those are the ones that might be charged under the Criminal Code. But if people are receiving support through government, which is

ultimately the taxpayers of Manitoba that are paying the taxes to provide that support and they are receiving support that they are not entitled to under the rules and the regulations, that is fraud.

Mr. Martindale: But in legal terms it is not fraud, it is a summary conviction?

Mrs. Mitchelson: I go back to the comment that I just made, that if you are receiving support that is generated by tax revenues, government collects based on your declaration that these are your basic needs, and if you are receiving that money you are not entitled to because you are not providing the information to government that is required and that is determined, then it is fraud.

Mr. Martindale: I guess one could say that it is fraudulent behaviour, but in terms of legal language it is only fraud if it is a Criminal Code charge. Going back to the 3,605, is this since the welfare fraud lines started or are we talking about a fiscal year?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Chairperson, that is since it started.

Mr. Martindale: Could the minister tell me of the 37 that are being considered for prosecution, how many would be in the 1994-95 fiscal year for the department?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Chairperson, most of the cases would be from the last fiscal year, because the only stats that would be included for this year would be those from the end of March until the present date.

Mr. Martindale: Would any of those 37 include recipients whose activities were investigated and charges are being considered laid from previous fiscal years?

Mrs. Mitchelson: No.

Mr. Martindale: So they are all from the beginning of the fraud line to the present?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Yes.

Mr. Martindale: I would like to switch topics now and ask about special needs allowances. My

understanding is that there was a policy change in May of 1994, one that I did not find out about for quite a long time, actually until April 1, '95, when people were requesting special needs and finding out that it was abolished.

We will start with when the policy changed, was it May of 1994?

Mrs. Mitchelson: The change was made a year ago and I believe, if I am not mistaken, that I read the changes into the record in last year's Estimates.

Mr. Martindale: That is fine. Could the minister tell me if the regulation has changed?

Mrs. Mitchelson: No, the regulation has not changed.

Mr. Martindale: If special needs funds are something that is available because of a regulation, how can the minister change the policy without changing the regulation?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Chairperson, we have a big policy manual on the social allowance side, and much of the assessment of special need, I guess, is discretionary and not everything is set down in regulation. So policy direction does determine the criteria and the need for them to do this.

Mr. Martindale: You mean that there is no regulation covering special needs?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Chairperson, I will try to get this right. There is a regulation that says that we can go up to \$150 in special needs, but there is discretion to provide less or, in some instances, to provide more based on individual circumstances. So each case is assessed on an individual basis, and there is a determination of what the special need might be. That is set by policy.

Mr. Martindale: Well, it used to be that the first \$150 was available after April 1 of each fiscal year, and we know the people use this money to buy furniture, to buy winter clothes and for other purposes. Now it is almost impossible to get this money. The reason that I am raising it is that I think this is causing undue

hardship for people. I have been told of situations where people have no furniture, including no kitchen table. They have requested special needs funds, and they have been turned down. So I would like to ask the minister, why is this being done? Other than to save money at the expense of the poor, why are you deliberately creating hardship for income assistance recipients?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Chairperson, I guess if there are individual cases that have been brought forward to the member's attention that he would like me to look into and investigate, I certainly would do that.

I do want to indicate also that any decision that is made to determine what amount we might provide or not provide is appealable, but if there are individual cases and specifics—when you indicate that there is a family that did not have a kitchen table and they were denied, I would like to have that detailed information and I would certainly investigate.

Mr. Martindale: Well, I will certainly bring to the minister's attention any past and future individual situations. I appreciate the minister's offer. But the problem is that when I raise it or another MLA raises it we get action. I mean, if I phone Mr. Schmidt I get action. If I phone Mr. Sexsmith I get action because, of course, this minister does not want it on the front page of the Free Press.

* (1710)

Recently, we had a case that was going to the social services appeal committee, and the hearing got stopped and the person got what they needed because it was being raised by an MLA. That is of no help to the other recipients who do not phone their MLA or who do not have an advocate or do not have access to a lawyer or to Legal Aid and who apply for special needs funds for furniture or an emergency or winter clothes and they get turned down.

So I would like to ask the minister, will she consider changing this policy so that we do not end up with an ad hoc policy where if you know where to go for help you are going to get help, and if you do not know where to go for help you are going to get nothing?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Chairperson, all I can say is that if cases come to our attention, if people feel they are being unfairly treated, there is an appeal mechanism that is available for them, and we have set down certain policy and guidelines and rules and regulations. I can indicate to you that, if I am aware of any circumstance or situation that appears to be unfair or unjust, I will look into that. But we have certain policies and we have certain rules that we abide by.

Mr. Martindale: Well, Madam Minister, the part that is unfair and unjust is the policy change so that it is almost impossible for people to get furniture or winter clothes or whatever through the special needs fund. Suggesting that they appeal it is not very helpful when, for about 90 percent of people on appeal, their appeal is turned down. So that is only going to help a very small number of people. The only thing that would be fair and just would be if you were to reverse this unfair policy.

Mrs. Mitchelson: I would believe my honourable friend is making some wide, broad, general speculations about what is going on out there, without any specific documentation or instances. So these are general comments. I would have to be convinced, and I would hope you would bring to my attention issues that would indicate that things are so widespread that people are not receiving the basic needs that they require, and I would look into it. I think to make broad generalizations without specifics or detail is not doing a service to the kind of support in the programs that we have in place.

Mr. Martindale: Well, maybe we can get some documentation. Would the minister be willing to table information on the amount of money that was handed out under the special needs category and we could do a comparison? If the minister would give us the figures for '93-94 and the figures for '94-95, when they become available, we can see what the results are of the policy change. If what I am saying is true, then much less money will be expended on special needs. If I am wrong, then that will be apparent in the figures. If I am wrong, I will apologize.

Mrs. Mitchelson: I will look into that and see what I might do.

Mr. Martindale: Will the minister provide me with the figures from those two financial years?

Mrs. Mitchelson: I will look into the situation and see what is available to provide.

Mr. Martindale: I would like to change now to the topic of social assistance for off-reserve aboriginal people, particularly two communities, South Indian Lake and, I believe, it is Granville Lake. Could the minister tell me if she is involved in negotiations with the federal government and with these two First Nations communities?

Mrs. Mitchelson: You know it is very difficult when you receive a notice one month, a unilateral decision by the federal government in writing. Not from the minister, but I think, from the Director of DIAND to the Deputy Minister of Family Services, that indicates within a month they are going to cut off support to Status Indians in communities that they have traditionally supported for years and years. Unilateral, no consultation, no dialogue, and I think a very unfair and not terribly caring or considerate decision.

That has been the instance in both cases around South Indian Lake and around Granville. As a result of the letter from the federal government, I wrote immediately, in both instances, to the Minister of Indian Affairs, federally, indicating that kind of unilateral decision, without any dialogue, was unfair and unjust.

We have always maintained, and we still maintain, that the federal government has a special financial responsibility to Status Indians, a responsibility that they have not lived up to in the last few years, not only in Manitoba but in other provinces.

I would venture to guess—and I know for a fact, that Saskatchewan is in very similar circumstance to us. The taxpayers of both Saskatchewan and Manitoba are being asked to pick up increasing amounts of support to Status Indians, without any commitment from the federal government as to what their role and responsibility is going to be in relationship to dismantling of Indian Affairs and turning over the power to govern to aboriginal peoples.

Anyway, yes, I have been involved. When you talk about consultation, I guess it is one way. I have corresponded with the federal minister asking for discussion and dialogue around this issue and for them to live up to their responsibilities. To date, I have not received an audience with the federal minister. I indicated in Question Period today that I have tried to get a meeting when I heard he was coming, just via the grapevine, to Winnipeg yesterday, and was not successful in getting a meeting. He has indicated that he will meet. We have had discussions at the officials level with MKO and the federal bureaucracy to try to deal with this issue and come to a fair resolution, but I am rather disappointed that the federal minister is reacting in the manner that he is reacting.

We also raised this issue when my colleague the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Praznik) and myself hosted ministers from across the western provinces dealing with Family Services issues and Native Affairs issues, and we did a joint letter off to the federal Minister of Human Resources and of Indian Affairs indicating that we all had specific concerns, especially around the new funding that is being provided to provinces—a complete lack of consideration for the unique or special needs in some of the western provinces, specifically Manitoba and Saskatchewan with our high concentrations of aboriginal population.

We have the two highest percentages of aboriginal population per capita across the country. There has always been a special federal commitment which they have been offloading and continue to offload. Then with reductions in transfers and sort of an abandoned social safety net reform, which we believe should have taken into consideration the unique circumstances in our two provinces, received support and a letter did go off to the federal ministers. I guess we just received a letter back yesterday that indicates that the federal ministers may be prepared to meet with western ministers in September.

* (1720)

So, extremely frustrated, extremely disappointed, and I guess for the federal government the bottom line is finances, and it does not look like they have put a lot of thought, as I said earlier, into services for people.

Mr. Martindale: Can the minister tell us who is currently taking responsibility for people in these two communities for welfare needs?

Mrs. Mitchelson: The federal government.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Item 2. Income Security and Regional Operations (a) Central Directorate (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$1,273,200—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$592,400—pass.

2. Income Security and Regional Operations (b) Income Maintenance Programs (1) Social Allowances \$225,124,700.

Mr. Martindale: I have another question about Income Security. I was informed by someone who was in a supervisory capacity in a training program that some of his trainees were cut off social assistance because they took the training program without telling their worker. Is it possible that that could happen?

Mrs. Mitchelson: If that information and some detail could be shared with me, I would investigate that immediately.

Mr. Martindale: Thank you. I see the department is projecting an increase in municipal assistance and a decrease in provincial assistance. Could the minister tell us why?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Chairperson, we have seen a decreasing enrolment in the provincial caseload and that continues.

On the municipal side, although the caseload was down from the previous year, we had to spend more money last year because we did not quite predict correctly from the year before, so although there is a decline in the caseload, there is more money because we had to make up for a shortfall from the previous year. Does that make sense?

Mr. Martindale: Yes.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Item 2. Income Security and Regional Operations (b) Income Maintenance Programs (1) Social Allowances \$225,124,700—pass;

2.(b)(2) Health Services \$14,259,900—pass; 2.(b)(3) Municipal Assistance \$108,195,500—pass; (4) Income Assistance for the Disabled \$9,100,000—pass.

2.(c) Making Welfare Work \$3,600,000.

Mr. Martindale: Mr. Chairperson, I see there is a decrease of \$300,000 in Income Assistance for the Disabled. Could the minister explain that, please?

Mrs. Mitchelson: I guess we have not seen an increase in the caseload that was predicted.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Item 2.(c) Making Welfare Work \$3,600,000—pass.

Item 2.(d) Income Supplement Programs (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$741,000.

Mr. Martindale: I would like to go back to 2.(c).

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Is it the will of the committee to return to 2.(c)? [agreed].

Mr. Martindale: The program I guess I am interested in is Taking Charge! although I see there is a number of programs here. I presume very little money, if any, was spent on Taking Charge! in '94-95.

Mrs. Mitchelson: That is correct. Very little was spent.

Mr. Martindale: How much of this appropriation is for Taking Charge! in '95-96?

Mrs. Mitchelson: In our budget for Taking Charge! there is \$2.6 million, and there is also money in the Department of Education under Making Welfare Work for Taking Charge!.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Item 2.(d) Income Supplement Programs (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$741,000—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$443,500—pass; (3) Financial Assistance \$13,632,700.

Mr. Martindale: That is the total? All financial assistance, okay. Pass it.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Item 2.(d)(3) Financial Assistance \$13,632,700—pass.

Item 2.(e) Regional Operations (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$22,583,500—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$5,306,600—pass.

Resolution 9.2: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$404,853,000 for Family Services, Income Security and Regional Operations for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March 1996.

Item 3. Rehabilitation, Community Living and Day Care (a) Administration (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$641,300.

Mr. Martindale: I think now we will get into questions about the Vulnerable Persons Commissioner's Office. I see the details on the next page, but we might as well start right now. Can the minister tell me when she plans to proclaim the act?

Mrs. Mitchelson: We have indicated that we were looking to proclaim the act this spring. Unfortunately, not everything is in place that is needed to proclaim the legislation at this point. We are working. There is a lot of work that has been done in the department, in the community. I guess the next step is to get the commissioner in place, and we are in the process of determining who might fill that position. Once that happens, we also have to set up the appeal panels that will review all the appeals that come forward and orient those people to their roles and responsibilities as part of the appeal process.

Those are two steps that have to be completed before the act is proclaimed. I hate to be giving a bait because I did say spring of this year, and we are not ready yet. As I have indicated in the past, it is leading-edge legislation that is not anywhere else in the country, and we want to take all of the steps that are needed to ensure that when it is proclaimed we can put it into place and have something that we can be proud of.

Mr. Martindale: Can the minister tell us when the Vulnerable Persons Commissioner will be hired?

* (1730)

Mrs. Mitchelson: Very soon.

Mr. Martindale: Very soon sounds like a day or two.

Mrs. Mitchelson: No comment.

Mr. Martindale: What has taken so long? It is almost two years since the bill was approved unanimously in the Legislature. Why has it taken so long to hire a Vulnerable Persons Commissioner?

Mrs. Mitchelson: I cannot speak for the time before I became the Minister of Family Services and the steps that were taken. I do know that since I have been in the portfolio, it took me a little bit of time to get up to speed on what the legislation really involved and what steps were necessary. Probably if there had been the same minister that had continued through, you might have seen a little faster process.

I have to accept some responsibility for a bit of the delay, but I wanted to assure myself that I had an understanding of all the issues and was on top of the situation and new what was going on before I proceeded too quickly. I will accept some of the responsibility for a bit of the delay, although, while it has taken me some time, I think there has been a lot of activity ongoing within the department and all the implementation subcommittees that have been working to get a process in place.

Mr. Martindale: It is good to see the minister accepting some responsibility. That is almost refreshing. Of course, that is normal anyway in this parliamentary democracy. The minister is responsible for everything whether it is her fault or not, so it is good to see this minister acknowledging that.

I would like to ask some questions in the whole area of vulnerable persons, beginning with, would the minister be interested in appointing a committee to look at moving more people out of institutions and into the community and, similarly, would the minister establish a planning process to reduce the number of people living in institutions?

Mrs. Mitchelson: I have had many meetings with many community members around the issues surrounding vulnerable persons, and we have talked institution versus community. I have been out to MDC to tour the facility and meet with staff out there. I have been to St. Amant Centre, which provides services to children. I have become convinced, and I think it has been our policy, and I certainly would not recommend a change of that policy or direction, that we need to have a broad range of services available for people with mental disabilities.

I think there is a place for St. Amant Centre and I think there is a place at this point in time for the Manitoba Developmental Centre, although the numbers are getting fewer and fewer. I think with the new legislation that will be proclaimed, there will not be anyone going into an institution without the commissioner or an appeal panel making that determination.

I think as time goes by we will see more community support and activity. I know that is the route to go if we possibly can to try to keep people in the community. I think the legislation will put some checks and balances into that whole process, so we may see places like MDC into the future, just through the natural process, scaling down to a point where it might not be that necessary.

I think a broad range of services needs to be available and I am not prepared to push any further than what might take place under the new legislation and the review of all cases that are presently in institutions.

Mr. Martindale: I have some similar questions to follow up on this theme. I would like to ask the minister if she agrees that all persons living with a mental disability have the right to live in the community with appropriate supports.

Mrs. Mitchelson: I believe that what we have to do is look very carefully ensuring that we can try to put in place the programs and the supports so that people can live in the community. I think I have indicated in my comments, in any speaking I have done in the Legislature, that this is the one area within my department that I have a feeling that these are the most

vulnerable Manitobans who, through no fault of their own in any way, are in circumstances and situations where they need our support and our resources. I wish I had enough resources today to ensure that every person could have everything they needed to live in the community in a very real way.

Unfortunately, in the kinds of times we are living through right now, I have tried to put every extra dollar available into supports for community living. I think in last year's budget we had about \$4.5 million and in this year's budget around \$2 million, and those extra resources were all put into support in the community for those people that need that support. Unfortunately, it does not answer all of the issues. It does not address all of the issues and all of the people that do need help. I have indicated clearly, and I know that my department understands, that wherever possible if there is additional available resources, this is one area that I want to see be given very high priority.

Mr. Martindale: Does the minister support a zero-admissions policy to institutions for children and adults so that we can reduce our reliance on institutions and instead provide resources in the community?

Mrs. Mitchelson: I would say no to that question. The short answer would be no. I think that the process that will be put in place under the legislation that will allow for the commissioner to review, there will not be anyone that will go into an institution without that review taking place. The total discussion around, you know, is the community a better option, and if so, how do we make that happen, that discussion will take place.

There will be appeal panels that will be set up to hear those kinds of cases as they come forward, so I would say that I believe that process will address the issue, and I think that the reality is we are going to see less people going into institutions. There will be more people living in the community. I am thoroughly convinced.

I think we have started to develop the programs, and we also see parents and families and communities looking to building community residences and providing support for those that are going to need

support all of their lives. I mean, we are seeing it happen, and I think that there is community acceptance, more so today than there ever has been, for complete integration and community living, and I am very supportive.

I do have to caution, though, that a lot of the services that may need to be put in place are going to be put in place over a period of time as resources become available. So the short answer was no, but I honestly believe that we are going to see many more people living in the community, and we are already seeing less people going into institutions.

Mr. Martindale: Could the minister tell me if she is in favour of enhancing the role and status of families as primary caregivers to children with a mental handicap? I think one of the ways of doing this would be for family-managed respite care. You know, we now have individual-managed respite care for adults. Would the minister be willing to encourage or allow family-managed respite care where families would hire their own help?

Mrs. Mitchelson: We are doing both right now, and I am supportive.

Mr. Martindale: Is the minister in favour of providing funds for training for families?

Mrs. Mitchelson: It is my understanding that child development specialists do come in and do some training with family and parents, and that there is some support available through children's special services for that, especially with medically fragile children.

* (1740)

Mr. Martindale: Does the minister favour working towards and stabilizing or even expanding current employment programs for vulnerable persons throughout Manitoba?

Mrs. Mitchelson: I think we are working pretty proactively in that area, and we are putting in place resources to look at supportive employment so that there are meaningful job opportunities for those with

disabilities and working with the community. So we are moving in that direction.

Mr. Martindale: The minister keeps anticipating my questions which is good, I guess. The next question is, will you work towards reducing reliance on sheltered workshops?

An example of what the minister and I are both talking about is an organization like Sturgeon Creek Enterprises. I went to their annual meeting a couple of years ago, and I was very impressed with their success in placing people in ordinary work situations and also the success of the employees in these work situations, who were found to be very reliable and enjoyed the work and were actually very good employees.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Sturgeon Creek Enterprises does a great job. I am very impressed with what they are able to do. I would venture to guess, though, there is a need for both.

Mr. Martindale: But if you are in favour of increasing employment opportunities and decreasing reliance on sheltered workshops, how do you do that? I mean, do you reduce the funding for sheltered workshops?

Mrs. Mitchelson: We have not done that to date. I think we have tried to find resources where we could to enhance services and look at support of employment. It is a balance, and it is trying to find resources and manage those resources to the best of our ability and to maximize the programs we can provide.

Mr. Martindale: Are there employment opportunities within the civil service, and also are there employment opportunities in the private sector that your government or department would be willing to support through wage subsidies?

Mrs. Mitchelson: There are opportunities, and we try to support them as much as we possibly can. I do know in the assistant deputy minister's office we have managed to support an employee, one individual that I think is working very well. But there are other opportunities also besides that one.

Mr. Martindale: Mr. Chairperson, I have in front of me a press release from November 5, 1992, announcing the pilot project to assist Manitobans with disabilities. I asked some questions about this last year in Estimates, and one of the things that I found out was that the pilot project numbers were reduced from 25 individuals to 10 individuals. I wonder if the minister could bring me up to date briefly on how this pilot project is going, if it is still going, and what you have learned from it.

Mrs. Mitchelson: The pilot program, I think, is working very well, and we are getting feedback from right across the country about how innovative and what a good program it is. We have increased from 10 to 15. I know the original program was supposed to be 25. We started at 10, and we have been able to increase to 15 so far. We will continue, as resources are available, to try to get those numbers up, but we will be evaluating as the project continues. All indications are that it is pretty successful, and it is working fairly well.

Mr. Martindale: Mr. Chairperson, I have had correspondence from two ACL organizations, and one of them indicated that their grant or per diem funding, whichever it is, was not nearly adequate to cover their expenses. They itemized their expenses, which were things such as utilities, repairs and maintenance, furnishings and appliances, taxes, insurance, transportation, accounting and legal, and a very small amount for staff training, in this instance. The difference between the government funding and their actual costs, in the case of one group home, was \$11,000; in the case of another group home, was \$2,000.

Since I do not think there has been any funding increases since 1993, when I received this correspondence, I am wondering how these ACL group homes manage to get by. Are they having bake sales and doing their own fundraising to make up the shortfall in their budget, and why does this government expect them to do that?

Mrs. Mitchelson: I give any organization, community organization, credit for being innovative and creative and doing fundraising, and I do not think that is a bad thing necessarily. But I understand the original

question and also know too that everyone is being asked to manage through very difficult times to the best of their abilities with the resources that are there.

I guess the question for us is, do we want to expand and provide some service to more people, or do we want to—we have tried to the best of our ability, when resources become available, to put more money into the community living side so that more people could be served in the community with additional programming. The reality is that we have expected people to manage within the resources that are allocated; I know that sometimes it is very difficult to do. I do not have an easy answer, but I cannot guarantee or commit more resources at this point in time either.

Mr. Martindale: Well, I would agree with the minister that it is good for people in the community to fund raise, but I think in the case of the Association for Community Living branches there is a difference between them and other nongovernment organizations or voluntary organizations or charitable organizations. One of the differences is that in many charitable organizations people come and go. You recruit volunteers; you lose volunteers; you replace volunteers. In the case of ACL group homes, many of the volunteers are parents, and they are volunteering for 5, 10, 15, 20 years. I think there is a tendency for people to get very tired of having to do fundraising year in and year out to help their children in group homes. Could the minister comment on that?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Chairperson, I certainly sympathize with the people that make a commitment to a family member that needs support. There is no easy answer, no quick fix.

I guess in my travels, in my visits in the community to group homes and to community activities that are providing supports for those with mental disabilities in our community, I know the work that families put in and the time commitment that is involved. I also know of others that might be a circle of support or friends to some of those families that commit and dedicate their time and energies too. I do not have an easy answer or a solution. I just know we have provided the resources that we are able to provide. There are no easy answers. I know it is not an easy issue to deal with.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Item 3. Rehabilitation, Community Living and Day Care (a) Administration (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$641,300—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$230,700—pass.

3.(b) Vulnerable Persons Commissioner's Office (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$208,700—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$257,000—pass.

3.(c) Community Living and Vocational Rehabilitation Programs (1) Adult Services (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$1,316,900—pass; (b) Other Expenditures \$336,100.

* (1750)

Mr. Martindale: Mr. Chairperson, I just need to ask the minister a question in terms of process.

I do not think I am going to be able to ask questions on External Agencies today, so is it okay if we do that tomorrow morning?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Sure.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Item 3.(c)(1)(b) \$336,100—pass; (c) Financial Assistance and External Agencies \$43,803,700—pass.

3.(c)(2) Children's Special Services (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$247,200—pass; (b) Other Expenditures \$83,300—pass; (c) Financial Assistance and External Agencies \$21,319,300—pass.

3.(d) Manitoba Developmental Centre (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$22,801,000—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$2,831,300—pass.

3.(e) Child Day Care (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$2,065,200.

Mr. Martindale: Mr. Chairperson, of course, I have questions on Child Day Care.

I have a very interesting newspaper clipping with me from the Winnipeg Free Press dated Friday, April 7, 1995. It says: Tories flunk out of day care. Restraint message gets thumbs down at campaign forum.

I am sure the minister will remember this well, because we were both at this event. The event was the annual meeting of the Manitoba Child Care Association. Many of their members were there. One of the more interesting things that they did was they had a ballot, rather appropriate to have during an election campaign. They asked people to rate the leaders. Only one party had a leader there. To their credit, this party had their minister there. One party had neither a leader—well, one party had a critic there on the panel. When the ballots were totalled up, the result was that this minister's party finished last, I believe, although I have to give her credit for honesty because she said there is no more money.

I would like to ask the minister, I guess I have a lot of questions on day care because there are a lot of concerns and a lot of problems, and many of the problems result from decisions that were taken in the past. In fact, most of these decisions were taken before this minister became the minister of this department. One of the problems is that we no longer have spaces, but we have cases. We have a cap. It was \$9,600. I guess my first question is, has the minister increased the number of cases by 300?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Chairperson, yes, the number has been increased by 300 cases, and that was based on an evaluation and an appeal to centres to see whether there was a need for increased cases. If there were, we tried to look at those on an individual centre-by-centre basis and provide them where appropriate.

I just wanted to make a couple of comments on the newspaper article, and I guess it is not the first time a Conservative government has gone into a forum with the Child Care Association which, I might say, is not unlike the Manitoba Nurses' Union or the teachers' union. It is the union for the child care workers. It is not the first time that a Conservative candidate or minister has gone into a forum and under that circumstance not knowing that it is not going to be a terribly friendly crowd.

I went in with the full expectation to that forum that I would not be the most popular person, but I also went into that forum knowing what the reality was, having been in government several years and in the

Department of Family Services, understanding and knowing that there is no more money. For me to go in and make all kinds of wild promises in the midst of an election campaign knowing full well that they would not be promises that could be fulfilled or kept no matter what government of what political stripe was elected would have been very difficult for me to do.

I just want my honourable friend to know that I did go back the next morning to sign the proclamation and bring greetings on behalf of government. My opening comments were, you know, back by popular demand. Reality was that I brought greetings and left. I had committed to it before the campaign, and I was not going to renege on that commitment. I know there are a lot of people who are working in the child care community that really do want to see change and do want to see new things happen.

Although the association and some of the leadership as a union for child care workers are certainly not terribly sympathetic to our government, I believe that there is real opportunity to work with the child care community to look at innovative and creative new ways of delivering flexible, affordable and quality child care to Manitobans who need that.

So I am prepared to work very co-operatively and very diligently with the child care community to ensure that within the resources that are available we find some creative solutions for some of the problems that exist.

Mr. Martindale: Since the minister wanted to go back to the newspaper article, I would like to point out that the member for Concordia (Mr. Doer) and the New Democratic Party were rated first in the ballot by child care workers. I think that is a recognition of the fact that we built up the best child care system in North America during our term of the Pawley NDP government and also that our policies that we announced at the child care forum were also the most progressive. All our policy announcements were costed, and we had identified, I think, \$108 million of Conservative government priorities like Workforce 2000 that we would cancel in order to pay for the \$108 million of promises that we made including in the area of child care.

I object to the minister making the analogy that child care workers have a union. First of all, very few of them are unionized. They do not have nearly the clout that nurses and teachers have and their salaries are woefully inadequate compared to those of teachers and nurses. I think that the Manitoba Child Care Association and its members are going to be shocked by the analogy that this minister is using. One of their biggest areas of contention is the need for worthy wages or the inadequate wages that they have now. So I am disappointed that this minister would make that analogy.

Mrs. Mitchelson: I cannot let that comment go by without putting something on the record.

The approach that the Child Care Association took during the election campaign was the approach that the teachers' union and the nurses' union took. They put out a paper, a brochure to their membership and to the community that used the same tactics that the general public dismissed as not valid as the teachers' union and the nurses' union.

The facts are the facts. That does not mean to say that there are not many in the child care community, almost all of those that are providing support to children in the community, who certainly have the best interests of children at heart. I take some exception to, you know, an association that, as the teachers' union and the nurses' union and the Child Care Association, and I will lump them in together and the same in their approach to supporting a political party.

It was clear and it was evident, but that does not mean to say that I am not going to work very co-operatively to try to ensure that child care for parents in the province of Manitoba, with those that are proving the child care, working alongside of government to ensure that we create the opportunity and the options and the new ways of delivering child care that will meet the needs of more Manitobans will not be looked at.

I am committed to ensuring that we have affordable, accessible, flexible and quality child care, contrary to what my honourable friend might say or to what the leadership in the Child Care Association might say.

I am committed and I will work with them and with absolutely everyone in the child care community that wants to work with us to ensure that we have a better system into the future.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Order, please. The hour being 6 p.m., committee rise.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Mr. Assistant Deputy Chairperson (Gerry McAlpine): Order, please. Will the Committee of Supply please come to order.

This afternoon this section of the Committee of Supply, meeting in Room 255, will resume consideration of the Estimates of the Department of Education and Training. When the committee last sat, it had been considering item 16.2(g) Student Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits on page 39 of the Estimates book.

Item 16.2 School Programs (g) Student Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$1,896,300—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$735,700—pass.

Item 16.2 School Programs (h) Manitoba School for the Deaf (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$2,663,600—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$331,100—pass.

Resolution 16.2: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$20,448,800 for Education and Training, School Programs, \$20,448,800, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1996.

Item 16.3 Bureau de l'éducation française (a) Division Administration (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$129,900.

If I may beg the indulgence of the committee, the minister would like to table some items for the benefit of the committee.

Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Education and Training): The following information had been requested, and we now have it for tabling. It is two

items. One is the regional breakdown of ISP students, and the other is an item on teacher librarians. I have these available here for tabling.

Mr. Assistant Deputy Chairperson: I thank the honourable minister for this submission. The Clerk will enter and distribute to the committee.

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): I do not have many questions on this line, but I am interested in enrollments in the immersion programs and the français school division, really enrollment trends as much as anything.

Mrs. McIntosh: We have at the current time 4,270 pupils in the new Francophone division. We have 1,400 students in other divisions in the français program. In French Immersion we have 19,354 students in 104 schools in 25 school divisions. In the French first language we have 5,600 students.

In terms of stability, the Francophone division is new, so it is obviously a growth. The French Immersion is reasonably stable, I think a very slight decline but for all intents and purposes stable. The French first language is stable.

Ms. Friesen: I wanted to ask about federal funds and whether the minister had experienced any changes in federal funds in the past year and what the next fiscal year looks like in terms of federal funds. Has there been any change, any notice of change, any anticipated changes?

Mrs. McIntosh: The trend is showing that in the infrastructure, you will see, in terms of Canada's historical contribution to the financing of the official languages in education program, in Manitoba the trend is down, ranging from—in 1990, for example, we were getting \$6,330,000.

We are now receiving in the '95-96 year \$4,500 with a projection—I mean \$4 million, I beg your pardon, pardon me, that is not quite that a reduction, but trimmed down to \$4,500,000, and a further indication that for '96-97 it will be dropping to around \$3,800,000, so that is definitely declining fairly substantially.

Under the minimum guarantee it is relatively stable. Again using 1990 as a base, we see it going from \$2,534,000 down to \$2,200,000 projected for '96-97.

* (1450)

Supplementary funds have remained reasonably stable for the last four or five years. In 1990, it was at \$1,162,000; in 1992, it dropped to \$550,000, which is quite a drop, but it has remained at \$550,000 in supplementary funds since that time. It is projected to stay at that amount through to '96-97, so those are the trends we see in those categories.

Ms. Friesen: I am not very familiar at all with the format and accounting of this program. I understand from what the minister said, there are three types of funds which come from the federal government. The first one where the largest declines were, could the minister tell me what the purpose of that aspect of the funding is, and what accounts for that decline?

Mrs. McIntosh: Mr. Chairman, in terms of the infrastructure category, you will find out of that category such as grants to school divisions, grants to private schools, the University Grants Commission, the grant to École technique et professionnelle, Bureau de l'éducation française.

An Honourable Member: Très bien.

Mrs. McIntosh: Merci beaucoup.

An Honourable Member: Ça te vient pas pire.

Mrs. McIntosh: Oh, merci. Danke schön. Okay.

Those are the areas that are funded or receive federal funding from—

An Honourable Member: From the bad Liberals, is that—

Mrs. McIntosh: I do not even dare comment on that, Monsieur Gaudry.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Chair, what has been the impact on provincial programs of that decline in the infrastructure

area. Has the government prepared any evaluation reports? Are there any sort of benchmarks that we could look at?

Mrs. McIntosh: I think the short answer to the question is that we have been able so far to maintain the funding levels for basic support and for the bureau.

Ms. Friesen: Has there been a formal evaluation prepared of the impact of federal funding?

Mrs. McIntosh: If you could just give us a sense of what you mean by formal, because I can indicate that the staff has taken a look at what kind of impacts they think we might experience. I am not quite sure what you mean by formal. I do not think we have done anything for public—

Ms. Friesen: Yes, I was looking for something that was available to the public. Here we have a long-term trend. Had the department, for example, in order to meet with a particular group or to talk to parents in the new division, prepared something for parents that might be available more generally?

Mrs. McIntosh: Mr. Chairman, there is a protocol that is in place. It is a five-year protocol, and it was up two years ago. At the end of the five-year protocol, Canada and Manitoba would sit down and sort of negotiate new circumstances. That is still ongoing.

In the meantime, what the staff have done is they have prepared internally some sense of direction that we need to be moving toward in light of the trends. It has not been prepared for public presentation because they are still having this internal negotiation, interjurisdictional negotiation, continue. What we are doing to make sure that we are able to maintain the levels is that we are simply doing what we are doing with so much of Education, Health and Family Services. We are just bringing in money from other areas in terms of general revenue, and we are making sure that the program can still be maintained.

Just one important point to note on those negotiations; they are bilateral, not collective. So you will get a one-on-one, so to speak, as opposed a federal jurisdiction with a 10-member entity. It is bilateral.

* (1500)

Ms. Friesen: While those negotiations have been going on, there is obviously a continuing drop. Is there a formula for that? How is that decided upon?

Mrs. McIntosh: I am advised that Canada can just do that arbitrarily, and they do that. So they have cut their funding, and we have been, as we are in so many other areas, picking it up to ensure that programs that are deemed to be important continue. I do not know where we will be at the end of the negotiating, but, in the meantime, they can arbitrarily vary the amount that they present to us for our use, and they have.

Ms. Friesen: How would I track this in the Estimates booklet? Where would I find the amount recoverable from Canada? How do I find or how does the department demonstrate the amount that it has picked up?

Mr. Chair, there is probably a gap in Hansard there, or logical gap anyway, while I was looking for page 40 of the general Estimates book, which is where it is.

Mr. Assistant Deputy Chairperson: 16.3 Bureau de l'éducation française (a) Division Administration (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$129,900—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$24,300—pass.

3.(b) Curriculum Development and Implementation
(1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$859,800.

Ms. Friesen: I was interested in the phys ed curriculum here. I understand that one of the people who is developing the new phys ed curriculum is developing it in French. Particularly, I had forgotten to ask earlier, there was quite a thorough evaluation of immersion students, a comparison of immersion and English-speaking students at the Grades 4 and 11 levels in physical education. The last time that I asked about this in Estimates, there was no evaluation report ready. The actual numbers had been published, and they did show significant differences between the two groups of students.

So I would like to ask about the phys ed curriculum that is being developed here. Is it addressing some of

the evaluation points that were made? Is that evaluation available yet?

Mrs. McIntosh: I understand that a report involving the evaluation of all programs such as you indicate will soon be before me, may, in fact, be there now and I have not just yet gone through it. The review will take all of those points into consideration. I look forward to perusing it and to examining its contents. It has been addressed, and it is in the process of being presented to me for my information and approval.

Ms. Friesen: In the new curriculum that the minister is anticipating, could she give us some idea of the relationship between the health curriculum and the phys ed curriculum? There have been concerns expressed to us about the loss of activity time. I think it has been raised in Question Period as well. I wondered if the minister wanted to add more to the responses that were made then.

What I think people are concerned about is that the health curriculum seems to be being lost at the moment —sorry the other way around in fact. The activity time is being reduced in order to accommodate the health aspect of the curriculum. I wondered what the minister's response to that was and how the curriculum development process was proceeding under the new type of organization.

Mrs. McIntosh: Mr. Chairman, this does not pertain directly to language of instruction, although certainly, whether the students receive their instruction in French or in English, they will still be looking at a new curricula. The proper response, I suppose, to the member would be to indicate that the same rules that apply to those who will be receiving their instruction in English would apply to those who will be receiving their instruction in French.

I note the concern that she has raised and assure her that we will do all we can in the curriculum development to ensure that the activity level is not ignored or compromised in any way as new curricula comes in.

The direct answer to the question is that the same rules that apply to the other schools will apply to these

schools, because it is not a language of instruction as much as it is a content.

* (1510)

Mr. Neil Gaudry (St. Boniface): Est-ce que je peux demander une question en français, s'il vous plaît? I am just joking.

I see you have had an increase of a staff year. It says your provision for the acceleration of education renewal initiatives. Can the minister explain?

Mrs. McIntosh: We have employed a person who will be developing the standards in français in French Immersion.

As you know, the curricula is being developed, and we are working with other provinces on curricula. Our standards, we wish to have prepared here for the français, and that person is being assigned to that particular task.

Mr. Gaudry: Will there be a report in regard to working with the other provinces that you have indicated?

Mrs. McIntosh: Oui.

Mr. Gaudry: Will it be available very shortly, or what is the time frame for the report to be available?

Mrs. McIntosh: En mars '96.

Mr. Gaudry: Merci beaucoup, Madame le ministre.

Mr. Assistant Deputy Chairperson: 3. Bureau de l'éducation française (b) Curriculum Development and Implementation (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$859,800-pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$154,600-pass.

3. (c) Educational Support Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$219,800-pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$64,700-pass.

3.(d) Official Languages Programs and Administrative Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$457,000.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Chair, this brings us back to the negotiation of the infrastructure agreement. Could the minister give us an update on that in the sense of how often does the group meet? Is there really negotiation taking place? Is it something that—well, I do not know what else to ask. What is happening over the last two years that no agreement has been reached?

Mrs. McIntosh: Mr. Chairman, it is a good question and there are, in fact, two parts to that negotiation. There is an overall agreement that is negotiated between Canada and CMEC, the ministers of Education. They meet two or three times a year to try and negotiate this particular overall agreement, and that is where there has been some tough slugging. It has been difficult.

The second part in terms of process has been much less difficult, even though the amounts have come down, but the second part of the negotiating process is that each province negotiates bilaterally their own appendix. So we will negotiate an appendix to that overall agreement that deals specifically with Manitoba, and that is bilateral, and I made reference to that before. That is a bilateral agreement between Canada and Manitoba.

The process for that one seems to be working all right. It is the overall one where there has been a struggle to come up with something that is acceptable.

Ms. Friesen: That overall one then involves all the provinces, so everybody is at the table then trying to negotiate an overall agreement.

Mrs. McIntosh: Yes, in terms of who is the ultimate authority. In the actual negotiating, it would be the executive of CMEC. It would not be all the ministers all of the time, but it is an executive given the delegated authority by the ministers, and they are working on trying to develop that or to get that agreement to where we would like it to be.

Ms. Friesen: Has Manitoba been represented on that executive over the past two years?

Mrs. McIntosh: We do not have anybody this year on the executive. We did last year. The Deputy Minister

for Education and Training for kindergarten to Senior 4 was on the executive last year, but this year, we do not have executive representation.

* (1520)

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Chair, I am puzzled by the difficulties of a federal government which I assumed had a strong commitment to French language education outside of Quebec. I am not even sure how to phrase the question.

Is there any policy shift that the minister senses that would account for these difficulties?

Mrs. McIntosh: Very definitely I think the member asks an excellent question because the federal government wants to reduce dollars for ongoing programs and maintenance funding and instead put forth money to seed projects. Essentially what they are saying is that they are going to be or want to be announcing new programs, but they are cutting us off funding the ones that we have. It is essentially using the seed analogy again, that they are quite wanting to make babies when they cannot afford to support the ones they already have in existence. We are saying, do not neglect the babies in existence.

I think ministers are understandably quite worried about that trend, because while it is great to have wonderful new programs announced with great fanfare in the press and all of the rest of it, if there is not any money to sustain the ones that are currently in existence and have a proven track record and have the acceptability of the population, they are more and more putting provinces in the position of having to do what I just described earlier which is to top up.

The provinces are not rolling in money right now with transfer cuts in Education and in Health and those essential areas. We feel that is where the focus of the funding should go is on strong maintenance for things that have stood some test and are serving a purpose. There is a difference. There is a change in direction and it is a worrisome one, and I think it is why, I have not been at the table myself, but I think it is why you are seeing a bit of a logjam there trying to get an overall agreement. The ministers are understandably

wanting to have assurances that existing programs will be maintained.

Mr. Assistant Deputy Chairperson: Item 3. Bureau de l'éducation française (d) Official Languages Programs and Administrative Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$457,000—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$257,500—pass; (3) Assistance \$486,000—pass.

16.3. Bureau de l'éducation française (e) Library and Materials Production (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$419,700—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$187,900—pass.

Resolution 16.3: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$3,261,200 for Education and Training, Bureau de l'éducation française \$3,261,200, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1996.

Item 16.4 Training and Advanced Education (a) Management Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$636,400.

Ms. Friesen: I recognize this is a management aspect of the department, but I am not sure I see another line to ask these questions on. I wanted to ask about The Vocational Schools Act. I have had an issue raised with me by a constituent who took at considerable expense as somebody who was on an extremely modest income and made really quite important sacrifices to take correspondence courses in a Natural Resources diploma program from a correspondence school. I am not sure which one it was, but it certainly was one that was—it may have been ICS, one which is—

An Honourable Member: Approved.

Ms. Friesen: That is the word. I was looking for the right word—that is "approved" by the department.

He understood that approval to mean that it was a career certification that would be acceptable, and when he came to apply to a branch of the Natural Resources department in Manitoba, he found that his qualifications were discounted or counted for very little as a result of that. He went to, as I say, enormous—the

family made sacrifices for him to do this and so he believes that there is—well, there is a problem here. He wanted to ensure that I raise this with the minister directly to see whether, in fact, there is a remedy, what the department actually means by "approved" and whether the minister believes that this is communicated in an appropriate way to people who are taking such courses.

(Mr. Mike Radcliffe, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair)

* (1530)

Mrs. McIntosh: I thank the member for raising the question because this is an area that I need to learn a bit more about. I could give a generic statement and then an indication on the specific instance.

The generic statement, to begin with, I should indicate that my understanding is these private vocational schools can work with certain aspects of industry to develop a program which they can then register with the department. It does not mean, however, that every place that the person applies upon graduation will want the particular aspects of whatever the course is. That is just a generic statement. In other words, I suppose, no guarantee that every employer who employs people with that type of training will want the specifics that course offers.

Having said that, with this particular situation, if you are able to provide more details—and I do not mean to say that you need to read them into the record if you are concerned about a person's confidentiality—I would appreciate that. There is a complaint procedure. If you are able to provide more details here or off the record later, we would follow up looking into that for that individual.

I am not able to say at the present time if the course that he took—because apparently there are quite a few listed under Natural Resources—was not acceptable to the place he applied for a specific reason. Maybe they were looking for a specific skill that was not inherent in that course, but maybe the qualifications he had might be suitable for another type of job in Natural Resources, I am not quite sure. We would be pleased

to look into it for the member and appreciate her raising that individual's concern.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Chair, I do not think there is an issue of confidentiality here. I think the constituent would appreciate what you have suggested. We have taken up the issue with the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Driedger). I thought there might be an opportunity for discussion here as well that could be helpful. I will certainly send some material on to the minister, and, if she could follow up on it.

One thing that occurred to me was, a number of years ago I think we did raise a number of questions about vocational education, and essentially the consumer information was provided to students who were looking at private vocational colleges, generally, not just correspondence schools. The department did produce a very useful leaflet subsequent to that of advice to consumers.

I know in the last year I have been contacted by a number of—well, in fact, two, I believe, private vocational schools who were essentially looking for business. It was a marketing plan on their part. They were contacting local residents. When I asked further for information certainly at least one of them enclosed that consumers guide in its information to me. I was very pleased to see that.

I wondered if in this case, with the correspondence schools, whether the minister might look at—one remedy might be to ensure that correspondence schools who were dealing with Manitoba students enclosed that particular leaflet of advice to consumers.

Mrs. McIntosh: I think that is a very good suggestion. I am not familiar with the booklet, but I will search it out and certainly take that as a suggestion.

I have it right in front of me now. The deputy has just handed it over.

This is the one I think you are meaning about private vocational schools, Be an informed consumer. I think you have made an excellent suggestion. I appreciate it, and I will certainly take it under serious consideration and discuss it with staff.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Chair, I do want to go on to discuss the Access Programs, but I think we will do it on the next line, if that is possible.

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Radcliffe): Item 16.4. Training and Advanced Education (a) Management Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$636,400 –pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$229,800–pass; (3) Advanced Education and Training Assistance \$1,766,500–pass.

4.(b) Access Programs \$6,498,200.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Chair, I think the minister knows of my interest and concern about this program, and I notice that the minister in the House has recently suggested that the number of students in Access Programs has increased.

I know that subsequent to that statement there have been newspaper reports that in fact Access student numbers have decreased and that there is a further anticipated decrease in the coming year.

I wonder if that is the minister's experience and if she has those numbers, the change in numbers from last year to this year.

Mrs. McIntosh: Mr. Chairman, the enrollments have gone up, as I stated in the House. My statement in the House was the correct one. I do not know the source of the newspaper article's information, but it was wrong. The enrollments in 1994 were 781 and in 1995-96, 850. It is a 9 percent increase. It is, on a percentage basis, a 9 percent increase.

* (1540)

Ms. Friesen: The newspaper report, I think, was in the downtown newspaper, which may be called Uptown, and the reporter was Tim Broadhead. I think he was quoting Sue Matusik at the University of Manitoba. I do not know if that is something the minister would like to follow up.

How many Access students in this coming year and in the past year will be students who used to be previously called nonfunded? How many are

remaining who are receiving funds not of their own bringing to the program?

Mrs. McIntosh: Mr. Chairman, I want to just take the opportunity to point out our ongoing distress over the federal government having sort of again left this province in the lurch in terms of the money available for programs such as Access. Having said that, it is a fact and a reality, and we did pick up the slack there for awhile.

At the present time, there are 850 students who receive funding of some sort or another in the program; 200 of those will be Access funded; 650 received their funding from other sources such as band councils if they are Status Indians on reserve, that type of thing. So they will either get money by other sources or through Access, and total funded students are 850, 200 of those being Access.

Ms. Friesen: My assumption is that that 200, that number will continue to decline as students who began in the program graduate. Is that the way that will happen?

Mrs. McIntosh: Mr. Chairman, the numbers for this year are actually up slightly, so you will see a slight increase this year, actually a fairly good increase if we really think about it, because we are going last year from 189 students up to 200 this year under the Access funding.

So you are seeing stabilization occurring and a 6 percent increase, so it is stabilizing, slightly increasing. We will be replacing each graduate with a new student. The stability has come to that point now that as a person graduates he will be replaced with a new student coming in the other end. So I think when the member refers to an ongoing decline that is not what we are seeing happen, and it is not what we are planning to happen. We are planning a stable, slightly increasing enrollment.

Ms. Friesen: When the minister says Access funding, are we referring there to that third level of bursary that students with particularly significant needs get? I understand now that every Access student must take a Canada Student Loan, then they are eligible for a

Manitoba Student Loan based on need, then there is a third level of a small bursary available. Is that what is meant by Access funding for those 200 students?

Mrs. McIntosh: Access students who still have an unmet need after the Canada Student Loan will have those needs met to whatever level. It could be \$20,000 if that is what they need. That is not repayable. They do not have to repay that. They would repay the Canada Student Loan of course, but they do not have to pay the money Manitoba gives them. It will depend on what they need. What they need is what they will get. The amounts are certainly high in terms of what they can receive if their need is high.

They do not have to take out a Manitoba loan. They just take out the Canada Student Loan and then whatever they need above that we provide, and they do not have to pay it back.

Ms. Friesen: And that is what is meant by those 200 students who receive Access funding?

Mrs. McIntosh: That is correct.

Ms. Friesen: What is the average amount those students receive, or what would be a typical amount? Up to \$20,000, for example, how many people are receiving \$20,000?

Mrs. McIntosh: Some interesting comparisons here in terms of the advantage given to Access students versus regular students. While they can receive any amount they require up to—there is no ceiling on it. It could be way more than \$20,000. The average, of course, is much lower. You see, the Access student, their loan average here would be \$4,800. The bursary we would provide as a gift on top of that is \$4,900. So the bursary on average is about \$100 more than the loan for a total of about \$9,700 they would have. Of the \$9,700 on average that they would receive, they would only have to pay back the Canada Student Loan portion which would be the \$4,800.

Regular students, on the other hand, taking out a loan, the average loan they would take out would be \$4,600. The average bursary they would get on top of that would be \$11 for a total of \$4,655. So you can

see, in terms of the advantage that Access students have over regular students, the advantage is in the neighbourhood of a \$4,890 advantage which is a pretty substantial advantage considering it does not have to be repaid at all to the taxpayers of Manitoba, to the people that provide it.

Those are the averages. As I say, there is no ceiling. I do not know what the lowest and highest rates would be for the Access students, but I do know there is no ceiling.

* (1550)

I can provide the member with some figures, actual people, real amounts. I will not read the names in because I do not have permission to use their names. In terms of the amounts that have been given out over and above—I say the average, as I point out to the member, was \$4,900 for the gift that we provide, but they have gone up as high as \$23,736 for one individual, \$21,072, \$19,276, \$18,575, \$17,838, and so on. We do have bursaries that we give out in those amounts there at the high range. We would, of course, then have some we give out that are much lower than the \$4,900. Obviously, if the average is \$4,900, there would be some less and some above, but just to indicate that there are indeed—when I say it could go up as high as \$20,000, I am not just plucking a figure out of the air. We have in fact had some go up higher than that.

Ms. Friesen: One of the concerns of Access students, particularly those who are taking both the loan and the bursary, is, sometimes but not always, that they are in 11-month programs, and that the approximately \$9,000 or \$10,000 that this comes to does not take account of an 11-month program where they are not able to take a summer to earn money, one of the assumptions, I think, which is made in the Canada Student Loan Program. I am sure the minister or the previous minister has encountered questions of this or appeals to the minister. I wonder what kind of response or what kind of flexibility there is in the system for this.

Mrs. McIntosh: Mr. Chairman, I have two points in response to that question. First of all, I should indicate just a general statement again that as regards regular students who are in a 34-week program, a regular

student in a 34-week program with a Canada Student Loan will incur a debt load of \$9,350. An Access student in a 48-week program will incur a debt load of \$7,920. So, even though it goes for longer weeks, they still have well over a \$2,000 advantage over a regular student who goes for the shorter year. I just want to emphasize, it is still the big advantage for the Access students over regular students. I think the fact that a regular student in a normal university year incurs a greater debt load by a substantial sum than an Access student in a 48-week year shows a significant advantage right there.

The other thing that we were told over a year ago—and we are still waiting to have it occur, and we are presuming that it will occur. Although with so many things the federal government is letting us down, we are hoping that they will not let us down on this one. They have promised to introduce a deferred bursary program, and they did that well over a year ago. Of course, that was something that we anticipated, and still anticipate, will be of assistance here for those students who are in the longer programs.

Ms. Friesen: I think the point that the students would make is that the regular students in that two-month period have an opportunity to be employed and to make some repayment on their debt as they are going along, rather than have it accumulate to the point where, when the interest starts to begin as they graduate, they feel very much the impact of that at graduation.

I wanted to ask the minister about the impact on Manitoba of that federal delay. For example, these large amounts of \$20,000, \$18,000, \$17,000 that the minister indicated, is Manitoba being required to pay out large amounts in those bursaries because the federal government is not deferring their bursary program or is not making the changes to their program as quickly as anticipated? Would that have any impact on what Manitoba would pay?

Mrs. McIntosh: No, because the federal program will forgive to the student the debt load that they have, and it does not really impact on the Manitoba government.

I just want to indicate that, while I appreciate that students might have the opportunity to work for a

couple of months this summer and start paying down their student loan, in my experience I have never known a student in my entire life who has worked in the summertime and used their summer earnings to pay down their student loan. If you know of anyone, I would be pleased to meet them.

What my experience is, Mr. Chairperson, is that most students that I am aware of use their summer to try to earn money to help offset the costs of the year to come. I have never known anyone to use the summer months between university years to pay down their student loan.

So my experience tells me that most students in regular programs do not begin to pay off their student loan till the conclusion of their program; and, while it may be short spans, say, maybe a four-year program that has 34 weeks in each year, they still would not be able to begin paying it off in most circumstances until after graduation. Then they have four years worth of debt to pay off, whereas the Access students would have only 11 months of debt to pay off. Granted, they have come consecutively not in two separate years. I just want to say in my experience that, although they maybe have the opportunity, I have never ever met anybody who has ever done it that way.

Ms. Friesen: I wanted to ask about Engineering Access at the University of Manitoba. I wonder if the minister has had any recent reports on the future of the Engineering Access program. It has had its difficulties. There have been years when it has been suspended. I think there was an intake of students last year. Can the minister tell us whether there is a long-term commitment, that is to graduate this next intake through Engineering Access?

* (1600)

Mrs. McIntosh: I am advised that that program should not change. Our funding commitment has remained. We are not reducing it in any way, and it may be that the university itself decides to have, like, one program facilitator or something for several programs as opposed to one for each or some other thing like that. Our commitment to the program remains unchanged, and we anticipate still seeing the same draw on the

population as currently is there. We do not expect to see any change because we have not changed our funding commitment to that.

Ms. Friesen: Could the minister tell us what the longer-range plan is for Engineering Access? The government's money I understand is still on the table. Students are still being accepted and are still graduating. Does the minister have an estimate of say over a five-year period from '93, five years on, how many students will have graduated in Engineering Access and how many students will be going through the program?

Essentially I am looking for the scale of the program and to ensure or to at least find out whether it is being maintained or not.

Mrs. McIntosh: Just to give an indication, for '95-96, which is this year coming up, we have an increase in enrollment of 13 percent from 98 to 125 students, so by anybody's stretch of the imagination that is not a decrease, it is a very substantial increase in Engineering Access.

I am just looking here now at the anticipation, the intake for '95-96 is at 12 and the enrollment is at 44, the graduates are expected to be at six. The year before the intake was 12, the enrollment was 40 and the graduates were three. What year did you say—you wanted to look ahead.

We are expecting the university to replace all graduates with new people, so we are saying as people graduate they should be replaced. Looking back, I think you asked to go back to '93-94, again, the intake was 12, the enrollment was 44 and the graduates were two. You can see stability. In fact, you can see stability and slight growth from '93-95. The figures in '93 and '95 are identical except for the number of graduates. In '95, six will be graduating, four more people than graduated in '93-94, so we expect to see that stability continue. We do not have projections, but I did indicate what we are expecting which would be a person graduates, a person is replaced. Kind of like a tree in a forest when you are harvesting trees.

Ms. Friesen: What does show here is an increase in retention rates and graduation rates. If the government stays very strictly to that graduation rate replacement intake, it may not result in the continuing growth of graduates.

Mrs. McIntosh: The member, of course, expresses a reality. We do not know of those who enter how many will stay till the end of the program. We are hoping and expecting that we will continue to see people being retained and graduating. It is impossible to predict, but she raises a valid point, and I hope that—I am sure we both hope that we will see the number of graduates being maintained or enhanced as time goes on.

Ms. Friesen: Of the 650 students who come with their own funding, could the minister indicate where that funding comes from? What proportion, for example, comes from band funds?

Mrs. McIntosh: Yes. I can indicate to the member that 45 percent of other source funding would be First Nations. The 26 percent would be what we call the CSL Access Bursary, which is us, provincial. Eight percent stay on social assistance, so there is eight percent who are social assistance recipients. There is 21 percent that comes from a wide variety of other sources which I do not have broken out in terms of the source, but 75 percent of them we can identify for you, over 75 percent, about three-quarters.

Ms. Friesen: I wanted to ask some questions about Access Programs in the community colleges.

Could the minister give us an idea of the numbers of Access funded programs, and I guess I am talking not just students here but also administrative funding at the three community colleges?

Mrs. McIntosh: We have the four colleges—well, the three colleges rather, Red River Community College, Community College Access Program North and South. It provides opportunities for a variety of college diploma and certificate programs to northerners and to rural residents, as well, and we have 125 for the '95-96 year.

Again, at Red River Community College, we have the Southern Nursing Program, and that provides training to southern residents to obtain a registered nurse diploma. We have 63 people in that.

At Keewatin Community College, we have the Northern Nursing Program, and, again, that provides northern residents the opportunity to obtain a registered nurse diploma. We have 55 people registered in that. Again at KCC, we have some certificate and diploma programs, and we have eight people in those. They are sort of a variety of things. It is not like the registered nurse; it is a variety of certificate diploma programs. Those are two community colleges that have been identified there.

Ms. Friesen: Could the minister give me a sense of the enrollment trends at the two community colleges which have Access students?

Mrs. McIntosh: We are anticipating stable enrollments because just as we indicated for universities, the same holds true for the colleges in that we are looking at a person graduating being replaced by a new entry at the beginning level.

Ms. Friesen: Has that, for example the 125 at Red River Community College, been stable for the last number of years? What have been the changes there over the last few years?

Mrs. McIntosh: Going back again to '93-94, we can see that at Red River Community College we had 44 students at the intake. We had 90 enrolled, and we had 12 graduating. In '94-95 we had 64 at the intake, 98 enrolled and 17 graduating. In '95-96, the year that we are about to enter, we have 74 at the intake and enrollment of 125 and graduates at 26. So you can see the trend is definitely on the increase in all three categories by a fairly significant percentage.

* (1610)

Ms. Friesen: Could the minister give me the same information for KCC?

Mrs. McIntosh: I can give them to the member both for Access, The Pas, and for the Northern Nursing

Program. Again, just going back to the '93-94 for the northern nursing, we had an intake of 20, enrollment of 57, graduates at 11; '94-95, intake of 19, enrollment at 55, graduates at 12; '95-96, intake of 20, enrollment at 55, graduates at 14. So the trend there shows that the intake and the enrollment fluctuate one or two people or remain stable, but the graduates are increasing each year.

At the Access, The Pas, again, '93-94—intake eight, enrollment 25, graduates 19; in '94-95—intake four, enrollment 29, graduates 12; in '95-96—intake 10, enrollment eight and graduates eight, so the trend in that one, you see, is that the intake has fluctuated from eight to four and up to 10. The enrollment has gone up and then down, and the number of graduates is decreasing.

Ms. Friesen: Could the minister tell us why there are no Access Programs at ACC? Have there been in the past, and there are not at the moment, or have there never been?

Mrs. McIntosh: I am advised that there never has been an Access Program there. The Northern Development Agreement was put in place some years back, as the member probably recalls, and that was to assist with those affected individuals either being trained for work in the North or for work in the south, but there never has been Access money put into that particular community college.

Ms. Friesen: Does the minister have any available statistics on the BUNTEP program at Brandon University, again the enrollment trends and the source of students?

Mrs. McIntosh: I should just indicate before I go on to the next answer that Assiniboine Community College has never requested an Access Program either, so it is not as if they have requested one and been denied. They have never indicated that they wanted one, so I will indicate now the other answer.

In terms of BUNTEP at Brandon University, again, going back a couple of years to '93-94, the intake then in '93-94, we had 16, enrollment, we had 109, graduates were six. In '94-95, intake was 97,

enrollment was 136, graduates were 31. In '95-96, we have intake at 25, enrollment at 158, and graduates at 20. So the trend there is that the intake went from 16, scooted way up to 97, back down to 25, which is more than the 16, but less than the 97. The enrollment, though, the retention, we have gone from 109 up to 158. Graduates are down by 11.

Mr. Chairman, staff has just indicated in terms of the trends in graduation, because of the nature of the BUNTEP program and the way in which it is structured, that you are not always able to have the graduating group reflect what might be a normal graduating pattern.

Ms. Friesen: One of the arguments the government used to change the funding of the Access Programs was the high rate of employment upon graduation of students. Many of the students at the time contested this and said that might have been true in the past but in the areas of education and social work in particular, where many of the students were in those programs, they felt their employment rate had not been nearly as high in the most immediate years and their employment prospects were not as good as they had been in those disciplines.

I wonder, is the minister continuing to track those graduates, and do they have numbers on employed graduates for the past year subsequent to those changes?

Mrs. McIntosh: Mr. Chairman, the Hikel report is the last sort of official report we received. I think that was last year that was given to us. It indicated that the students coming out of the Access Programs actually had a higher success rate in terms of obtaining jobs in those areas than regular grads do.

I have some statistics that might be of interest that could clarify some of this, because in the last three years a total of 90 percent of the Access graduates either found employment or continued their education and 9 percent would be unemployed. Of those employed, over 95 percent are in jobs related to their field of study. It is one of the reasons that we still feel it very important to try to keep the Access students coming into the program, because we see that while it

is an expensive program, and I grant you that, we have I think, by going to the part loan part bursary, been able to make it available to more people so that more people can access Access.

* (1620)

Given the statistics show what they show, we felt it was important to try to maintain the number of people who could enter this as opposed to being able to fund a smaller number at a higher level. We want to be able to fund a much larger number with the loan component, Canada Student Loan, and then the gifted bursary from the province.

That does, in fact, seem to indicate—because the numbers show growth and we know the success rate is good. I think those are really quite excellent statistics in terms of coming out of a program and being able to put all of those skills to use in a way that enables people to contribute and earn money to support themselves and their families. It is a good program.

Ms. Friesen: I think the Hikel report's last numbers available on employment were '93-94 and possibly even earlier than that. What I was asking was, has the government continued to track that postgraduation employment and/or further education, and what has been the result of that?

Mrs. McIntosh: We are always a bit behind in gathering that because the program reports will get filed with the government, but we do not get them till after the students have graduated. So we are always just a little behind. We will be getting the '93-94 ones very soon, but we did not have those, obviously, four months ago. So in that sense, yes, we are tracing them but always with a lag.

Ms. Friesen: The government has eliminated the Student Appeal Board, and we will come to that in a minute, but I wanted to know what happens to Access students who have difficulties or believe that an appeal is required? What recourse is open to them, and how many of these has the minister heard from?

Mrs. McIntosh: Mr. Chairman, just for clarification for the record. I think the member knows that the

appeal process that used to be in place was an appeal process that we can no longer administer because we cannot hear appeals on Canada Student Loans. Aside from the fact that the number of appeals had dropped by about 80 percent, there is also the very real factor that we have no authority to hear appeals on Canada Student Loans, so there was nothing we could do even with the few remaining people who were appealing because we could not hear appeals on another jurisdiction.

We do have an appeal process in place. Any Access student who has an appeal on anything the provincial authority is doing can appeal, and the information will be taken straight to the deputy minister. We have bent over backwards to be more than fair as far as Access students are concerned. If they have a complaint or a problem, they have the ability to appeal. What we do not have any more is a formalized structure for hearing appeals on the federal authority for two reasons. As I indicated, one, we are not able to hear appeals on a federal body and we do not have any authority to do that; two, those who were appealing that, the number of appeals had dropped dramatically by more than three-quarters. Those are the two reasons that went.

We still have the appeal, most definitely, for our Access students. We also have a Student Assistance Committee for all Access students made up of program directors of all the participating institutions. That is an asset for them as well.

Ms. Friesen: How are students made aware of this appeal process, which sounds like a very informal process, and how many appeals have there been in the past year?

Mrs. McIntosh: Mr. Chairman, the program directors all know that students can come forward with any kinds of concerns or complaints they have.

Just to give you an indication of the types of things we are doing, over and above the gift of money we are saying that we have had about five or six appeals—I am not sure of the exact number but it is in that ballpark. They, as a result of those appeals, have been granted extra money, for example, for books and supplies. For expensive disciplines such as dentistry where the books

and supplies would cost more than they might for another discipline, they have been granted extra money for those books and supplies. If they have some special transportation costs, they have been granted special transportation costs over and above the provincial nonrepayable bursary. Those are the types of things that come up.

The program directors are aware of these things. The students are informed. It is an informal process, in that they do not have to go through reams and reams of red tape and 16 different authorities and committees and all of those things. They can just go to their program director who passes it up through the department and the appeal is heard right at the senior level. As I say, people are bending over backwards to try to be more than fair and accommodate whatever they perceive to be some special circumstance that would warrant an appeal for more money over and above what they have been given. I do not have specific details on whether it is five or six or four or seven, but just to give you an indication.

* (1630)

Ms. Friesen: I think some of the students who felt they were caught unaware—as indeed they were by a change in direction of this program, the financing of it, who entered it under one set of criteria and then half way through were required to take loans—I think that group of students or that particular belief has been put together in a court case.

I wondered if that court case is still outstanding or whether there is a resolution on it. I am not asking the minister to discuss the content but really the timing of it.

Mrs. McIntosh: Apparently that court case is still pending, and a decision is expected within the next few months. Because it is pending I am sure the member appreciates I will not comment and run the risk of pre-empting or tainting the process in any way by a ministerial comment.

Ms. Friesen: I was not asking for that, just simply, what stage is it at? Have the hearings been held? Is it simply a matter now of waiting for the decision?

Mrs. McIntosh: Yes, and I appreciate that the member was not asking for more than that, and just an indication that we are currently waiting for—I think all of the arguments have been made and we are waiting for a judgment to be handed down.

Ms. Friesen: One of the other concerns that students in Access had in other years, and also the staff, was that the change in policy meant that there would be, they believed, a substantial change in the selection process of Access students, that when one of the requirements for acceptance into the program becomes bringing a portion of your own money or, in some cases, of 45 percent of them, I gather, bringing money from First Nations bands.

I think the argument there was that the selection was not being drawn upon as wide a group of students across northern Manitoba and elsewhere as had been possible before and that the constraint of bringing ones own funds limited the—maybe not limited the number, but limited the range of applicants to Access Programs.

I wonder if the minister has been meeting or talking to program directors while they are in the middle, or towards the end even, of their selection process now to look at some of those concerns that have been raised over the last couple of years.

Mrs. McIntosh: Mr. Chairman, I just want to indicate a couple of things. We never used to means test, so we had people who had zero need of money getting money when people who had need were not getting it. The non-Status aborigines and the Metis, for example, do not have band money, and in some cases, because the money was spread out and given to Status people who already had money and did not really need extra money, some of those non-Status and Metis people were not having the advantage of an Access Program.

Just to give you an example, in not means testing, we sort of made the assumption that everybody was poor, and if they applied for Access, they would be applying because they needed the money because they had no access to funds, yet, upon doing the means testing, discovered that some of those families had incomes around \$90,000 a year and were getting Access money. Some of the Metis people were not getting any ability

to be part of it because they had not made application before someone else.

So when we go to means testing, a \$90,000-a-year family would be seen as someone who maybe did have access to some funds, that they could maybe help pay for their own education and that the money that we have available could be used for people who do not have that kind of access. So I do not see the new system as denying opportunity but as rather opening up opportunity to those who really do need help and saying to those who have access to money, be it band money or whatever the source, you do have access to a sizable amount of money, perhaps far in excess of what most people in Manitoba would have, and we would ask that you use that so that we can have our Access money go to those who do not have another source into which they can tap. That way, then, we maximize the number of people who are able to become educated and contribute both to their own livelihood and future benefit but also to the benefit of the community and to those people with whom they live.

One of the things that is nice about some of these programs is that so many of the people do return to their home communities upon graduation or work in some area that benefits people who really can relate to those graduates. So I think what we are saying is that we look, first of all, for a general improvement in quality of education. We look for maximizing the number of people who can acquire post-secondary education. We look to fund those who are most in need. We ask those who have incomes, substantial incomes, to assume some responsibility for paying their own way.

We ask those who have the ability to repay a loan to repay that, but we still do provide bursaries over and above the Canada Student Loan for those in need, up to whatever amount it is that they need, be it \$5,000, \$10,000, \$15,000, \$20,000, \$25,000. If they need it, it is a gift. It does not have to be repaid over and above the student loan which does have to be repaid. We say, since the success rate in this program is what it is, a very successful program with 90 percent of the Access graduates finding employment and most of those in jobs related to their field of study, that they then would be in a position where they would have a salary which

would enable them to repay the student loan, as do all other people who take out student loans repay, to the people of Canada.

We advance on their salary, is how I always refer to it with students in my acquaintance. Do not complain about your loan. Never renege on your loan. Reneging on the loan, if you have income, is despicable. If you have a loan and you have a salary, think of the loan as an advance on your salary because, in a sense, that is really what it is. So I do not think we are penalizing band people if they are being sourced by the band. I think what we are doing instead is opening up opportunities for non-Status and Metis to have the same opportunities that the band people, in many cases, can afford.

* (1640)

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Chair, my question was not based on the assumption that we were shortchanging band people. The issue was really the accessibility for the Metis and non-Status students who do not have as wide a portion of funds, even including the Access funding that the minister is mentioning, as do First Nations people with band funds specifically earmarked for education. It was that loss that seemed to me to be the one of concern, that they were essentially drawing on a smaller pool of money than were the First Nations people.

What I was asking was: Has the minister met with program directors who were concerned about what they saw as a narrowing of the selection field? Has she met with or have her staff met with those program directors, as this year's selection process has been underway, to ensure the original purpose of the Access Program, that is, a wide selection field and a very intensive interview process, a consideration of the family as well as of the individual and the ensuring of that high success rate that the minister made reference to, that that is ensured because of very careful selection processes?

Those were some of the areas of criticism that were brought by a wide range of people at the time that the government changed direction on the funding of this program. I am wondering what monitoring has been

done, what assurances the government has that those conditions are still in place.

(Mr. Assistant Deputy Chairperson in the Chair)

Mrs. McIntosh: Mr. Chairman, the department works with the program directors on a fairly regular basis, and the department will continue the monitoring. The member is asking, do we monitor? They are looking at, with special interest, the status of the—I guess I am using words that are similar here but in different ways. I was going to say the status of the non-Status and Metis, the situation being faced by non-Status and Metis peoples, because we wish to see them being able to avail themselves of these opportunities.

That is why I indicated to the member earlier that we are trying to broaden the base so that we can get more people in. We are trying to, by going to the part-loan-part-bursary style, hoping to be able to provide ability for more people to take advantage of the program. We have told the program directors that the provincial-funded spots would be generally maintained for the '95-96 year back to the concept of having graduates and leavers being replaced, and we do maintain a liaison and a contact, most definitely, as to how the situation is unfolding.

Ms. Friesen: A similar question dealing with the target group of immigrant students, what resources are immigrant students able to have access to, other than the provincial funding? For example, are there funds for immigrant students to come to college or university that exist elsewhere in government programs, either federally or provincially? Are there particular means or voluntary funds programs that enable immigrant students to have access to university programs?

I am thinking, for example, of some of the immigrant programs that deal in the inner city, where they are assisting teachers and that sort of thing. Are any of those kinds of funds, the Gordon Fund [phonetic], for example, applicable to immigrant students at university—it seems to me one of the groups that would have the most difficulty in bringing their own money to a program.

* (1650)

Mrs. McIntosh: We do not provide provincial money for off-shore immigrants. By that, I mean we do not have any programs where someone, say, from Africa could write ahead of time and apply and opt into it.

What we do have, though, is for people who are already here, landed immigrants, people who have come here and said, we are going to live in Canada now and make it our home and become Canadian citizens. We have some special programs for those types of individuals, and we have them through the Winnipeg Education Centre, particularly in social work and education.

Through Culture, Heritage and Citizenship, we will have programs in English as a second language, the ESL programs. So funding is provided through some sources. I do not have the names right here, but we have a variety of sources for landed immigrants but not for overseas people who have not yet come.

Ms. Friesen: I understand the distinction. What I am looking at here is a target group in the Estimates of immigrant students. Now that the program has been changed to deal, for the most part, only with students in an Access Program who can bring their own funds, I am wondering how those immigrant students are bringing their own funds to this program?

Mrs. McIntosh: Mr. Chairman, the Winnipeg Education Centre is open to students in much the same way that high schools are open to students, so they do not have to pay to go to the Winnipeg Education Centre. For those who are landed immigrants, they are, I am advised, able to apply for a Canada Student Loan, and they have the same ability to acquire. They are not excluded from being granted a Canada Student Loan. If they are landed immigrants, they are eligible to apply for a Canada Student Loan. One would not require obtaining funding for those programs at the Winnipeg Education Centre, and the others who are landed immigrants are able to apply for a Canada Student Loan.

I have just been handed a note here, and I am believing it says 8 percent—[interjection] That is okay; I just want to make sure—of the Access students are immigrants—just a piece of information for you.

Ms. Friesen: I wondered, in the first part of the minister's response, whether there might not be a confusion, for the record, of the Winnipeg Education Centre. The minister said that it was free. I think the Winnipeg Education Centre that does the social work and education programs in the Access Programs incorporates the same university fees as elsewhere. Maybe the minister was referring to another Winnipeg Education Centre, run by Winnipeg No. 1 School Division, where fees are not charged to residents of Winnipeg?

Mrs. McIntosh: Apologies to the member because what she is saying is absolutely correct. The immigrant students, in terms of if they are regular Access students, would receive and not have to pay back any of the provincial bursary money. That is nonrepayable. In that sense, it is free money, so to speak, but the Canada Student Loan would still be there as a first obligation, and she is correct in that because the free part comes after the Canada Student Loan has been applied for.

Ms. Friesen: I wanted to ask a question that is not directly an Access question. It relates to the kind of conditions that Access in the past faced, and that is the graduation rate in northern high schools, both band schools and across the North.

One of the difficulties of, say, the generation who is now in their twenties was that so many were not able to complete school in their own communities, and for some of them, it was not even possible to move to regional communities. Has the minister or does the department in any way track the changes in that if indeed there are changes? Are there an increasing number of northern Manitobans graduating from high school? If so, what is the rate of change?

Mrs. McIntosh: Mr. Chairman, the universities do tracking on high school students. When the other deputy is here on the K to 12, we may have some other information on high schools. The universities do tracking.

One of the things that the member and I were talking about the other day becomes evident here when I said that universities keep looking for consistent measurable standards from high school. We know that, as the

students who graduate from the North come down south, they have a more difficult time. A lot of that is because of isolation in some places.

We look at measures like distance education, distance technology, measurable standards so that, when people go with a piece of paper in their hand that says I have Manitoba Grade 12, it will mean something that is recognized as a consistent standard. That is a goal of reaching for excellence, because it is known that they have a more difficult time for a variety of reasons. One, it is not always possible in certain high schools to offer, say, Physics 300 if your enrollment is very small. If you have, say, just one student wanting to take that course every third year or something of that nature, it becomes increasingly difficult.

When we look at distance education, that is one of the things that we are hoping—maybe not this September, but one of our goals is to improve those opportunities to enhance the education in remote areas. Does that answer your question?

Ms. Friesen: The universities, I think, only track the people who apply to them. What I am really looking for is some indication of how the general education picture has changed in the North, particularly in terms of completion.

I understand the issue the minister is addressing of availability of subjects and, of course, the distance that students travel, in many ways, to move south to university. Yes, those all, I think, have been there for a long time.

One of the issues, I think, that the Access Program had to address and has for a long time is that so few students comparatively have either had the opportunity or have been enabled in some way or other to complete high school in the North. I am looking to see whether that is changing. I do not, again, expect that is going to change overnight, and it does include statistics and numbers from band schools and from federal jurisdictions. So is there any way we have of looking at that problem?

Mrs. McIntosh: Mr. Chairman, we can come back with specific details on that. We do not have that here,

but we can obtain it, and we will. We will bring it back for the member's information and actually for mine, too, because it is a good question, and I do not know the answer. I would like to know it.

* (1700)

I am informed that the quality of learning that has been experienced by Access students is improving while we are still seeing people coming into the Access Programs from Grades 10 or 11, without the complete high school, of course. It was not that long ago that they were coming with Grades 7 or 8, and now they are coming with Grades 10 or 11. So there might be some deficit in some areas, but the situation does appear to be improving. There is always need and room for more improvement. The trend is encouraging, but there is still work to be done.

We will obtain those figures, though, to try to give her a more accurate picture as to what the tracking reveals, and we will bring that back as soon as we can.

Ms. Friesen: Is the minister looking at any changes to the Access Program in the sense of special programs such as there are in premedical studies or in the medical area? Are there any new additions that the minister is considering?

Mrs. McIntosh: We are looking at the Hikel report, working through the universities with that, but we do not want to do what the federal government is doing to us on the French side. We do not want to be introducing new programs if they are going to come in at the expense of valid existing programs. The answer is, yes, in the sense that we are going through the Hikel report with universities, no, in the sense that we will not bring in new programs if it is going to harm existing programs. If ever that event were to occur, the new program would have to be one that had a higher value attached to it. So at the moment, no.

Ms. Friesen: Where does the minister see the Louis Riel Institute fitting into this area? It is a bill before the House, so I am not looking for specifics. I am looking for principles and possibly where it might be seen in the next Estimates. What kind of line, what area is it going to fit in with?

Mrs. McIntosh: Mr. Chairman, we have set aside \$155,000 for the Louis Riel Institute. It is contingent upon federal dollars, matching dollars. The member is probably aware that this is to provide an increased awareness of early Manitoba history and the Metis role in early Manitoba history and the Metis culture today.

I just recently forwarded a cheque for some \$35,000 to the Manitoba Metis Federation in anticipation of the work that they are doing in this area because this is not going to be a government thing. This is something that we are recognizing and funding being done by the Manitoba Metis Federation. We are supportive. We are a funder. We are expecting and asking them to identify the messages they want relayed and to develop a way of relaying them effectively to Manitoba students.

Mr. Assistant Deputy Chairperson: Item 4. Training and Advanced Education (b) Access Programs \$6,498,200—pass.

4.(c) Student Financial Assistance (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$1,418,600.

Ms. Friesen: I am just looking from the minister for an update on where the federal government program is at the moment. There has been talk of an income contingent loan repayment. There have certainly been changes I think in the timing of repayments over the past year. There was an adjustment in September, October, I think, when the federal government found that its requirements were not appropriate for Manitoba.

I think there are also some questions in some students minds that I am sure the minister has also heard about, about the use of one particular bank for the Canada Student Loan Program. These are a number of questions, I know. There are students who have dealt with credit unions in the past and have found that unless they were dealing with a particular bank their money was very slow in coming. Some students were perhaps given advice that was not very helpful.

It is the federal role, the changes that have happened over the past year—what is the federal government saying to the minister at the moment about prospective

changes, particularly for income contingent loan repayment, and thirdly, the issues of the banks and the financial institutions that deal with Canada Student Loans?

Mrs. McIntosh: This is a Canada Student Loan issue actually, Mr. Chairman, and it probably should be directed to the federal government for further clarification. However, I will indicate because it is of interest to Manitoba students that over a hundred credit unions right now are participating with the federal risk premium, and most of the major banks, except for the Toronto Dominion and Bank of Montreal, are also participating, so federally that is what is happening. The Toronto Dominion Bank is not in; the Bank of Montreal is not in. But you will have the Bank of Nova Scotia and those other banks, some Caisse Populaires, and lots of credit unions.

* (1710)

Ms. Friesen: On a couple of occasions it was brought to my attention in the fall that students who were not dealing with CIBC were either being told or had been led to believe that their claims or their loans would be dealt with in a much slower process, two to three weeks slower, and some of them at least were offering evidence of such claims. Has the minister had any encounters with students who have had those kind of difficulties, and is there anything that the Manitoba government can do?

Mrs. McIntosh: I think because of the newness of this venture we have not had—this time last year nobody had a risk premium; last fall nobody had a risk premium. It is still quite new. We have not had anybody default obviously because they have not had time yet, but let us hope they never decide to default or they never have to default.

I have not personally received any concerns or complaints brought to my attention, but then I have not been here very long either so not to say they will not come. The staff indicates they have not received any either; the staff that is here with me today.

Ms. Friesen: The Informetrica Study of university enrollment futures that I raised in the Legislature with

the minister, I believe it took a number of variables and related the perspective changes in federal policy. I realize this is a federal issue, but what they were suggesting was that income-contingent loan repayments would have an effect upon student enrollments, and they were doing it province by province.

What I am interested in is whether in fact the provincial government has a concern in this area and how it is dealing with it with the federal government, because the changes to Canada Student Loan—yes, indeed, and the risk premium, yes, indeed, those are federal issues—but they do have an impact on student enrollment. I am sure the minister is aware of certainly the concerns about student enrollment in Manitoba. Are they tracking this in any way with the federal government? Is there any kind of liaison nationally through the Council of Ministers or whatever that is looking at this?

Mrs. McIntosh: Well, first of all, I indicate that we do track students' enrollment through StatsCan. Secondly, regarding the income-contingent loan repayments that were put forward by the feds: not one province of Canada was willing to take up on it, so it was lifted off the table, and it has vanished somewhere into the lofty atmosphere and is not an issue anymore, because the offer was never taken up by anybody. So those who were concerned and worried really do not have anything to worry about anymore. It has gone like dust in the wind.

Mr. Assistant Deputy Chairperson: Item 4. Training and Advanced Education (c) Student Financial Assistance (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$1,418,600—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$613,300—pass; (3) Assistance \$7,122,600—pass.

4.(d) Student Financial Assistance Appeal Board (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits.

4.(e) Labour Market Support Services \$591,400.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Chair, I am interested in a policy direction that the government indicated I think perhaps two or three years ago now that it would be providing a labour force development strategy, and I am

wondering what progress has been made on that in the last few years.

Mrs. McIntosh: Mr. Chairman, we were beginning to do that kind of analysis, that kind of a strategy, and we were preparing it in isolation, so to speak. By that I mean separate from the federal government. The federal government then, of course, did a number of things. It announced social security reform, which we are not quite certain what path it is taking us down.

They also made some announcements of federal reductions for training across Canada to the tune of \$1 billion as well as a reduction of several billion dollars for established programs. So we do not know, as we work with them, where we are going to be in terms of trying to harmonize activities.

We know that we have the Minister of Family Services, for example—a lot of these things cross portfolios—she is acting as the lead minister on some of the welfare-to-work programs that will be part of a labour force strategy. Again, though, we are trying to work within the federal government's plans so that we can harmonize or complement as much as possible and that we do not inadvertently start an initiative only to find out some action of the federal government has rendered what our initiative is invalid.

So we are kind of at the moment waiting to see what kind of moves are being made federally so that we can plan properly and in accordance with whatever is going to be coming down the tube towards us from the people in Ottawa.

Ms. Friesen: I understand that obviously Ottawa changes are going to make a difference, but this is something that has been promised for many, many years, and certainly Ottawa funding does affect it, but one of the elements of a labour force strategy is the indication of high need occupations and consequently low need occupations in Manitoba, and the training strategies that are developed to meet those needs, advice to students, advice to young people.

I think in 1992 the government published a booklet on high need occupations which was one element of this. A second element has been the newspaper which

really repeats elements of that booklet that is available to career days for students in Grade 9.

I am wondering what has happened since the publication of that booklet, what studies have been done that would have updated that. For example, I mean I think we probably all read the Canadian Federation of Independent Business' report on the increase in self-employment in Manitoba. I think we are all aware of the increase in part-time employment. So what studies has the department been conducting that would update the material that it published in 1992?

Mr. Assistant Deputy Chairperson: Just for the benefit of the committee, I do want to read, and I believe it was read into the record, but just to be sure, item 4.(d) Student Financial Assistance Appeal Board, no dollars. I believe it was read into the record, but I wanted to make sure that it was read into the record. We are on item 4.(e). We are discussing that at this point—just for the benefit of the committee. Thank you.

We will take a five-minute recess. Is it the will of the committee? [agreed]

The committee recessed at 5:27 p.m.

After Recess

The committee resumed at 5:33 p.m.

Mr. Assistant Deputy Chairperson: Will the committee please come to order.

We are on line 16.4 Training and Advanced Education (e) Labour Market Support Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$591,400.

Mrs. McIntosh: In response to the question posed by the member just before we broke, the High Demand Occupation Report is updated every year, as is the Manitoba Prospects.

This year, the information is also being made available on the Internet, and we are developing a

guide to post-secondary institutions, as well. New programs at colleges reflect high demand in the Framework for Economic Growth. There is also increased emphasis on literary training for welfare clients and expanded training for welfare recipients leading to employment and independence, so we have those things going on, in response to the question she posed.

Ms. Friesen: Where does one find the updated list, the annual updated list of occupation profiles?

Mrs. McIntosh: We can table that for you when we come back tomorrow. I am hoping we can have it here for tomorrow. We will make every effort to do that.

Ms. Friesen: Where would the general public have access to that?

Mrs. McIntosh: They can get it through the unemployment centres. They can get it through libraries. They can get it—all students in high schools. It is made available to the students in the high schools.

Ms. Friesen: The newspaper, I forget what it is called now, is made available to students in high schools.

Mrs. McIntosh: Manitoba Prospects.

Ms. Friesen: Yes, Manitoba Prospects is made available to students in high schools, but the information upon which that is based, the longer study, I assume, the greater statistical study, where would one find that? That is what I was looking for to be tabled.

Mrs. McIntosh: Data is available to anyone who asks through the Employment centres. We publish the list. We do not publish the background data, but the list can be made available through us.

Ms. Friesen: That list is Manitoba specific, is it?

Mrs. McIntosh: Yes, it is.

Ms. Friesen: I look forward then to seeing the most current list, if that is possible, tomorrow. The other aspect of this is, of course, the training requirements that derive from the high needs occupations as the

department lists them. So, again, I do not have the list in front of me, obviously, but what plans does the government have coming from this section of the department to meet the training needs for those which are suggested as high demand occupations?

Mrs. McIntosh: We work with the colleges to attempt to identify high demand areas and generate programs for high demand areas, is one of the reasons we have given such a substantial increase to colleges, that 6 percent increase to colleges. We also indicate, though, just for clarification, that you might see something that is high demand today that may not be high demand tomorrow.

So all of those things have to be very carefully analyzed for high demand and for sustainability, and in that sense then, this staff works closely with the colleges. We have connections now between colleges and business, colleges and industry, colleges and the trades and so on, to try to identify where employers are saying they need more personnel or personnel trained in a certain way.

Ms. Friesen: In terms of the colleges then, what opportunities have opened up to high school students as they are looking at colleges or university students looking at colleges? What new programs have been or are being developed that meet the stated labour market high demands?

Mrs. McIntosh: That information is not with us in the binders we have today, but when we get to the section on colleges, we will make sure that we have it so that we can provide it for the member and try to give specific examples, which I think is what she is asking, like, what exactly are you doing? We will try to have some examples for your information.

Ms. Friesen: Another element in the planning of a labour force strategy would have been the Labour Force Development Boards. For the last several years, the government has argued that it has been interested in this, and various meetings have occurred at different times in different places. The last meeting I am aware of was in, I think, October of this past year, and I am wondering where Manitoba stands in relationship to the Labour Force Development Boards. I understand, for

example, we have not yet signed an agreement. Are we still looking at signing an agreement? Is there still ongoing negotiation on that?

* (1740)

Mrs. McIntosh: Mr. Chairman, we just received a visit from a student who will be beginning school at the onset of the new millennium, so it was kind of nice to see a future student of Manitoba in the room for a bit.

I just want to indicate that, in terms of our experience with the federal government on this, it has not been too productive a relationship. We did, some years ago, have the federal government indicating an interest, and things started to get put together, but recently that is starting to fall apart in that the federal government has started to cut the expectations that the province was expecting.

For example, they wanted the province to manage the co-op program and direct purchasing and so on, but they have now cut that, so what we see happening is, again, the federal Minister of Human Resources not being either willing or able to carry through with some of the money commitments that were going to be attached to this.

So the activities that were going to take place under this agreement have become so defused and diluted that we do not know where it is going to eventually end. The future structure of that federal labour force development programming is currently under review, and it is unclear what role, if any, boards will play in the new federal program arrangements. For that reason, at this particular time, Manitoba is not currently having regular discussions with the federal government on the development of a provincial Labour Force Development Board structure.

We like the concept. We would like to be able to proceed with something like this, but as with any agreement, you really have to have two eager participants to make the agreement work, and we do not see that eagerness growing. In fact, we see it shrinking from the federal perspective. So it has a delay in the process right now while, we hope, the federal government goes through whatever internal

machinations they need to go through to come back revigorated and in strength and then ready to participate in this process.

Ms. Friesen: One of the advantages, I thought, that program had was that it brought together labour, business, the government, education and some of the people with particular special needs. Does the minister have any plans to develop that on a Manitoba base?

Mrs. McIntosh: Mr. Chairman, in terms of the items that the member has identified, we concur in terms of the importance of bringing together labour, business, industry and those things, and we have indeed been reaching out in a wide variety of venues to have those kinds of contacts through the colleges, through the universities, through the Apprenticeship programs, indeed even through the high schools. So we are forming those relationships and find them to be useful and helpful and productive.

The area we would like to be able to pursue now would be to bring all those forces together in conjunction with the federal level of government, but unless or until they are able to come in as a federal government with an eagerness to participate, I cannot see that doing anything over and above what we are currently doing locally to include those groups would accomplish the goals that we had hoped to see accomplished through a federal-provincial partnership and agreement. So I suppose, in short then, the answer would be no, with that very lengthy preamble to kind of give the rationale for the "no."

Ms. Friesen: The majority of provinces have signed agreements of different kinds. I know there are still some provinces which have not, but could the minister indicate what disadvantages there are for Manitoba in not having signed such an agreement and having programs underway? What advantages? Where do we stand? How is it putting us in a comparative position?

Mrs. McIntosh: Mr. Chairman, I should indicate that there is only one province that has a signed agreement with Ottawa, and that is the province of Saskatchewan. There were several provinces that had, as we did and do, negotiations underway, moving toward signed agreements with Ottawa. The role of those boards was

to be making decisions on federal funding, and with what appears to be a pulling back of the federal government, the other provinces are hesitating a little bit now to find out what in fact the changed nature of these agreements might become, because it does appear that there is now a different approach coming federally.

The federal government themselves seem to be unsure of the advantages, and they are currently reducing the Labour Force Development Boards' role, so with that in mind, we are still wanting to see things proceed if they could proceed as they had been originally outlined, but we do not want to rush into signing anything in the light of a changed attitude from the federal government. We have partnerships agreements as I indicated earlier, and the member is aware of them with business in a variety of venues, directly with government, through the colleges, through the universities and through other arenas, but we cannot see any particular advantage in signing an agreement that does not do for us what we thought it would do at the beginning.

* (1750)

Not to say we are giving up hope altogether, because we are not saying negotiations should cease, we are saying we would like them to get back on track with the original perspective under the kind of thinking that was taking place when the discussions began.

Ms. Friesen: When the minister says only one province has signed an agreement, does she mean that only one province has signed an agreement with the new federal government? Because the last time I talked to the Labour Force Development Board in Ottawa, there were, I think, only three provinces which had not signed, and I certainly believe I have seen press releases from British Columbia very recently, within the last year, of their signing of an agreement and of the skills training programs that are being developed from that. I wonder if there is a difference in terminology or timing that we are talking about here.

Mrs. McIntosh: The member may be referring to the Labour Force Development Boards. There are two different things. There is the Labour Force Development Agreement and the Labour Force

Development Boards. The Labour Force Development Agreements, most of them expired. Saskatchewan is the only one that has chosen to sign a new agreement. The boards have, I think, all but three provinces, Labour Force Development Boards established. We were, perhaps, confusing one with the other.

Ms. Friesen: I notice that there is an increase in staff years in this section of the department. Could the minister explain what those staff years will be used for?

Mrs. McIntosh: Two staff years, which were term, for the government in terms of social security reform that is coming from Ottawa, so we had two staff years used that way, on term appointments.

Ms. Friesen: So those term appointments are one-year term, or is it a two- or three-year term?

Mrs. McIntosh: The resources have been approved for a one-year term at this time.

Ms. Friesen: How will they be applied? Is this a planning position to deal with anticipated changes to federal programs?

Mrs. McIntosh: Basically planning and research to help prepare our government's response to proposals coming out of Ottawa in terms of the whole reform of the social security.

Ms. Friesen: What reports have been prepared so far on those issues? From the federal budget, we have at least an outline of a three-year process of what is going to happen. Has the department begun those research reports?

Mrs. McIntosh: The member may recall, in December—I think it was in December—Minister Mitchelson submitting a report called Manitoba perspectives on social reform that was tabled in the House. Our staff people worked on that.

We also have prepared numerous, countless backgrounders and briefing papers et cetera for the government internally just for doing some analysis for ministers' benefits as they were working on trying to

cope with any perceived or anticipated impact of things that were being talked about in the nation's capital.

Those are not reports in the sense of the Manitoba Perspectives that was tabled in the House. They are reports that are going to be bound and sent out to the public.

They are more internally preparing ministers for an ability to react, in a knowledgeable way, with some of the impacts that might come out of some of the announcements from Ottawa, or some of the work that is being done in Ottawa toward reform.

Mr. Assistant Deputy Chairperson: Item 16.4 Training and Advanced Education (e) Labour Market Support Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$591,400—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$123,600—pass.

Item 16.4(f) Literacy and Continuing Education (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$432,200—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$109,500—pass; (3) Grants \$827,100.

Ms. Friesen: I do not have that line, I do not think, on my book. Are we still under 16.4(f)? [interjection] Okay.

Mr. Assistant Deputy Chairperson: Item 16.4(f)(3) Grants \$827,100—pass.

The hour being six o'clock, committee rise.

HEALTH

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

This section of the Committee of Supply has been dealing with the Estimates of the Department of Health.

Would the minister's staff please enter the Chamber at this time.

We are on item 21.3 Community and Mental Health Services (a) Administration (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits.

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): I believe the minister was just in the process of answering, in the midst of answering a question regarding the developments of the Women's Health Strategy when we last adjourned at 12 noon.

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): Yes, Mr. Chairman, in consultation with the women's community, we need to identify priority areas for action within the context of provincial health priorities, priorities like senior citizens, aboriginal Manitobans, children, cancer.

We need to identify gaps in research and implement strategies to improve data collection, analysis, and application. We need to evaluate current programs and services to determine their impact, their cost effectiveness, accessibility and cultural sensitivity. We need to promote equitable representation of women in policy and program development as a basis for healthy public policy and with an emphasis on population health.

Those are the kinds of things that should form any formal strategy that we would develop. I say that in the full knowledge that we have developed or are in the process of developing some very important initiatives in this area.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, does the minister have any time frame with respect to when we might be looking for the development of this Women's Health Strategy? Are we talking this fiscal year?

Mr. McCrae: Yes, we are, Mr. Chairman, and we hope to have developed that strategy by this fall.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, given the change in the structure of the department, are there specific allocated funds towards the development of this strategy, given that the former women's health division had a fairly substantial budget and a number of staff-years attached to it?

Mr. McCrae: The branch has dollars to help us in the development of a strategy like this, and then of course if programs are entered into, they are funded in the ordinary way.

* (1450)

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, with respect to the Canada Prenatal Nutrition Program, we touched upon this during the discussion over the child health strategy, can the minister update me briefly as to the status of that particular program and when matters are actually going to commence?

Mr. McCrae: In July 1994, Health Canada announced the Canada Prenatal Nutrition Program designed to reduce the incidence of low birthweight infants. Financial assistance will be provided to nonprofit organizations to deliver community-based nutrition services to economically disadvantaged pregnant women. Components may include food supplements, lifestyle counselling and referral to other agencies. The allocations are expected to be as follows: 1994-95, \$186,000; 1995-96, \$186,000; 1996-97, \$444,800; 1997-98, \$433,500.

The program is implemented through the existing structure of the Community Action Program for Children and is to be managed provincially through the joint management committee. Manitoba Health has two representatives on this committee. Other departments include Family Services, Education and Training, and Health Canada. A subcommittee of the joint management committee responsible solely for the Canada Prenatal Nutrition Program includes two representatives from Manitoba Health and one representative from Health Canada. Reference is made to this prenatal nutrition program in the report of the Nutrition Services Review, October 1994, and the Child Health Strategy of March 1995.

Mr. Chomiak: The branch is also looking at the establishment of a Cervical Cancer Screening Program. Of course, I stand to be corrected, but I was under the impression we did have a Cervical Cancer Screening Program, so I am wondering if the minister can update me as to what is meant by this particular initiative.

Mr. McCrae: Mr. Chairman, with respect to a couple of other matters in response to a question by the honourable member on June 9, I would tell him with respect to affirmative action that with the exception of workforce adjustment appointments, affirmative action

is included in the recruitment and selection process. The department remains committed to the principles of affirmative action as evidenced in the recruitment process.

Following are the options available to managers when applying affirmative action in the recruitment process:

First, bulletins are written to indicate affirmative action will be a factor in the selection process. Affirmative action is then identified as a selection criterion.

Second, a position can be targeted designating the position for recruitment of an affirmative action candidate. The bulletin will then indicate that preference will be given to affirmative action candidates. If a position is targeted, outreach is conducted to attract target group members, and only qualified target group members are screened in for interviews. If there are no qualified target group members, the competition is then opened up to other applicants.

Third, direct appointments may be used in cases where a manager has identified that a job has been redesigned to accommodate the disability of a particular target group member or that a promotional or a career development opportunity is desirable for a particular target group member.

In 1994-95, 15.92 percent of total appointments made through the competition process were from the aboriginal, physically disabled or visible minority target groups.

The honourable member for Dauphin (Mr. Struthers) asked about Roblin, Grandview and Gilbert Plains and issues related to physicians. Dr. Moe Lerner with the Healthy Communities office and Mr. Marcel Painchaud from Manitoba Health met with representatives of the boards of Gilbert Plains Health Centre, Grandview District Hospital, Grandview Personal Care Home and the Roblin Health District Centre on June 7.

The consensus of those present was that all three communities should carry on with the proposal as put

forward by Dr. Lerner in his previous brief following his initial visit to the area on March 31.

The proposal calls for the establishment of a salaried or contract physician program in the area. The physicians practising in these communities are currently being remunerated on a fee for service basis. Manitoba Health will work with the local communities and the MMA to ensure that this plan will be operative as soon as possible.

The honourable member asked about the cervical screening system that we have. A three-phase approach to the implementation of a comprehensive provincial Cervical Screening Program has been recommended. Phase 1 consisting of a population registry, development of educational materials, and a quality assurance laboratory review has been completed. Phase 2 consists of an information system to identify individual clients and their test results. Phase 3 includes follow-up of high risk groups.

Establishment of the second and third phases of the provincial Cervical Cancer Screening Program will reduce morbidity and mortality associated with cervical cancer. It will provide a mechanism to control costs through the identification of high risk population groups, appropriate scheduling of screening and reduction of hospital patient days for women being treated with cervical cancer.

With respect to the current status, the working group has met on a number of occasions to review the current status of cervical cancer and screening in Manitoba.

A proposal for a submission to the Program Development Branch is being prepared by the Manitoba Cancer Treatment and Research Foundation. The next meeting to review the draft proposal by the cervical cancer screening working group is slated for the last week of this month. Phase 2 consists of the development of a screening and cytology registry, quality assurance guidelines and the follow-up system.

The membership of the cervical cancer screening working group is as follows: Janet Bjornson is the chair, and Ms. Bjornson is the vice president of the Provincial Programs and Support Services for the

Manitoba Cancer Treatment Research Foundation; Dr. Les Roos of the Centre for Health Policy and Evaluation; Heather Whittaker, Director, Records and Registry at Manitoba Cancer Treatment Research Foundation; Dr. Robert Lotocki, Gynecology, Health Sciences Centre; Dr. Greg Hammond, Director, Public Health, Manitoba Health; Dr. Doug Tataryn, Psychosocial Oncology at the St. Boniface Research Centre; Jill Taylor-Brown, Psychosocial Oncology, St. Boniface General Hospital; and Suzanne Ring, Program Development Branch at Manitoba Health.

The terms of reference for this working group are to review activities that have occurred with respect to cervical cancer screening and to develop program guidelines and operational relationships for Phases 2 and 3 of the Cervical Cancer Screening Program. This will be submitted to the Program Development Branch for review and processing.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, I take it from the minister's response, and I thank him for the thoroughness of that response, that a registry will be introduced as a result of this program. Is that correct?

Mr. McCrae: Yes, Mr. Chairperson.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, can the minister briefly describe to me how this registry process will work?

Mr. McCrae: Similar to the Breast Cancer Screening Program, the cervical screening performance, if you like, will be tracked under this registry that would be developed.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, I have had occasion to review some literature in this area, and there has actually been some good publications on the Centre for Health Policy and Evaluation on this very topic. Given what the literature says, it is obviously a positive step.

Moving on to the next item, I note we are talking about the development of a Cardiovascular Health Strategy, and I wonder if the minister might outline for me as well the background concerning that.

* (1500)

Mr. McCrae: Mr. Chairman, cardiovascular disease continues to be a large health and financial burden on Canadian society. In Manitoba it is the leading cause of death. In 1992 there were 3,638 deaths due to diseases of the circulatory system, over a thousand more than from the second leading cause of death, which is cancer. Cardiovascular disease was also responsible for almost one in six of all hospital patient days. In addition, cardiovascular disease has far-reaching effects on the quality of life of survivors and their families.

The major risk factors for heart disease are well known and preventable. These are high blood pressure, cigarette smoking and elevated serum cholesterol levels. Other risk factors include diabetes, physical inactivity, obesity, stress, genetic factors and lengthy periods in Estimates.

In 1989-90 a large-scale heart-health survey—did you catch that? In 1989-90 a large-scale heart-health survey was conducted in Manitoba as part of a nationwide initiative. It showed that three in five Manitobans had one of the three major risk factors for heart disease and that one in five had two or more risk factors which put them at even greater risk for heart disease. Following the survey, Central Region was identified as an appropriate catchment area for an intervention research project. Over the last three years the Manitoba Heart Health project has demonstrated the utility of community activation and mobilization in enabling communities to take ownership of chronic disease prevention and develop strategies for risk-factor reduction.

Health Canada contributed \$1.1 million over five years to the Manitoba Heart Health Project survey and implementation phases. The department has made a commitment to provide a further \$225,000 over the next five years to assist in the dissemination of learning from Central to other regions and communities, and to build the capacity of other regions to carry out cardiovascular health promotion programming. There will be a particular focus on building sustainable projects which will continue beyond the life of the funded project. So that it can be said, very simply, that a Cardiovascular Health Strategy will be developed with the wide consultation of many stakeholders.

Mr. Chomiak: So I take it that as a result of the initiatives undertaken in Central Region, presumably a province-wide strategy will be adopted that will spread throughout the province based on the experience of the Central Region. When will that take place? Does that fall in the next two years of further development, or is it something that is eminent?

Mr. McCrae: Well, it is not quite as imminent as the member for Lakeshore is eminent. I am still working on keeping my senses sharply honed because the honourable member is going to be testing them, I am sure.

The development of our regional governance and our regional system in Manitoba will be happening, and while that is happening, the development of this cardiovascular health program will then be replicated or will be developed across the province.

Mr. Chomiak: So, within the context of the regionalization, the results will be passed on to the various regions for use. Is this a prototype that can be used or documented? Is this one of a kind?

Obviously, it is a Manitoba initiative. Are there similar or parallels anywhere, because this is clearly a major identified area of health prevention and promotion? If there is a program here that is developed that is a prototype, there are all kinds of interesting possibilities arising from this.

Mr. McCrae: The program in Central has been related primarily to promotion and education. That and what would be built onto that to make it a total continuum of heart health initiatives would then be developed elsewhere in the province as the regionalization process goes forward.

Mr. Chomiak: Probably to no one's surprise, my next question is concerning the development of the Aboriginal Health and Wellness Centre. I wonder if the minister might outline, give me an update as to its status.

Mr. McCrae: The Aboriginal Health and Wellness Centre Inc. has submitted their operational planned proposal for consideration and review to Manitoba

Health. The operational plan phase was supported by Manitoba Health through a grant of \$91,600 in fiscal year 1994-95. The proposal will include a full complement of programs and staff. The integral and unique feature of this initiative is a culturally based and community responsive model of health care support and delivery. The model for wellness is heavily emphasized through an aboriginal identified and developed model of service delivery. It proposes to move away from a focus on illness to a collective responsibility of wellness within the Winnipeg aboriginal community.

Mr. Chomiak: Are there funds set aside this budgetary year for the further development of the centre, and how much?

Mr. McCrae: Yes. It is under the general appropriation for Healthy Communities and no specific appropriation has been laid out. We await the proposals that would be made so that we could attach funding amounts at that time.

* (1510)

Mr. Chomiak: Are there any plans to have more than one centre in Manitoba?

Mr. McCrae: Not at this point, Mr. Chairperson.

Mr. Chomiak: The branch is also co-ordinating the review of the community health centres. Which review is this referenced to?

Mr. McCrae: This sort of activity is being rolled into the overall primary health review, which the honourable member for Inkster was, when we were talking the other day, we talked about, in conjunction with the secondary review.

Mr. Chomiak: Can the minister give us an update, a very specific update, because the questions arise quite frequently concerning the work of the Midwifery Council and the status of potential legislation and other matters concerning midwifery?

Mr. McCrae: The honourable member asked about this. It is also one of those areas where we can, by

working together, produce a health system that features the availability of choice for people.

The Midwifery Implementation Council was established following a 1994 announcement that midwifery will become an insured service in Manitoba. The terms of reference for the council were drawn from the report of the Manitoba Working Group on Midwifery, and I think it is important to say thank you to all of the people working on both the working group and now on the implementation council.

The implementation council has the responsibility to make recommendations to the Minister of Health regarding the implementation of regulated midwifery in Manitoba. As well, it will serve as the governing body until there are enough licensed midwives to the self-regulating.

The council has four committees, each with a specific set of objectives. The Midwifery Implementation Council philosophy is that midwifery care is based on a respect for pregnancy as a state of health and childbirth as a normal, physiological process. The midwife provides holistic, women-centred care in all stages of pregnancy and childbirth.

Above all else, midwifery care emphasizes informed decision-making as a shared responsibility between the pregnant woman and her caregivers. The introduction of regulated midwifery will add to the range of birthing services available to child-bearing women.

There are four committees of the council. There is the legislation committee and its job is to help us develop midwifery legislation to design a licensing and standards of practice regulatory structure and to address liability insurance issues.

The practice committee's role is to consult with current practitioners to develop standards of practice for midwives, to work with health professionals and institutions that will be affected by the introduction of regulated midwifery, to develop guidelines for the introduction of midwifery practice in a variety of settings and, based on approved guidelines, to invite proposals for midwifery practice from individuals, community groups and institutions.

The education committee's role is to consult current practitioners, to develop guidelines for an education program including entry requirements, curriculum content, delivery mechanisms and identification of clinical training sites, and to work with education facilities to develop an assessment and upgrade program for current practitioners.

There is an equity in access committee and its role is to ensure that implementation addresses the issues for future midwifery students and consumers, and to consult with aboriginal, Metis, immigrant and refugee and other interested communities to invite participation and to identify women with midwifery skills who may wish to become licensed.

The council members are as follows: Carol Scurfield, who is the chair, Gillian Andersson, Madeline Boscoe, Ina Bramadat, Lorna Grant, Margaret Haworth-Brockman, Vanessa Mays, Joan McLaren, Yvonne Peters, Kris Robinson, Sheila Sanderson, Diane Tokar, Aikaterini Zegey-Gebrehiwot. An ex-officio member is Frank Manning.

Mr. Chomiak: Does the minister have any idea when we might see the actual introduction of the program and commensurate legislation and the like?

Mr. McCrae: We expect to have recommendations from the Midwifery Implementation Council by 1997. It takes a while.

Mr. Chairperson: Item 3.(a) Administration (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$998,700-pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$441,700-pass.

3.(b) Program Development (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$1,186,600-pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$1,023,200-pass; (3) External Agencies \$921,100-pass.

3.(c) Home Care (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$1,411,100.

Mr. McCrae: Mr. Chairman, during earlier discussions we discussed here again I think it was the honourable member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux)—but we talked about a bed report or a bed map report, m-a-p

as in Peter report, with respect to rural and urban hospitals, and what I have records, set up beds by regions, and these are acute care beds, and a personal care beds map is attached.

So I will make that available now by perhaps tabling this so that the honourable member for Inkster can access this information.

* (1520)

Mr. Chomiak: Perhaps right off the bat the minister could explain to me how it is that, with regard to home care, last year it was estimated that on Schedule 7 of this year's Estimates, it is estimated that expenditures to direct service workers is in the amount of \$50,486,000. That is located on page 53 of the Supplementary Estimates book. Last year on Schedule 8 a similar schedule indicated there would be expenditures for direct service workers of \$52,252,000.

Could the minister indicate why the decrease of close to \$1.8 million in direct service workers this year over last year?

Mr. McCrae: Funding for Direct Service Workers budget lines was reduced because of transfers to other budget items. The largest portion, that being \$1.5 million, was transferred to the Self-managed Care line in support of the provincial expansion of this project. That is why we are so pleased that the honourable member gave his support to the Self-managed Care Program. The remaining \$300,000 was transferred to support enhanced grants funding, the opening of five new senior centres, and the development of the automated screening and assessment tool. It is not a reduction in the sense that it was discussed. It is, again, a shift to other program initiatives.

Mr. Chomiak: Can the minister point out for me where that Self-managed Care line is, \$1.5 million?

Mr. McCrae: Page 53, Supplies and Services.

Mr. Chomiak: But, Mr. Chairperson, last year's Supplies and Services was \$14,500,000 and, presumably, I do not see the \$1.5 million increase to Supplies and Services that somehow would show the

shift from Self-managed Care to Supplies and Services. In fact, it just does not make sense.

Mr. McCrae: If you look at page 57 of the 1994-95 Departmental Expenditure Estimates, the number is \$14,522,000. If you look at page 53 of this year's, the number is \$15,787,000. That is about one million point something more—not less, more.

Mr. Chomiak: So the minister is saying that last year Self-managed Care showed up under Direct Service Workers?

Mr. McCrae: Last year it showed up as Self-Managed Care, right?—as \$.5 million. This it shows as Self-Managed Care, \$2 million. That is included in the total, of course, for Supplies and Services, and it is a \$1.5 million increase; it is up, not down—up.

Mr. Chomiak: That may be the case, but something still does not add up. Last year the minister said that—by the way, last year my notes say that the minister said there was \$1.5 for Self-Managed Care last year, but that issue aside, last year the minister said that Self-Managed Care showed up under Supplies and Services, and this year it shows up under Supplies and Services. So there is an increase under Supply and Services of whatever.

Putting that aside, Direct Service Workers, last year, showed \$52.25 million, this year it is \$50.4 million, so there is a decrease of \$1.8 million under Direct Service Workers. So clearly, it is not Self-Managed Care where that is coming from.

Mr. McCrae: I would like to read aloud the last page of the Supplementary Information for 1995-96 Departmental Expenditure Estimates.

It says: "Estimates of Expenditure (Adjusted): A realignment of the previous year's estimates of expenditure for any organizational change to provide for more accurate and realistic comparisons from one budget year to the next."

That is probably the reason for our discussion here today. Anyway, I want to explain something. The Self-Managed Care Program is something that goes

back two or three years now, which began as an experimental project so that people living in the community could make their own decisions about their care. Under the program, under the pilot program, through an agreed-upon assessment, an assessment relating to a level of care that is required for a particular client, the department makes the money available directly to the client. The client then makes his or her decisions about whom to hire, when services should be delivered, how much to pay for them, all those things are then the responsibility of the client. This is something that was welcomed by that part of the community that got involved in it. I came along at the tail end of the pilot part of it and was given all kinds of positive comments about this. As a result of that and another study done by an independent company, a private consulting company anyway, they gave the thumbs up to this program, and we decided to expand it.

* (1530)

So when this program expands, it is in the process of that now, but when that happens there might be fewer direct service delivery people providing services under that or the total program because clients may choose to use somebody else. They are entitled to do that. They may choose to use the same people. They are entitled to do that too, but it is in that area where the fewer dollars would show in our traditional Home Care program for that direct service delivery function. It may or may not turn out exactly that way depending on how many self-managers use the staff, but the numbers will still show a reduction because they will be paid through a different appropriation.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, I could accept that for part of the—I do not think that is the whole answer, the numbers certainly do not add up. I am not going to belabour the point because the fact is that service showed up last year in Supplies and Services and it shows up this year in Supplies and Services. Even the adjustment made in order to make the Estimates process reflect the difference that the minister quoted would not cover all of that difference.

I am going on in my line of questioning, and since we are on self-managed care I wonder if the minister—a

program that we were very happy to support. In fact, I remember when we met with the individuals who were in the study, who met with us in one of the rooms here in the Legislature—I think it was 230 or 236—and urged us to try to persuade the government to get that consultant report released publicly so the program could go on. We had a very, very favourable meeting. I can remember meeting with all those people and being very favourably impressed and indicating that I would do my part to try to convince the then minister to try to move on this matter.

The present minister knows how difficult it was, on occasion, to move the former minister on particular issues. [interjection] I agree. I will give him full credit. It was the former minister's pilot project announced just before or during—just before the 1990 provincial election, as I recall.

To move on: Does the minister have statistics in terms of the numbers of individuals that are participating both in urban and rural with regard to self-managed care as well as data on the types of individuals that are participating because of the—when I say types of individuals, I mean, are there some elderly as well who are participating in the program and what the stats are?

Mr. McCrae: The honourable member's recollection of these events is, suffice it to say, not exactly the same as my recollection, but I do not think much will be gained by going over that ground over and over again. I do want the honourable member, though, to tell us what it is in the numbers here. To me it is important that these numbers add up because you cannot just go out of here sort of half-loaded with information in order to attempt to make some point out there in the community. And believe me, I know the honourable member will try to make a point in the community because I have seen it done, as recently as the recent election campaign. So I cannot just let the honourable member say these things do not add up. I want him to tell me why they do not add up so that we can get to the bottom of this matter.

While he is thinking about how he is going to explain why he cannot make this work out in his head, I will tell him about the implementation of the Self-managed

Care Program. But the honourable member does owe it to me, and to the people of Manitoba if he says the numbers do not add up, to tell us why they do not add up.

The implementation of this expansion is in progress, Mr. Chairman. Training and orientation sessions for non-Winnipeg regional home care staff have been completed. Each region is maintaining a registry of interested individuals. Home care clients wishing to apply for the self-managed care option can contact their local home care case co-ordinator for an information kit, which sets out the details of the program option. An application form is included in this kit.

Training and support is available from the Independent Living Resource Centre for those self-managers who require assistance from the Independent Living Resource Centre. This organization has been funded by Manitoba Health to provide a range of both individual and group consultations and structured training sessions. A 1-800 number has been established to enable individuals from all parts of Manitoba to consult with the Independent Living Resource Centre.

An implementation advisory committee consisting primarily of physically disabled persons is in place to advise Manitoba Health during the implementation of this expansion. The committee is chaired by Mr. David Martin, the executive director of the Manitoba League of the Physically Handicapped, and has representatives from both urban and rural areas. The self-managed care option is funded through the reallocation of direct service funds included in the Home Care program Estimates. The province-wide expansion will enable up to an estimated 120 individuals—60 from Winnipeg, 60 from outside—to manage their own care.

(Mr. Mervin Tweed, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair)

I just remember what I remember, Mr. Chairman, and what I remember is not exactly the way the honourable member has set it out here today. The honourable member seems to remember this matter differently from the way I remember the matter, but is it not interesting? They say my friend, the member for

Roblin-Russell (Mr. Derkach) here, will tell you that if you put two farmers in a room, you get three opinions. That is what I have heard. A farmer told me that, so that is the only reason I repeat it. The honourable member and I have two very different recollections. And who knows, a third may yet emerge.

Mr. Chomiak: Can the minister outline the number of individuals that are involved in self-managed care both in the city and outside of the city because there were specific target numbers that were attached to the program when the program was announced?

Mr. McCrae: There are 23 people enrolled in the program presently. Two, maybe three of them are senior citizens. They are all urban at this point and primarily young disabled people who seem to have shown interest to this point. I would like to see more interest and I think that through the community of people representing the disabled community we could let the word out that this program option is available for people who qualify. I would like to see the program grow.

The honourable member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) asked about the status of the implementation plans for the staffing guidelines at Thompson, Flin Flon and The Pas. All three facilities have submitted proposed implementation plans for their staffing guidelines. These plans have been reviewed, and further work is being completed by the facilities.

The administration of Thompson General Hospital feel they will be able to implement the staffing guideline over a two-year period without layoffs. This is addressed to the question put by the member for Thompson who seems to be wanting to put something else out there before the public. There may be some minimal reduction of hours for some employees, but this will be finalized within two weeks.

* (1540)

In view of Thompson General Hospital's obstetrical program, some increase in staffing has been recommended by Manitoba Health, which recognizes the complex nature of their service. Plans from Flin Flon and The Pas have not been finalized. There is

ongoing discussions with these facilities, and they are being encouraged to complete their plans as soon as possible.

Mr. Chomiak: At one time there was a number assigned to how many people the government planned or had hoped for, would be enrolled in the self-managed care. Can the minister outline what those target numbers are?

Mr. McCrae: Mr. Chairman, 120–60 in rural Manitoba, 60 in Winnipeg.

Mr. Chomiak: And is the budget of \$1.5 million formulated to cover the entire total for this year of 120?

Mr. McCrae: No, Mr. Chairman, \$2 million, not 1.5. \$2 million.

Mr. Chomiak: So, to restate the question, the budget of \$2 million for self-managed care, will that be sufficient should the program expand immediately and enroll 120 individuals? Will that budgetary provision completely cover all of those individuals who are participating in self-managed care?

Mr. McCrae: Yes. We have to understand that these Manitobans are going to get support one way or the other. So the same amount of money is going to get spent, one way or the other. I do not think self-managed care anticipates more spending per client. It is just that they are the ones doing the spending and making the decisions.

Mr. Chomiak: I hesitate to wade back into this discussion, but I will. The minister is saying that Direct Service Workers is down \$1.8 million because there are 30-some-odd people who no longer require the direct service worker assistance. There are some 30-odd people who are now receiving that assistance from Supply and Services. Is that a correct characterization of the minister's argument?

Mr. McCrae: Mr. Chairman, whether you are a self-manager or on the regular program, the money is going to get spent. Agreed? I would like it if there were initially greater demand for self-management. I guess it is going to take a little bit of time for people to get

interested in that and for the word to spread that it is really a good concept.

It is not for everybody. I have said that all along. The budget sets out an annual amount for a self-managed program for 120. There has not been an uptake yet. There may not be, I do not know. That number will be grossly underspent, so I guess we can look for a corresponding—I mean, if all these numbers come out exactly they way we project—they never do, really, come out exactly how you project, but let us say they were going to, then we would be overspent on the other side, so I hope that is—[interjection]. Let us have another question.

Mr. Chomiak: I mean, I can agree with the minister on that, and I do not disagree. Last year's Supplies and Services where Self-managed Care was budgeted was \$14.5 million. This year it is \$15.7 million. This year's budget reflects an increase in Self-managed Care within the operating budget, agreed.

Last year, Direct Service Workers was at 52.2, and this year, it is at 50.4. The department clearly budgeted for fewer direct service workers this year than last year for whatever reason. Is that correct?

Mr. McCrae: Yes. We budgeted for a shift of money. We budgeted for a shift in the way that money would be spent. It may get spent on staff who presently work in the program; it may not.

Mr. Chomiak: So the minister is saying the \$1.8-million decrease in Direct Service Workers is related to a decreased expenditure in staff for Direct Service Workers because of a shift to Self-managed Care.

* (1550)

Mr. McCrae: Yes, except we are talking \$1.5 million for that. There is \$300,000 left over, which I have already answered on this. Here it is. I will do it again. It is short.

Funding for Direct Service Workers budget lines was reduced through transfers to other budget items. The largest portion, \$1.5 million, was transferred to the Self-managed Care line in support of the provincial

expansion of this project. By the way, we never got anything from the federal government on this one, did we, and we asked and begged and pleaded and nothing ever—and I think I—yes, I spoke to Reg Alcock personally on it, and Reg Alcock has not been able to help us for whatever reason.

The remaining \$300,000 was transferred to support enhanced grants funding, the opening of five new seniors centres and the development of the automated screening and assessment tool. That accounts for the \$1.8 million. It is not gone. It is still being budgeted to be spent.

Mr. Chomiak: So the minister is saying we will not deal with the \$1.8 million. We will accept that the \$300,000 is going to other services. The minister is saying \$1.5 million was taken from Direct Service Workers, moved down to Supplies and Services to totally deal with Self-managed Care. Is that correct?

Mr. McCrae: Yes.

Mr. Chomiak: So the minister is saying that there is now removed 30 people from the Home Care budget who are now receiving \$1.5 million of service—or budgeted, pardon me. We are budgeting for 120 people to receive \$1.5 million of service, and we—

Mr. McCrae: Two million.

Mr. Chomiak: Oh, yes, the minister is correct, \$2 million of service, and we have taken that from Direct Service Workers, and we are projecting to take 120 million people out of the old stream and put them into the self-managed care stream.

Mr. McCrae: Yes, but it is just 120, not 120 million.

Mr. Chomiak: One hundred and twenty individuals, and therefore, that is why the Direct Service budget is down by \$1.8 million, give or take the \$300,000. Is that a correct observation at this point?

Mr. McCrae: Yes, sir, right on. Yes.

Mr. Chomiak: So to put this argument in the best light, from the minister's perspective, these 120 people

cost the system last year \$1.5 million or \$1.8 million. This year, they are costing the system \$1.5 million or \$1.8 million, but they are having the service delivered in a different fashion.

Mr. McCrae: Yes, I think we are on the same track. Precisely the same amount of money budgeted for the self-managers before they became self-managers is there for self-managers after they become self-managers, exactly the same, not a nickel less, not a nickel more.

Mr. Chomiak: I have to check Hansard, but my notes from last year's Estimates book indicated that \$1.5 million was budgeted for self-managed care last year. Is that not the case?

(Mr. Chairperson in the Chair)

Mr. McCrae: The honourable member should not have done that. Last year there was talk, there was a plan. It was not budgeted last year. This year it is in the budget. This year we hope the plan all comes together, but it is budgeted as available this year, and is. Last year it was in our planning, but it was not yet available, the program itself, the expansion.

Mr. Chomiak: Just to get it on the record, the minister is saying that last year half a million dollars was provided for self-managed care, and this year \$2 million is provided for self-managed care.

Mr. McCrae: That is right. Yes, last year we were still on the pilot, this year we are hoping to see it expand.

Mr. Chomiak: So last year \$52.25 million was available to individuals in the Home Care program; this year \$50.4 is available to individuals in the Home Care program, but the difference is that up to 120 individuals will be receiving those services through the Self-managed Care.

Mr. McCrae: The bottom line is the same. The plan, the hope is to enroll, if that is the right word, 120 Manitobans into self-management but, regardless, if it does not get spent there, it is budgeted to be spent in the other area.

The honourable member, it is okay if he wants to confuse me, but he should do it about a half an hour from now when we are ready to take a short little break.

The same dollars are budgeted to be spent, whether it is in the self-managed category or in the other category. If it does not get spent in the self-managed category, then those same people will receive the benefit of that spending and the money would be moved over to the other line.

Mr. Chomiak: So that I understand, and I think that if the 120 people do not take part in the program, and if by year-end only 30 are taking part in the program, the remaining dollars will have to be utilized, in fact, in the direct service workers, which will show next year, if we are both here or all of us are here discussing this, if that eventuality should occur, then the direct service worker line will show an expenditure of probably \$52 million or \$51.5 million dollars.

* (1600)

Mr. McCrae: If, when we are making our preparations for next year's budget, we believe that we will be at, or will achieve, 120; then the budget will reflect that. If the performance this year demonstrates that, I do not know if we are going to—we cannot see that we are going to get 120. I hope we do and we can move it to 150, or whatever it will be then. But, if it is not going to be that, we may revise downward slightly, depending on the performance of the program, depending on the subscription rate to self-management.

Mr. Chomiak: The notes accompanying the Home Care section indicate approximately 24,000 Manitobans will be supported in their homes by the Home Care program. Do we have an exact figure on that?

Mr. McCrae: I am sorry to keep the honourable member waiting; we are just having a discussion about the very, very significant growth in spending on home care in the last two years. The average over the years has been fairly stable at about 24,000 Manitobans served annually. It goes up and comes down a little depending on the year, but it does not go up or down very much from that 24,000 mark.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairman, so the minister is saying the number of individuals who are taking part in the Home Care program has not changed significantly from 24,000 in the last several years?

Mr. McCrae: I would not say significantly, but I think that there are differences in the types of services that we have to provide. I mean a lot of the people who, and I do not have the numbers in front of me and we were talking about this, I think, yesterday, the growth in the number of day surgery procedures, how much of that requires home-care services, I do not know. I would like to get some up-to-date figures on that, but the more that we are able to assess people more quickly for discharge from hospital and get them on home-care services, the more people are served as well. So that over the years, thousands and thousands of people are being served under the Home Care program in one way or another.

That may be a crucial statement to make because there are some levels of home care that are relatively light that have the effect of keeping people at home and comfortable and happy and all of those things, keeping them out of more expensive forms of care and less appropriate, frankly, forms of care all the way to proposals that I would like to see happen very soon.

I know the honourable member will be equally as supportive of this, whereby we can engage the services of the private sector to administer things like the Home IV program to provide back-up services for our Home Care program when we are unable to provide guaranteed services, or when we are unable to respond as quickly as we would like to in order to get assessments done so the people can be discharged from hospital and get quality care at home.

The private sector can partner with us in this endeavour, the endeavour being to improve services for people in their homes and make their lives more comfortable by providing services in their homes. There are people who are languishing in hospital beds simply because we have not been able to respond quickly enough to the needs that sometimes exist. That is where the Seven Oaks We Care project, I think, showed us some important things that we can build on. We just know we will have the honourable member's

support because the patient is the focus of what we are trying to do here and we will very much appreciate that support.

I think that the Home Care Appeal Panel and the Home Care Advisory Committee has been providing extremely important service to Manitobans in that their function was deemed, certainly by me and others, to be important at the time that their services began, and will remain very important for some. As I said the other day, until perfection is achieved, we are going to need those kinds of functions.

We get some pretty positive feedback from the work of the two panels, feedback from the public. One of the things I think we need to do is to find a way to get our clients aware of the existence of the appeal panel. I am not sure that everybody knows about it. I wrote a letter to all of our clients earlier on, but that client base is constantly changing. There are always new people coming in to become clients in our Home Care service, and I do not know that all of those people know. I know that there is some documentary information made available to new clients, but, suppose you want to be a new client and you get turned down, are you aware of your rights to approach the appeal panel? I want to deal with issues like that.

* (1610)

The thing that I am asking for is a client-focused approach. We have made some forward movement in that area; we need to make some more. Until we achieve, as I said, perfection, which I will not know how quick that is going to happen, we are going to need the independent agencies there to help us through. So, that way, I do not know whether we should be—I guess we should be serving the people that I have listed, these 24,000; they have all been assessed as requiring care.

I had a meeting this morning with the Home Care Appeal Panel, and they gave me a report on how we are going. It is quite amazing. We have been going for a year. There have not been very many appeals when you think about it in real terms. I will bring some numbers in next day for the honourable member or maybe later today respecting the numbers of appeals.

I think, a year or two ago, if you listened to the honourable member, you would think everybody, all 24,000, had some reason to grieve. It is not true. Some did, some had reason to grieve, and now I am glad that they have somewhere they can grieve.

In actual fact, a lot of—what is the total number there, it is not very big—you know, in a year's time, between June 1 of last year and March 31 of this year, we have had 166 appeals, and 158 have been resolved and five have been abandoned. Out of 24,000 clients, we have had 166 people upset enough to want to appeal, and, interestingly, in most of those cases, the appeals have been decided, for the most part, in favour of the client. That is all right with me.

The thing that is important is that there have been a large number as well that never, ever had to come to the point of adjudication by the appeal panel. The reason for that is that the appeal panel office has been able to work with the department to resolve issues satisfactorily to both parties. That is what these bodies do.

The honourable member will recall as Justice critic, the work of the various complaint agencies in the Justice area. The biggest story of the year is always how many matters were resolved before they ever had to come to a hearing. Yes, there are a few hearings, and these hearings, I am told—I have not actually sat in on one yet; I would like to—that they are relatively informal and are not imposing or causing an intimidating situation for the client.

So this has been a very good thing. It has really served not only to right some wrongs, if they existed, but also to help the program itself understand there are areas where we can do a little better, and if it means that we have to adjust a policy here or there to make it a little more user-appropriate, so be it. Those are good things to do, and there have been, I understand, some changes in various procedures as a result of this whole process.

When you do this over a period of time, you hear appeals, and you look at where they are coming from and the nature of the complaints and that type of thing, that can help you in the development of policy. So

while there is still work to be done, in a real way some significant improvements have been made.

Mr. Chomiak: I would appreciate if we could get some specific numbers with respect to the \$24,000, just to gauge how many were in the program last year and how many in the program this year.

I am also going to ask the minister if he can give me stats on-monthly would be fine—the home support services, home care attendants, overnight and daily work, R.N.s, LPNs and therapy, as well as the number of people that are assessed for admissions on a monthly basis and the discharges. I know the minister has those stats, and it just would be very helpful to be able to get an update as to these services.

Mr. McCrae: Yes, Mr. Chairperson, I will make some statistics available to the honourable member. I hope he will see his way clear to join with us in this area as well as in all the others in putting the patient first.

I look forward to some projects that will be going forward very, very shortly respecting partnerships with the private sector in assisting the Home Care program in backup times.

July 1 is coming, that is the summer season, and home care staff take holidays. I do not want the clients of the Home Care program to notice that anybody is going on holidays. That is something that we have to address, and we have to address it so that when I say I do not want them to notice, what I mean is, I do not want anybody to be told that your worker is on holidays.

Your home care attendant, pursuant to collective agreement and so on, has holidays. They are entitled to holidays. I do not want to hear any client being told that has any impact whatever on their care. The whole concept of guaranteed service is something that is important to me and important to the clients.

If we, through our own collective agreement process and so on, cannot provide that kind of service, I know it was good enough for the honourable member when his people were in office, but it is not good enough for me, and it is not good enough for the clients of Home

Care. So I really do trust that the honourable member will be supporting us as we engage in those things.

Mr. Chomiak: I am not going to get into a discussion with the minister concerning his view of privatization of home care versus other views of privatization of home care except to state to the minister that the home care committee that is kind enough to advise me has expressed all of and more of the same concerns that have been related by the minister with respect to how the Home Care program operates and works.

Based on that, we have said for some time that the Home Care program must be brought in to the 1990s, indeed to 2000, because the program that was designed in the 1970s is totally not appropriate or applicable or flexible enough to the situation confronting Manitobans in the 1990s. There is no question, there is no doubt that that has to happen. That is one of the more pressing, in fact it is the most pressing concern, I think, in terms of revitalizing and changing home care in Manitoba today.

Having said that, I think it is appropriate that I outline for the minister a specific philosophical and, I think, very important aspect of the imminent changes to home care that I hope are not lost upon the Home Care department.

I do not purport to be an expert and I do not purport to have any greater knowledge than any other Manitoban, but I do suggest that in the move to change home care the department not lose sight of the fact that home care was developed not just as a medical service exclusively and that the social factors and programs concerning home care are not totally medical in nature.

* (1620)

I think that is often lost upon—the minister in his comments talks about the backlog in beds, for example, in the hospitals and the need to discharge people faster. In fact, that is correct, but that is only one small component, one component of individuals who are involved in home care. The vast majority of people who are involved in home care are not involved in the hospitals. They are there for other purposes and for other reasons.

I sincerely hope that in the department there is a recognition of the fact that there is a need for a program that just is not medically oriented and just is not related to discharging of patients from hospital rooms. Albeit that is one important component, there should be a recognition of the overall requirements and needs of a program of this kind in the 1990s and beyond.

I do not want to go on for a long period of time. That will suffice at this point. I think I made my point to the minister.

* (1640)

Mr. McCrae: I know the honourable member wants to achieve quality health results for Manitobans just like I do. We do get bogged down on the philosophical arguments when it comes down to health care, and I regret that, because my bona fides are just like his. I want to do the right thing for Manitobans, just like he does. Having said that, you have to kind of throw away all of the philosophical blinkers and mindsets that we-[interjection] I think I should continue my roll a little later, so I will just pause here for a moment and then consult with my staff, Mr. Chairperson.

Mr. Chairperson, the honourable member is wanting to know a lot of things about the shift from institutional care to the community. Year over year we have seen, over the last seven years on average, a pretty significant increase in Health spending in the community. There have been challenges in the community because we have had to try to design programming so that we could show that we are getting results.

The time has passed now when we can just continue the process of increasing spending in Health, and when someone pops up and wants to make a complaint, we can say, well, you know, we are doing all this spending. If someone says they want us to spend more over in this area, we spend more over in this area. Then the next group comes along and they want more money in their area and more money was made available in their area without regard for what it was we were going to get in return for the money.

That is short-term expedient kind of thinking, and I regret that it was done. It was really the wrong thing to

do. Because not only did we waste millions and billions of dollars in our country on things that were not showing any results, but we were also building up expectations. We became a society that judged the quality of its health system by the number of dollars that were put into it.

Well, we now know that was folly, and we are now in the process of trying to extricate ourselves from that kind of thinking. Meanwhile, we have a good segment of the population that still thinks that is the way to proceed. Well, we know it is not. We have ample research, study and data to demonstrate that is wrong. Still, we are in a time of change.

(Mr. Mike Radcliffe, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair)

I recall having the pleasure on a couple of occasions making and remaking acquaintance with Louise Simard. Louise Simard was the Health minister for the Province of Saskatchewan, recently retired and returned to private practice of law. A fine minister, in my view, Mr. Chairperson, from what I could learn about her and her contribution. Yet she was Minister of Health at a time when in Saskatchewan they had to close 52 rural hospitals or change very dramatically the role of those hospitals.

Of course, a great debate ensues on that point as to, you know, how did we get so many hospitals in the first place, and whose fault was that? There is really not much point in pointing a lot of fingers. Manitoba nurses argue with me sometimes that there were far too many hospitals built in Saskatchewan in the first place; in other words, an attempt to defend the move in Saskatchewan to close hospitals. I say, well, it is all very good argument. You know, it is true, there was probably an overbuilding. There is some of that maybe in Manitoba too.

Maybe, I do not know at this point, but try to tell that to the people in the communities in Saskatchewan who relied on those health facilities or came to rely on them or appreciated having them in their communities. Tell that to the nurses who worked in those facilities who may now be facing the prospect of unemployment or change which I encourage people to embrace.

But I digress slightly. I am talking about Louise Simard, and Louise Simard made some very, very important and difficult policy change decisions, but like Manitoba, Saskatchewan is proud, or its government is proud of its tendency to make health care decisions based on potential population health outcomes. I know from looking at their press releases that they want to share information in Saskatchewan with other jurisdictions facing the same challenges.

You can do it that way, or you can do it the way they did it in Ontario during the Rae years of closing 10,000 hospital beds and putting who knows how many people out of work. Or you can do it as recently announced in the city of Montreal. They are going to close seven urban hospitals there and put 10,000 people out of work. Or you can do it like Alberta where they are, I believe, cutting salaries by 5 percent across the board. Or you can go to Prince Edward Island where they are cutting back 7 percent across the board. Or you can go to B.C., preferably after the next election, but in B.C. they have got themselves into some pretty big trouble.

In Manitoba we have taken a much more measured approach that demonstrates that there was some thought went into the decisions. As I said, perfection eludes us. I always say that because I do not think anybody will believe us if we said otherwise, and it would not be true, anyway. Some on this side of the House might want to argue that we have approached perfection, but I will not even go that far. Modesty prevents me from talking like that. Not everyone on that side is as modest as I am, I guess.

Mr. Chairperson, I think that the honourable member wanted me to engage in a little bit of a philosophical argument or discussion, and I will do that only for a minute or two. But I feel strongly about it, and I am a partisan just like he is. I believe in those conservative sorts of principles that say the state should not be doing things for people that they can and should be doing for themselves, and you cannot make the weak strong by making the strong weak and some of those very famous statements made notably by other people and not me. Nonetheless, I do not mind repeating them from time to time. I believe in those principles, and yet I have a strong belief like the honourable member for Kildonan, Mr. Chairperson, and all the members around here, a

strong belief in my fellow Manitobans and a strong sense of concern for their well-being and simply want to govern well on their behalf.

I do not need to transport Conservative principles and philosophies into everyday decision making on health, when some principles, Conservative though they might be, may not be the best, neither may socialist principles be the best in any given situation.

* (1650)

I mean, if Conservative principles reign supreme in this country, why then, when, I guess it was John Diefenbaker who came to office, or, why then, when Brian Mulroney came to office, did not the health care, the medicare, the universal system get thrown out the window? Because it was the right thing to do, not to throw it out the window.

Why, when Sterling Lyon came to office in 1977, was Autopac not thrown out the window? Because Autopac was working for Manitobans, and that is why, even though I am sure Sterling Lyon and others, at the time of its introduction, opposed the whole idea.

There is a time when you have to ask yourself, what is working for people? So I keep wanting the member to take the Louise Simard approach, if necessary. To take the approach of other governments of other stripes, including Conservative, for they have just plain done the right thing for the people that they represent. People will appreciate it if you do not adopt that foolish consistency approach, that approach which is the hobgoblin of little minds, according to Emerson.

So let us be consistently right in our thinking—correct, I should say, in our thinking, so that we reflect what the real needs are out there. Because Manitobans are not left, right or centre, they are Manitobans, and all I can do is cite a few numbers for the honourable member and for Manitobans to say that, in totality, our Home Care program has been growing and growing.

Governments of both stripes in this province have been very committed to that program over the last number of years. I can argue my government has been more committed than the honourable member's

government, but so what? There seems to be a demand for that as we concentrate more on services in the community.

I will not go back as far as I could, but I will go back to the first budget that would be of interest in this discussion.

In 1987-88 there was a budget of \$35.5 million for home care. That was the last Pawley budget, and these are not budgets, these are expenditures.

The first year that we took office, that number was bumped up from the previous year—do not forget I said \$35.5—all the way to \$39 million. It is a huge increase in spending in one year on the Home Care program, but I am really not trying to stress annual spending increase one year over the next. I am trying to look at the pattern.

The next year was '89-90, and the spending on Home Care moved from \$39 million to \$42.2.

The next year, 1990-91, from \$42.2 million to \$50.9 million.

The next year, I do not have the percentages in front of me, but these are significant percentages of increased spending. The next year '91-92, there was not \$50.9 million that year, it was \$56.7 million, tremendous increase.

The next year, 1992-93, actual expenditures, \$62.8 million on Home Care; '93-94, \$64,201,700; the next year, 1994-95, \$66,272,000. These are actual expenditures.

You can argue that in one year we might have overspent the budget or underspent the budget, and it was argued once or twice that we underspent the budget, but the actual expenditures just kept on going up, up, up.

So, 1994-95, \$66,272,000, and this year we are budgeting—this is a budgeted number this year—\$69,207,700. I do not know if we will come in exactly at that number. I suspect we will not. The indications—we might not be underspent this year.

Those numbers represent a very, very significant increase. I forget my percentages, but we have virtually doubled home care spending in seven years. You cannot say that about the hospital sector, and that is not what we set out to do either. Nobody asked us to, not even the hospitals. In fact, we have got partners in hospitals who understand the direction we have to go and work with us, are willing to work with us. We want them to work even harder with us in our relationship with the Home Care program, get that working very smoothly so that we do not have to worry about backups and worry about what we are going to do on so-called Filmon Fridays and those sorts of things.

I want to make sure that this year the Filmon Fridays, if they are going to be, that they come and they go and the patients do not even know which day is a Filmon Friday. That is what I want. If it requires backup services from the private sector to make that happen, then so it shall be, because we are going to provide services to patients. We are very, very committed to our Home Care program.

I regret very much that honourable members opposite and some others have exploited some of the growing pains that a Home Care program like this can experience with the kind of growth we have seen and actually have people believing that we are looking at cutbacks in the light of doubled spending in home care. Oh, and in fact, there have been cuts in some areas and increases in other areas, but to just say there have been cutbacks and not say anything else is not being truthful or is not being forthright with the people.

These numbers represent fluctuations, also, in the number of people being served, the kinds of services they are getting. We need to continue the path we are on. I get some very nice compliments from time to time, lately especially, from people living in elderly persons' housing, how we have really done a better job over the last year in terms of co-ordinating our efforts for people in those places—does not mean there have not been mistakes along the way, does not mean that we are still going to have in some cases grievous problems that we regret and do not want to happen anymore. We have put in place systems to make sure that there are not those sorts of things.

It bothers me when an event does take place which I wish did not happen, but when it is exploited to the degree that it is exploited, to bring discredit on every single person who works in the Home Care program, after some of the tales the honourable member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) would tell, how would you like to go and tell your neighbour, I work for Home Care?

I have talked to people who work for Home Care. They say it is not like that. It is not like we are hearing. I participated in a televised debate during the election campaign. I participated in phone-in programs. I cannot even remember all the debates I was in, there had to be seven or eight or nine of them altogether, all on health care.

But, thank goodness, there were some people besides partisans listening in, and they would call in and say: What are you talking about, my mom gets excellent service, my dad gets excellent service, and, oh, yeah, this happened a couple of years ago, it got sorted out and everything is fine.

There are going to be problems in a system that serves so many people and provides such a range of services. I do not invite them, I do not even welcome them, and when I hear of them I want them stopped. But let not anybody suggest that the good people who work for the Home Care program have in mind to do anything but the right thing for the patients. If we have not got all our structures the way they should be then we must remain committed to addressing those things. That is why we are going to rely more and more as we enter this new mandate on the services of the advisory committee to the Home Care program to give us advice, and we expect to be following that advice.

* (1700)

I met with various players. I went out on a home care call one day to Napinka, I think it was, Napinka, Manitoba. I went on a couple of home care calls here in the city of Winnipeg.

I am always learning, Mr. Chairperson, and there is always room for learning. I enjoyed the experience. I feel badly for people who are not as fortunate as I and

are housebound, but, you know, there are some people who are pretty disabled that we are able to bring a fair amount of quality into their lives. It is really nice to see how some people appreciate so very much the work their home care attendant or their home support worker or the nursing profession brings to them or the relationship that they have with their care co-ordinators.

There are an awful lot, the numbers that reflect the 24,000 reflect 24,000 or more relationships between people, and we ought never to forget that. We ought never to think that all is unfortunate or all is negative, because not all is, and I think that sometimes we fail, when we look at some of the shortcomings that exist, to reflect for a minute or two on all of the success stories in the Home Care program. We want to see more and more success stories, we want to see more and more people served by them. We want to see levels of service and care rising to meet the need that we know is going to be rising too in the system. As we take people out of hospital, the level of care required at home is going to be higher than if all you needed was a minimum of service to keep you living comfortably at home.

I do not think that the concept of home care is all that difficult to understand. Carrying it off successfully is a very big job and the more help we get, the more we want, the more we accept, the more we appreciate. But I do appreciate constructive help, constructive advice, and it is going to be my commitment to act on that constructive kind of advice and to make it my business to understand which advice is not constructive.

There is a little bit of that around, but most of the advice we get is constructive, and we will be following it, and before we are very far into the present mandate, I expect that the honourable member for Kildonan is just going to want to change the subject every time home care comes up, Mr. Chairperson.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Yes, Mr. Chairperson, very briefly because I do not have too much time, I wanted to ask the minister with respect to the office of the Continuing Care Program, I understand that it has been disbanded or is going to be disbanded.

Can the minister give some comments as to what is the current status of that office?

Mr. McCrae: Mr. Chairperson, in the same way we discussed earlier on in these Estimates the whole concept of the Women's Health Branch being folded into a different administrative structure in the department—and that had nothing whatever to do with program delivery or even policy development. It was strictly an administrative reshuffle, if you like.

Similarly with the honourable member's question, we are talking about a reorganization of the department. We used to have six assistant deputy ministers. Now we have three. That entails a realignment of all of the things that go on in the department.

At the present time, Home Care, Home Care Supplies and Support Services for Seniors are all in the one area, and Tammy Mattern is directing all of those things. She reports to Ms. Hicks, so what we are talking about is an administrative realignment of the department.

Mr. Lamoureux: This does nothing in terms of taking back any services that would be out there or no cutting of services. It is just more of trying to make it more bureaucratically efficient, and I am pleased to hear that.

Is there any private-sector aspect to this being brought in or being considered to even being brought in?

Mr. McCrae: I think I can make this very simple for all honourable members. Since I have been minister, there have been no program reductions in the three areas I talked about, Home Care, Supplies or Support Services for Seniors. In fact, there have been very, very significant increases. Other than the cleaning and laundry, which was the issue of 1993, there have been no reductions in services in a policy sense. I mean, you have all these thousands of people getting served. Once you recover, then you have all your services cut, right? You have recovered; you do not need any. Some do. Some need more and they get it, but in a policy sense, there have been no reductions.

The honourable member asks about private-sector involvement which I have made very, very clear. I am

looking forward to private-sector involvement in the delivery of services at home in the very near future. I see gaps where our program was never designed to fill those gaps in the first place, but because of expectations, No. 1, and No. 2, need, which we have not met in the past and which I want to see met, I see a quick and efficient way to get online with delivering services in a backup way would be to involve the private sector.

* (1710)

I see it in two or three areas. I see it in the area of providing backup services for those times when our HomeCare program is, because of labour arrangements or so-called Filmon Fridays or whatever it happens to be, or because we just simply have not done this before in this way—we have not guaranteed services in the past. It is in these areas, and the other area I see room for private-sector involvement is the transition from hospital to the community.

I see room for the private sector. I see room for nonprofit involvement through agencies like the Victorian Order of Nurses, and I see the government-run program.

I would like to see a level playing field, however, so that when we do ask the private sector to be involved, they get an opportunity to compete for the business on a level playing field. It is one thing to say that you would like to have private-sector involvement and then have a system where they cannot possibly compete. That does not make any sense.

I am interested in the patient, and we have lots of money to spend in the Home Care area, and I just want to see us spending in such a way that the patient is going to receive services, but as I said to the honourable member previously, as in the Seven Oaks project, one of the comments from one of the patients was, oh, I did not realize we had anybody else involved in this.

That is the way I want it to be. I do not want clients to have to feel that they have to ask for people's union cards before they let them in the door to help them with their health care needs. A union card does not really

matter to somebody who needs home I.V. therapy. It does not matter to somebody who cannot see their way to the other end of the room and their home care worker has walked out on them. They do not care about a union card. Anybody who wants to defend that kind of a system is not going to have my support.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Acting Chairperson, I have been listening to the minister go on, and I think the minister does a disservice to people that are home care workers by going off on his tangent which is identified in the original speech. It is the vested interest speech, it is the No. 1 speech of the minister about the union cards. I do not think he does any service to the thousands of dedicated home care workers, people who have come to my office, who have been upset because they could not provide the proper care, and it was not because of the fact they did not want to provide the care, it is because of the bureaucratic tangles.

It is because of disorganization. It is because of a variety of factors that prevents them from doing the kind of work—people who have come to my office who sneak back home to work with senior citizens who need the help because they are prevented from doing that. I think it is a disservice of the minister to home care workers to suggest that it is because of unionization or something in that regard that these people do not want to do their jobs. I think it is wrong and inappropriate for the minister to go off on that particular tangent.

We have identified that long ago, and we have said that the program needs to be changed adequately and properly to reflect the situation, the circumstances of the '90s, and to reflect the demographics. We have made suggestions as to how that should be done. But to suggest that home care workers are interested not in that, in fact to suggest that to any caregivers I think is inappropriate of the minister to do so. The minister might criticize me and say that I am making those claims, but I think it is inappropriate to attach it to those very dedicated people, many of whom have sat in the minister's office and have sat in my office and talked about the dilemmas and some of the circumstances. The minister knows that.

Can the minister advise me whether or not I will be receiving the statistics and numbers about the various

matters that I raised earlier concerning the numbers of the home support workers, home care attendants and overnight daily work registered nursing, LPNs, therapy and those assessed for admissions?

Mr. McCrae: Mr. Chairperson, I thought I might get the honourable member's attention with some of those comments, and maybe he ought not to jump to the conclusions that he has. As I said a while ago, there are a lot of excellent people working in the Home Care program. In fact, there are 750 more of them today than there were five years ago, and this is all kinds. There is a range of people who work for our Home Care program. There are professional people, there are therapists, there are nurses, there are home care attendants, there are home support workers, and all those people are employed, in one way or another, in the Home Care program.

I prefaced all of my comments by paying tribute to the kind of service they deliver, and I know them, too. I have talked to them, as the member says. I have listened to them. I have listened to their input. I have gone on home care trips with them. I have done all those things now, and I understand the kinds of things they put up with. They put up, sometimes, with schedules that may not work just so for the clients, or for them, for that matter, and those sorts of things can be made better through more attention paid to co-ordination.

I have made myself aware of some of the issues, perhaps not all, but certainly some of them. I know that home care attendants, for example, would like very much to have some input into some of the assessments or the planning for their clients, and, also, who better to take note of a change in the client's condition, or situation, or care requirements, and to report them to the co-ordination function of this program. We have home care workers involved in our appeal and advisory boards. We have nursing professionals involved in those boards to assist us in giving us advice. So I do not really want to take too many lectures from the honourable member for Kildonan about disservice to people.

My goodness, I have listened to him make suggestions that have nothing whatever to do with

people, but everything to do with union bosses, and, you know, I do not want to get into speech No. 1 today. Speech No. 1 is about union bosses, I think it is, and I have made that speech before. But I say, let us get those things out of our heads because they cloud our thinking. If all we think about is how is this going to work for the union bosses, then we have already forgotten who we are working for. [interjection] Well, I am not. I told you how I am pulling myself away from that part of the speech.

I do not want to do any disservice to anybody. My job here is to provide service. We know we can put the money to the task. Now let us use the money appropriately. There is nobody I know saying, spend more now, spend more, not after a proper examination of the situation. They are not asking that more be spent; they are asking that it be spent better, and so there will be changes made. There will be adjustments made to this and other programs to make them work for the patient, for the client.

The honourable member asked about numbers. I gave him some numbers. I gave him very, very significant numbers dealing with expenditures for the Home Care program. I mean I could argue, I will not do this today, I have done it before, but I could argue that our commitment to home care is far greater than any commitment ever demonstrated by the New Democratic Party. Our commitment has doubled, in seven years, any commitment ever shown by the New Democrats, but I am not going to make that point today because I have made it before.

It does not mean the New Democrats did not have any commitment, because they were spending millions and millions of dollars, too. Were they getting value for the money? I suggest there might have been gaps where the value was slipping through the cracks, and so were the patients, so were the clients.

So I ask all of the home care people, right from the home support workers to the home care attendants, to the nurses and the other professionals involved in delivering services to the home care co-ordinators, and right up to the top echelons of the department, to put the patient first. There are signs that is happening. It does not happen overnight, and I wish it would, but it

is going to result in the first part of this government's mandate in a vastly more focused, vastly improved system of home caring services for our fellow Manitobans who need those services.

I am not going to be very impressed when somebody is assessed in a fair manner as not requiring services anymore, that they have recovered enough that they or their home network of family or whatever can look after their needs. I am not going to be impressed if the honourable member wants to come forward and make a very big issue out of something that ought not to be made an issue of.

* (1720)

It is important that we take seriously legitimate criticism and accept it and acknowledge mistakes and move on. It is not important to me to get bogged down in a political diatribe that does nothing for anybody when all of the aforementioned people are part of this network of trying to make improvements to make our Home Care system sustainable for a long time and to do the job that it is supposed to do, and that is to get people a quality of life that they cannot get in another way in the health system. [interjection] I have shared many numbers with the honourable member.

Mr. Chomiak: My question: Is the minister going to give me the figures on the various services? If this program has expanded as dramatically and has had as dramatic an effect on Manitobans, and that many more Manitobans are taking advantage of a service after the downsizing of acute care facilities, then presumably the minister ought to be wearing these numbers of his chest and be prepared to share them with all of the members of the House.

Mr. McCrae: The honourable member wants some numbers, so I will give him some numbers to digest. I have given him some numbers representing dollars, and now I am going to give the honourable member some numbers representing units of service.

A unit of service is an hour, and between 1985 and 1995, the units of service have increased from some 2.8 million to 4.5 million hours, services, delivered to people. Now that is what we paid for. I do not know

if every unit equals exactly an hour. If it does not, we ought to check that out because if someone is assigned to do an hour's worth of work at somebody's home, and the tasks that they are entitled to do are completed in half an hour, why not look at that issue? I am suggesting that we do. I think others are, too.

In 1985-86 total service units were 2,858,441. Before I go on, you will see generally an upward trend in all of these numbers until you reach 1993 when the reduction in cleaning and laundry services happened, and you will see a reduction that year. Generally speaking, you will see a tremendous increase in units of service for home care.

(Mr. Chairperson in the Chair)

Moving to 1986-87 there were 3,574,156 units of service. Those are still NDP years, even this next one is. They increased units of service that year up to 3,678,389. Then '88-89 came along and there were 3,396,819, a slight decrease in the units of service that year. However, the next year, '89-90, the units of service increased to 3,501,213 units of service; 1990-91, 3,868,329; '91-92, 4,187,310 million units of service; 1992-9—the honourable member for Transcona (Mr. Reid) now does not want to hear the numbers. So I do not know who am I supposed to listen to, the honourable member for Transcona or the honourable member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak). Well, it is out of my respect for the member for Kildonan that I will continue to put some numbers on the record here.

In 1992-93 the number went up to 4,423,286; 1993-94, as I pointed out earlier, a reduction which I suspect reflects reduction in cleaning and laundry services, 4,079,569; 1994-95, these are actual numbers, 4,235,028. That was the year, I understand, we were underspent, underspent in our budget.

I remember honourable members making great hay out of this. You are underspent in your home care budget. Well, it never occurs to them that the budget is driven by the number of people subscribing to the service, too. I would hope that people would recognize that, but if there is a chance to fool anybody on it, and there is a political brownie point to be gained, well then let us try to fool them, okay? That is what happened.

Well, 1995-96 we may not be underspent this year. In fact, I am told we may be something different from that, and we are projecting something in the neighbourhood of 4,551,361—I do not know how you can be that exact, but there you are—units of service.

But the point I am trying to make is that you can go one year to the next with any list of numbers and make a point that is down and up and down and up. It is true, but overall from 2.8 million to 4.5 million over a number of years is up, and it is up very significantly.

Now, these are units of service. They are not some number to describe something else. It is hours of service delivered to fellow Manitobans. That is what we are doing in this program, and it reflects home care attendant services, home support services, nursing services and other services, all of which form part of that team to provide home care services.

* (1730)

Mr. Chomiak: The minister clearly made the argument in those numbers, and the fact is, at a time when acute care hospitals were downsizing, at a time when more home care support was needed, if you look at the 1991 figure, it equates the 1994-95 figure—4.2, 4.2 million. So it indicates that the number of people receiving service in home care in those downsizing years was constant, which has been our argument.

If, Mr. Chairperson, we are moving services from the acute care institutions into the community, that number ought to be up dramatically. If all of those tens of millions of dollars, not a million, not two million, not even 50 million, but more, have been taken from the acute care hospitals and supposedly not cut and supposedly moved into the community, it ought to be reflected in increased hours of service, but in fact, from the minister's own numbers that he has given us, that is not the case. And if you combine that with the changing demographics, it basically states our case. It states the case, and it also reflects the figures that I used over and over again on those very debates the minister talked about.

The last figure from the Department of Health that dealt with the number of total monthly admissions to

home care was 11,395, from the annual report, 1993-94. Total assessed for admissions in 1993-94 were 11,395; the year previous, 13,139, down 1,700 assessed for admissions at a time when acute care hospitals are being cut back, at a time when all of these services are supposed to be in the community.

Now, I am not going to argue with the minister the fact that overall—and I am using the statistics from the Annual Report of the Department of Health. The minister has not given me any updated statistics. I have asked for them, and what the minister gave me was units of services in the millions, and it is very, very interesting that last year's number matches completely 1991; 1991 was before the downsizing, before the so-called move to the community, and yet the figures from 1991 and this year match.

Now the minister says, next year there is going to be more. Even if there is more, it will only achieve 1993 levels, but I do not want to get into that.

The point is well made by the statistics given by the minister, and the point is well made that there has not been an effort to expand resources in the community during a time when acute care facilities are being cut back and when resources are supposed to be provided in the community.

In fact it is a constant, and the minister, when he said 24,000 people served, 24,000 people served year after year after year, that rough number, he would not give me the specific number, I know, and maybe I will still get the specific number, but he said 24,000 people, and that reflects what we have been hearing in the community, that in fact while the levels of service remain constant, the services being offered, be it in the day surgery—the minister always talks about the decrease in the day surgery—be it in the cutting of acute care hospital beds, the service has not been increased in the community, and that has been the point of our argument for some time.

It has not been an argument about whether the government spent more in home care or less in home care. The services in home care would go up by demographics anyway, just by natural growth, Mr. Chairperson. But they have not been reflected in

efforts in the community, and we have not seen that yet under this government. I hope we will see it in the future, but the point has been made by the figures provided by the minister quite solidly.

Mr. McCrae: Mr. Chairman, I appreciate what the honourable member has said, and some of the things he says do indeed reflect a change in some of the policies of the Home Care program, but he forgot to take into account that in that same time period, between 1988 and 1995, the number of personal care home beds has increased by 515. That has served many, many people over that period of time.

The honourable member forgot to mention the grants to the Support Services for Seniors projects that have been made, and those projects have done a number of things for Manitobans. They have provided some home support services to Manitobans. We have also provided meals programs and recreation programs. [interjection] The honourable member now wants to think of a meal as a unit of service. The honourable member now wants to think of spending some time with friends in a relaxed, enjoyable atmosphere—maybe getting some exercise, as a unit of service. You cannot do that.

The honourable member wants to mix these things up and play that shell game with people. He does not want to talk about adult daycare where in February of 1994 we moved forward with the expansion of adult daycare for a total of 651 weekly spaces.

I will just give him a status report as of a little earlier this year, the expansion process effective in May of this year. In rural Manitoba previously there were 631 spaces. Now with the addition of 18 new programs and the expansion of 17 more, that resulted in 235 spaces in the new programs and 153 in the expanded ones for a total new spaces of 388, new spaces. That is more than, not quite more than that but it is more than 50 percent increase in the number of spaces and that gives us a total current spaces in rural Manitoba of 1,019. In Winnipeg there were previously 646 spaces, what with five new programs, representing 202 spaces, and another 38 spaces in three more expanded programs for a total of 240. We now have 886 spaces in Winnipeg where we had 646.

The honourable member does not take into account in his comments of the fact that in Haywood, Manitoba, \$6,500 went to the Support Services for Seniors project. In Ashern, \$11,900 went to the Ashdale Holdings which is a support services project. In Winnipeg, the honourable member forgot to mention, conveniently, that \$29,000 was going to the Bethel Mennonite Care Services Inc. Oh, and he forgot to mention the \$6,600 going to Blumenort Senior Citizens Housing, the \$20,000 going to the Broadway Seniors Resource Council of Winnipeg, the \$13,000 going to the Brooklands Weston Community Resource Council, and \$6,600 going to the Camperville Senior Citizens group.

Why did the honourable member not mention those things? I just got started. I will perhaps have an opportunity to talk more about that. Why did he forget to mention that in his comments? Oh, and by the way, cutting the cleaning and laundry aspect for people was not a fun sort of thing to do.

There are people, I think, whose lives could be made a little easier if that kind of a program was still available. But in all of the millions being spent for home care, is it not wise and would the honourable member not support using those dollars in such a way so we can serve as many people as we can in order to—with the dollars that we can make available? [interjection]

The honourable member says, it is not logical to try to keep people in their homes. [interjection] The honourable member argues—he is still arguing the same thing he was arguing for the—[interjection] The honourable member does not accept my logic and I accept that. He made a point during 1993, the people of Rossmere made a point in 1993. The honourable member argues, five by-elections we lost. Actually, we lost one. We lost Rossmere, and Harry Schellenberg remembers that, but since that time, Mr. Chairman, a lot of things have happened in Manitoba.

* (1740)

There has been a general election too, and the honourable Minister of Labour (Mr. Toews) represents the Rossmere riding. We were able to show

Manitobans that we are really attempting to do the best we can with their dollars to build a quality health system that we can sustain for many years to come. We have shown the people of Manitoba that with the assistance of the Home Care Appeal Panel, the Home Care Advisory Council that we are serious about their concerns when it comes to home care issues. The honourable member is attempting to flog a horse that passed away. [interjection]

Mr. Chairperson, this House is in a state of disorder, this committee. We are attempting to maintain order in this place and have a rational discussion, but the heckling from all those honourable members on the other side of the House is becoming so thunderous that I can hardly hear myself think. However, I will attempt to carry on.

You know, we are attempting through Support Services to Seniors to carry out the goals and objectives set out in Quality Health for Manitobans, The Action Plan. That came out in the spring of 1992. I know that the adjustments, the reductions to the cuts to cleaning and laundry which happened in 1993 were off-putting to some people and they needed to be addressed and were, I suggest, through the advent of a number of initiatives that we have taken since.

The whole issue of supplies was another matter which was raised and much was made of. When it came right down to it in my consultations upon becoming Minister of Health, the main problem that I have perceived through my meetings with so many people and groups and organizations had to do with the ostomy supplies. I asked the department—there are not very many people affected by that, the Ostomate Association tells me that—can you not work with the Ostomate Association to deal with the circumstances of those few people which their own membership described as a handful of people?

I cannot even tell you today exactly what the outcome was, but I do know that the department did extend itself and work with the association and arrangements were made to put that matter behind us. I regret, anybody would regret, making life unnecessarily difficult for anybody. As a result of all of those consultations, we have been able to bring some

relative calm to the whole health care debate in Manitoba.

But I say it has not been easy, it would not have been easy anyway, but the honourable member has not been helpful, I would say with all due respect to him and his colleagues. They have simply milked the health care issue and made it into a political game which none of us, when we really examine the issues, want health care to be. We want to view it as a very serious matter, something we want to preserve, enhance to the extent that we can with the resources that we have available.

I do not hear the honourable member gloating about Rossmere today. I did for a year and one-half and then all the gloating stopped. Well, the people of Manitoba looked at the whole performance of the government and said, yes, we were mad at you about that and we have sent you a message about that, you have done some things to address the issues that made us angry. We addressed them and we continue to address them.

The honourable member is still fighting a by-election from 1993, still fighting an election that just got over a month or two ago. Now we want to get on and continue to build some strength into our system, some integrity into it so that it works the way it is supposed to work. Every effort is being made to make this system work the way it is supposed to work. At \$1.85 billion and at 34 percent of spending, the highest level in this country, no one can tell me that we Manitobans are not committed to our health care system. Now that is the main feature, that is the main thing that New Democrats want to attack. They want to convince fellow Manitobans that because of this issue or that issue relating to cleaning and laundry, for example, there is no commitment on the part of—Connie Curran—this government to health care.

I reject all that categorically. I was here, I was not Health minister when some of those things were happening. I know what the honourable member wants to tell me the Premier (Mr. Filmon) said during the Leaders' debate in the recent election campaign, I accept what the Premier said, I agree with him.

I also know that we were able to bring people together through that project and to do some thinking,

some brainstorming, some planning, some evaluating of the way we do things in our hospitals and make improvements. To do what? To do a better job for the patient in the hospital. That is what the hospitals are there for, I remind the honourable member.

The staff are there to use their skills to make a hospital experience one of feeling, one of comfort, all of those things. Hospitals ought not be the hotbeds of politics that the honourable member wants to make them. Hospitals are places of caring and healing. So let us stop flogging that dead horse.

The points have been made by the honourable member. The people of Manitoba were listening. The government was listening. Adjustments have been made to account for some of the legitimate concerns that were raised. Adjustments will continue to be made to make sure that our programs are running the way they are supposed to run and getting the results we want to get. Additional funds have been made available through the shift in services and resources from the acute care sector to community alternatives. I keep saying this.

A three-year initiative provides \$698,000 to develop new services in areas of the province which are currently underserviced. Fifteen new projects and expansions for 12 existing projects received funding effective April 1, 1994. An additional 17 projects have been funded in 1994-95, and 15 projects this year. All of this has to do with our Support Services for Seniors.

I have been out and about, and I have been out with Bev Kyle who is involved with that program, and I have met with co-ordinators in that program. That is growing and expanding. If you visit some of these seniors centres, you see a lot of happy people. I got a free dinner one night at one of the meals programs here in Winnipeg. About 30 or 40 people were there, and it was a great experience, and I have done it elsewhere as well. I think I had to pay one time, but I offered to pay both times.

The point is, these things are bringing some quality into people's lives. They are worth doing, and a lot of people are taking a lot of pleasure in seeing these programs getting started, taking part in the operation of

the programs, being a volunteer themselves, as well as a recipient of benefits of the programs, and they are also doing a lot in terms of community development.

We have a volunteer sector at work in many of our communities that are simply doing what they can to make life just a little nicer for their fellow citizens. I think that is what Manitoba is about. We also have some pretty important benefits to go along with it. It is taking us some way down the road towards the promotion of a healthy life, which is something we really need to do.

* (1750)

I had a very interesting experience earlier this week. It seems like a long week already. The honourable member will remember Dr. Bogdan Trach, who was in the gallery one day. He is a politician and a medical doctor from Ukraine. The honourable member, this is close to his heart. They had virtually nothing to start with in the sense of a rationalized health care system in Ukraine, and Dr. Trach and his assistant, Ms. Antoniuk, were here to visit Manitoba to help them in the development of their own health reform project in Ukraine.

Dr. Trach is trying desperately to build on that community level. In Ukraine, they have district and regional hospitals and, well, frankly, not a whole lot else. They have some medical practitioners, but they have to start from scratch. In terms of what we have here, that is what you would have to say, because he said to me that they are starting from almost nothing.

We have so much that has been done in our country and in our province. We have lots to do by our standards, but the Ukrainians, I am sure, would be happy if they only had to start where we are at today. They have to do a lot more. They do not even have the fundamentals in some of their communities.

They have their built-up urban communities, but in the countryside, it is fairly rudimentary. Clean water is still an issue in a lot of places. That is fundamental, as the honourable member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) knows, but as we are here debating, as we are, and exchanging venom from time to time, let us not forget

that here in Manitoba, we enjoy things like the safest obstetric services basically anywhere in the world. We have immunization programs. We have water treatment, and we have waste management systems in place in most of our communities. There are a few very notable exceptions, but there again, when we learn about them, we act, as well.

We have much to be thankful for, and that is due to the commitment of successive governments in our province that have done a good job, I suggest, with the development of our health system. I do add, though, they sure could have done a lot better over the years, but nobody knew.

Nobody was really thinking in the way we are thinking today. We now have to think the way we think. We now have to look at outcomes and determinants of health, and we have to look at how best to spend the dollars that are available to us.

We cannot do it the way it was done in the days when governments felt that borrowing and taxing and spending was the best way to govern. It must have been easy for those people in those days. [interjection]

It was fun for some of those politicians. I know there were others around in those days, however, who were counselling caution. I know they were there. The honourable member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns) can probably remember some of those people.

There are some people who, in our system, do not exactly study history; they remember it. Of course, there would not be anybody in this Chamber like that, but the last of those we lost recently, when D.L. Campbell, former Premier of Manitoba, passed away, leaving a legacy of service and selfless commitment to his province.

Mr. Chairman, I think that the honourable member may want to wrap up today, unless you want me to talk for a few more minutes.

Mr. Chomiak: I am not going to get into a long argument or discussion with the minister on his interpretation or my interpretation, nor am I going to fight old battles.

I simply used the numbers that the minister had provided in order to determine, to make a point which, I think, is very plain on the record, so suffice that it is on the record to be seen by all.

My question to the minister is, can the minister outline for me what the [interjection]. No, it is a question about the VON. [interjection] I wonder if the minister can outline for me what the status is of the VON contract this year and how much is budgeted.

Mr. McCrae: Mr. Chairperson, in approximate terms, we contract to the tune of about \$8 million annually with the Victorian Order of Nurses.

Mr. Chomiak: Is that this fiscal year?

Mr. McCrae: This is for nursing services.

Mr. Chomiak: For this fiscal year?

Mr. McCrae: That is about the number for this fiscal year as well.

Just before we got onto that question, I was talking about a former Premier of Manitoba who was a personal friend of mine whom I was privileged to count as my friend. But, he also happened to be the predecessor of the Minister of Agriculture. I take some interest in these things.

I am not a historian or anything but it was 25 years ago that the Minister of Agriculture was first appointed Minister of Agriculture and things kind of come full

circle and now the member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns) is Minister of Agriculture again.

There have only been two MLAs for Lakeside in its history as a constituency of some 70 years and those two members were the Honourable D.L. Campbell and the present member for Lakeside, which is quite a history for a constituency. Doug Campbell, I think, took that riding by acclamation about three or four times having held it for about 43 or 44 years, 47 years maybe.

The days of acclamation, as the honourable member for Kildonan knows, are basically over. We do not have that sort of treatment anymore, so we fight hard for every vote that we get. We certainly work hard to try to keep the support of the people.

Mr. Chairman, it has been a real pleasure today taking part in this examination of the Estimates. I appreciate the sporting approach taken by the honourable member for Kildonan and we will see you tomorrow.

Mr. Chairperson: The hour being 6 p.m., committee rise.

Call in the Speaker.

IN SESSION

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Marcel Laurendeau): The hour being 6 p.m., this House is now adjourned and stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow (Friday).

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, June 15, 1995

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