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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

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Friday, May 3, 1996

The House met at 9 a.m.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

(Continued)

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

(Concurrent Sections)

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Mr. Deputy Chairperson (Ben Sveinson): Good morning. Will the Committee of Supply please come to order. The committee will be resuming consideration of the Estimates of the Department of Education and Training. When the committee met yesterday afternoon, it had been considering item 2.(c)(1) on page 35. Shall the item pass?

The honourable minister, to finish her answer.

Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Education and Training): I do not think I had started it.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: No. Well, please start and finish your answer.

Mrs. McIntosh: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

When we broke yesterday, the member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen) had asked some questions which I indicated I would start today with by answering. She had some questions about the English language arts exam. As an indication for some of the response, I would indicate to the committee that upon completion of the marking of the English language arts exam, markers were asked to complete an exit questionnaire. There were about 136 markers and group leaders who completed the exit-slip questionnaire which was designed by department personnel.

The questionnaire asked for comments on the examination instrument, on the training and marking process, on the role of departmental personnel and on the facilities. In addition to that, respondents were invited to make general comments and to provide suggestions for

future large-scale English language arts assessment projects.

A large majority of the team leaders and the markers commented favourably on the exam instrument, on the fairness of the instrument for students and on the value of the marking experience. One message permeated the responses, and that was that the marker training process and the marking experience was viewed as a most valuable professional development experience.

A quote that was made by many was, and I am quoting: The best P.D. I have ever had.

In addition, the majority of respondents commented positively on the excellent organization of this vast project, and the term "excellent" was the term that was applied.

Several respondents commented favourably on the exam and the exam process but expressed their concerns as to how the results would be used. Respondents were asked to comment on the exam instrument used in the categories: fairness, process component, demand component and reading test. The overriding response of those completing the response form was that the exam instrument was well thought out and very fair. That was in 83 of the responses.

A response from several was that the exam was fair to all, yet offered a challenge to AP and IB. Many recognized the difficulty of designing an instrument suitable for such a wide range of abilities, and many expressed the view that the instrument was, in quotes again: as fair as it could possibly be.

The process-writing component received the most detailed comments. The reading-for-process writing booklet, Awareness, received accolades from the vast majority of respondents for its variety in both difficulty and subject matter. The repeated comment was, materials were challenging and fair.

Some expressed concerns, however, regarding the length of the reading booklet and thought that the

purpose of the reading-for-process writing could have been accomplished with fewer selections.

The most frequent concern was that students had to refer directly to only one reading selection from the reading-for-process writing awareness booklet. The concern here was this dictate will convey to students and teachers that the readings do not have to be read entirely in order to successfully complete the process-writing component.

Many commented that the demand writing was interesting and provocative. This component of the exam, however, did receive some criticism. In general, respondents applauded the choice of readings that proceeded this writing assignment and were the basis for reading questions. The fairness of this component of the exam and the variety of the reading passages were applauded by the majority of those responding to the questionnaire. Many commented specifically on the three levels of reading questions—literal, interpretative and critical reflective—as a fair approach. Thirty-three said that their students found the passages interesting and challenging and that students enjoyed reading the selections in the collection. Three respondents recommended that the reading component be completed prior to the process writing and, therefore, marked earlier.

One hundred and four, which was an overwhelming number of those responding to the questionnaire, stated that the marking training ranged from very good to excellent. The expression and the feeling, "I felt confident when I began marking" and "This was a P.D. experience I would not have missed" was expressed by many. Group leaders, 28, responded that not only had they enjoyed their roles, but they felt well trained and well prepared.

Concerns centred around exemplar choices and rational and last minute and/or midstream changes to the reading answer key. A solution for the problems regarding exemplar selection and reliability papers was suggested by several, and that was that a small number of group leaders be brought in early to select exemplar and reliability papers and to have time to develop detailed rationale to support their selections.

Fifty markers and group leaders reported that they found the marking scheme very good to excellent, and 12

group leaders commented on the improvement on this schema from the November model. Many respondents said that they will use this schema in their classrooms and several suggested that posters be prepared for classroom display. The laminated card, the short form, appeared to be the one most appreciated.

Fifty reported they found the key to be very good; an equal number reported concerns and frustrations. Problems with the key centred on the bulkiness of the instrument and issues such as the use of half marks and the awkwardness of mark recording. Reliability reviews both at home tables and by random grouping or tumbling were considered an important and integral part of the process by over 100 markers. While the tumbling process was initially considered upsetting and by some disruptive and threatening, all but a very few in the final analysis reported that they came at the end to value the experience and to see it as an important part of the reliability process. So an opinion there changed as the process went on.

In summing up the use of reliability reviews, one respondent expressed the thoughts of many in the comment: we fought, we argued, we grew, the best P.D. in years. The response from respondents was overwhelmingly in favour of the small group with trained leaders format for facilitating the marking process. Seventy-five people described their group leader as wonderful and only three responded that they thought the small-group model was unnecessary. Eighty commented on the camaraderie and support that developed within the group and several expressed interest in staying together in June. Only two advocated that the groups be reorganized for each segment of the exam. Many markers admitted they were tired at the end, but most of them said that all that was possible had been done to ensure their "creature comforts" and to encourage them to take breaks.

Twenty-six group leaders responded that they felt well trained and that they had thoroughly enjoyed the process and enjoyed working with their group. Several commented that they appreciated being involved from the beginning in order to make them really feel part of the team.

The departmental team was commended, applauded and congratulated by virtually all respondents. Accolades were given for organization, quote: However did you do

this; it worked smoothly and efficiently. Professionalism, quote: the highest compliment I can give. Energy, quote: You must have been all exhausted, but you never let it show—and cheerfulness, quote: How did you keep on smiling?

Most also reported that the ongoing reminders to take breaks and the, quote: great care and concern you showed us—relieved stress and contributed to this being, quote: the best experience that I have had ever working for the department, and, quote: the best professional development possible.

* (0910)

Many respondents commented favourably on Fort Garry Place as a marking facility. In particular they commented on the spaciousness of the room in which they were housed, the indoor parking facilities, the lunch facilities and the general pleasant working environment.

The greatest concerns expressed were that the room was too brightly lit and too cold at times, lacking in air movement and that the smoking facilities should not have been located en route to the dining room. Most considered that they were fed well, good food, but a considerable number, 23, requested that in the future meals be lighter with soup and sandwiches on alternate days, and that snacks consist more of fresh fruits.

Most markers reported appreciation that everything had been done to keep them comfortable. While many commented there was just too much paper—is that my time up? Oh. I am not quite through but I will just conclude this last sentence, so—

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: It is okay. The member for Wolseley says you can finish that up.

Mrs. McIntosh: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the opportunity to continue a little bit beyond the time. I do not have much left, but it keeps all the thoughts together here. So thanks to the member for Wolseley.

While many commented that there was just too much paper and expressed concerns regarding recycling, most admitted that they had no suggestions to put forward on

eliminating the amount of paper involved in all aspects of the process.

Quote: This has been fabulous and we are all the better teachers because of it. The department has made an impact on the classroom.

Another quote: It is encouraging to see that teachers from across the province are doing largely the same thing, and do have similar views on the education process.

Quote: My students will write in June. This experience has alleviated many of my concerns.

We received this kind of feedback with a tremendous number of compliments and also some very helpful suggestions for improvement, and constructive critique on things that were seen as hindrances to the process and could help make it even better. But in addition to this kind of feedback, I indicate to the member that we have also asked a number of Senior ELA teachers and divisional consultants to review the criticisms of the examination. They also provided us with their expert opinions which will work to help guide our work along with the valuable contributions of all our teacher partners.

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

All of the information that has been received, including that used during the pilot phase, which was a very rigorous process to examine the design structure, content, and mechanics of the exam, are used with the teacher development teams to improve our work. Our interest is to design the best possible test instruments so that students will benefit and so that teachers will learn and be able to apply learnings to the classroom and so that parents will have one more reliable piece of information to inform them about the process of their children.

We are committed to an inclusive approach in the development and implementation of curriculum and programs, and we also are committed to the integration of aboriginal perspectives in the revised and new curricula. The Native Education Directorate participates on all divisional management and cross-functional committees. Aboriginal staff from Program Development and Program Implementation participate on the committees as appropriate.

Every department-led committee has aboriginal representation or aboriginal input, if representation is not available, into its proceedings, as of April 30, 1996, so that is a very recent inclusion. It has always been there, but we now have that as a statement.

During the development cycle of the ELA exam for 1996, we were not able to secure a field aboriginal representative because the nominations from the superintendents did not include the representation that we were seeking, so we are taking a more aggressive role in ensuring that representation. The following committees, for the member's interest, now have aboriginal representation. I will just indicate those. There is a very long list and I do not want to take a lot of time, but I will sort of hop-skip through them to give an indication or—

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley) Do you want to table it tomorrow; or, if it is not in table form, table it another time?

Mrs. McIntosh: Okay, we could do that and that might save us some time. I will table a clean copy of the committees; right now I have scribbling all over it, so it is not presentable. But I will table them. I will just indicate that they are department-led and -initiated committees, committees where department staff are members, committees where department staff have been invited to participate as associate members or personal guests, and government-led committees. There is about a page of committees listed. I will table a clean copy later today.

Students received the readings for the exam for over the weekend. I think the member is familiar with the process there. No questions were attached to this set of information. The process of reading, understanding and being critically reflective were individual activities that a student could engage in, as well as discussions with friends, family, extended family.

The member had expressed some concern yesterday about some students perhaps disadvantaged or advantaged, depending on the perspective, but the member was worried that some might be disadvantaged in not having access, say, to the Internet if some other student did and therefore having access to a wider variety of research capabilities, or know people with views and

so on on the readings that they might be able to tap if others could not.

I think the concern that some students could be disadvantaged could be seen as a difficulty, but, given the evenness of the marks across the province, it did not seem to result in a pattern of lower marks. Now, whether there might have been some marks that would have been higher is hard to determine, and I think that is something that is very difficult to control if we really want to have the ability to read and ponder and further investigate or consider what is being read.

Once our system of student numbers is in place and the standards testing program is fully implemented, we will be in a position to better monitor the types of concerns raised by the member with respect to achievement demonstrated through the provincial testing program as well as the local school assessment programs.

So we have heard the concern that she raised and have noted it for any kind of monitoring that we might be able to put in place.

It is important to emphasize the shared responsibility of student assessment. The school has a very important responsibility to provide students and parents with information about student performance. We support the use of varied instruments and methods to gather this information, but we also believe there is tremendous value in a provincial testing program that is curriculum congruent, contributing information to the teacher, to the student and to the parent.

So we have a very strong commitment to involvement of the community and to the issues related to bias and inclusion concerns that she identified yesterday, and we appreciate that those are very fair and legitimate concerns to raise and ones which we are conscious of and consider important.

I can share just one more example of this by sharing a letter that was received by the department just yesterday and then I will conclude with thanks to the member for extending my time to answer. This is a letter that was sent to us by Wayne Helgason. She may know Wayne. I am sure most of us know Wayne because he has been so active and helpful in terms of the aboriginal community in Manitoba and been very active as well on the Social

Planning Council of Winnipeg. This letter is written to us in his capacity as executive director of the Social Planning Council.

* (0920)

It says, members of the Social Planning Council's multicultural working group appreciated the opportunity to hear from the Excellence For All committee and to present their views at a round table discussion at the Social Planning Council on April 11, 1996. There was a fair exchange of information and ideas at the meeting, with several suggestions put forward by our working group members to ensure commitment and implementation to diversity, antibias education, aboriginal perspectives and gender fairness in the curriculum in teaching and in behaviour in schools. Committee members were open in questioning, explored ideas further and took notes. We understand that the feedback from our meeting, along with that from others, will be considered in the development of the final document and look forward to reviewing the final document. We believe that the department is showing leadership in this area. The issue for us is clarity of directions and expectations of schools, particularly with regard to implementation. He then goes on to indicate that they wish to continue and dialogue, be involved in discussion and to be kept apprised of progress and further opportunities for dialogue.

I just read that into the record as an indication of the type of interaction that we are having with various sectors of society in trying to ensure that the work we do is reflective of the real world in which people live and that we are doing everything we can to take into account views and opinions and perspectives from various groups that might help us prepare curriculum that is well balanced.

I will stop there and, again, my thanks for the extended time and if the member needs extended time for questioning, we will grant it in reverse.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Chairman, I hope not, but I had asked a lot of diverse questions at the end and so it was useful to have it all put in one context. I am also glad to have the summaries of the evaluation of the markers put on the public record as well. I understood the minister to say that the next stage of that is really speaking to the senior

English language arts teachers, speaking perhaps to superintendents and sort of another phase of consultation, and I assume that a similar kind of process will be done at the end of the June exams.

So what I am looking for is really a public discussion of that or a public availability of some of that material. Is the department intending to do that? Has it thought of a format or some way of getting that information back to the public?

Mrs. McIntosh: Mr. Chairman, the feedback we get comes more through an internal process rather than full-scale public hearings, et cetera. We meet with the various groups. They, in turn, bring us the views of their particular organization or interest group, if it is not a formal organization. So the feedback we have been obtaining has come through a more informal internal way. There is a lot of public input but not through the format of a public-hearing type structure. It is more of, if we meet with superintendents, for example, they will provide us with feedback from the superintendents' association as to how they feel, and so on—that type of information flow.

Ms. Friesen: What I was really thinking of was a report on the process. The minister has put on record some of the things that were said by the teachers, and what I was looking for was something that says to the public: Here is what we intended to do; here is what the exam looked like; here is how it was marked; here is our evaluation upon that marking; here is our consultation with superintendents; here is what we learned.

Mrs. McIntosh: This is a good suggestion. It is not something we have done in quite the way the member describes, but it is something I will review with the implementation committee on educational change because it may be possible to issue some sort of information report or some vehicle along that line that would be of assistance or add further awareness of the process. So we are open to improvements in the process. This being a new initiative, there are ideas being put forward from various people, in this instance here from the opposition, that are ones that we will follow up with to take a look at. I will discuss that with the implementation committee and see if they have further ideas and thoughts as to how we might be able to do something along that line, either that specific suggestion or one that would accomplish the same goal. So we will take a look at it. Thank you.

Ms. Friesen: The minister had, in the House, offered to arrange a meeting for me with some of the teachers who had marked this. Would that be possible?

Mrs. McIntosh: We recall the statement from yesterday, and we will be very pleased to contact some of the teachers. The only thing we have to do is get their permission. We are reasonably confident there would be a fair number that would say, sure, we would love to talk about the experience. The reason we need to contact them and get their permission is that when they came on to write, there was a confidentiality form that they signed that said that we would not release their names without their permission because they are marking and all of the concerns that might come about anything in the marking process, but it is our strong feeling and impression that it would not be a problem. So what we will do is we will contact teachers and see if they would like to share their experience, thoughts and opinions, and we are quite confident that we will be able to find a number for the member to talk to. We would be pleased to do that. I think that might be a very worthwhile endeavour for us. So give us a couple of days to effect the permission and the release and we will be pleased to follow through on that for the member.

Ms. Friesen: It might be even more appropriate after the second exam. So it is not something I am looking for immediately but something perhaps toward the fall, if that is possible.

Mrs. McIntosh: That is helpful to us in terms of giving us a little more time because we are sort of crushed right now with our time constraints, but we will try to set it up so that you do not have to wait for June unless you would like to, but we will try to get somebody or a few people available for you before then, as soon as we can.

Ms. Friesen: There was another kind of evaluation or monitoring at this point that I was talking about, and that was the responses of schools to the amount of time that had been taken out of classroom teaching for the exam, and whether the government was in fact monitoring that through consultations with teachers and with parents and principals and superintendents. I wondered also whether the points that I had raised about the monitoring of the impact of this upon students who are relatively new to English as a Second Language could take place. Does the department actually collect that information in ways

that will enable it to measure that impact on those students?

* (0930)

Mrs. McIntosh: Mr. Chairman, this is something that has been a matter of concern and discussion, and it is a particular concern for language arts because it is a longer exam and so on. We did a survey of the larger senior high schools in the province. Over 90 percent of the teachers involved in marking the first semester examinations were not required to be teaching in their schools at that time. For those people it was not a problem, and, in fact, most schools plan a five or six day break for examinations and administration at this time. But it is still a concern where teachers have to be taken out and a substitute in. It is ameliorated somewhat by the fact that having a substitute in under these circumstances is a little different than having to call a substitute at the last minute because you have taken ill or have some other problem that prevents you from getting to school without advance notice. There is opportunity in this particular circumstance for some planning to occur between the regular classroom teacher and the substitute in preparation for the teacher being out of the classroom. Nonetheless, we know that the regular classroom teacher will have a more intimate knowledge of the students, simply because of the amount of time they have spent together, than a substitute could be able to acquire. We are discussing this.

I keep referring to the implementation committee, but what these Estimates are making me aware of is how valuable that group has become in my life. I did not realize the full extent of it until I was forced to pause and consider how many things I am taking to them or they are bringing to me for discussion. So my appreciation for them has been heightened by the awareness I am getting here.

This was one that both the members of the committee and the minister wanted to talk about. All of the things surrounding marking are on the agenda at our implementation committee meetings.

(Mr. Deputy Chairperson in the Chair)

The teachers and superintendents who were the ones arranging for free time and substitutes, et cetera, have views and opinions on this that we will be going through

to see if there is anything that could be done to alleviate any concerns that might be there surrounding the fact that, in many cases, substitutes have to be taken into the school while the teachers are freed to mark.

We are also examining, just as a matter of interest on this whole business of marking, as we analyze the results here and talk to people about their experience, the central provincial marking versus local regional marking, and so we will be looking to see, because some people have said—well, a lot of people, not some, have said the regional marking would be so much more convenient, and we know, of course, that it would be. What we need to find some comfort around is whether or not regional marking versus central marking would show a variation. Other provinces that have done both seem to be showing a variation of greater proportion between regions when it is regional marking than through central marking. But we are going to be taking a look at that in our analysis of this first round. Also, coupled with that then, of course, not just based upon where it was marked, but, on a whole range of items, the reliability and the validity of the testing and the marking.

So I am saying to the member that we know there have been concerns expressed about substitutes. We know that they are not in every school, but we know that the concerns that have been expressed have some merit in them. So we are looking to see what we can do, if anything.

We are preparing a paper for next year, for next year's options, to see if we can make the writing and marking more manageable. For June of '96 in this upcoming examination, we have made some changes to streamline the training and marking process.

I think when we get through all the examination of concerns, the things that went well, the things that did not go well, we may find that we really cannot do anything about having substitutes come in when the teachers go out to mark, that there may not be any better marking times that we can arrange. If that proves to be the case, my own personal feeling is that we still have to have the teachers marking; that they need to be language arts teachers. While the downside would be not having the regular classroom teacher in the room for a period of time while they are marking, that would have to be accepted as

one of the things about the ability to have an assessment done that is one of those grin-and-bear-it things.

I say that knowing that we are trying to work on addressing the concern, but believing that the process of marking and whom we get to mark and how it is marked are fundamentally of higher importance than a lost day with the regular teacher when the opportunity for a well-prepared and prepared-in-advance substitute could be there.

So we are confident that parents, students and teachers in the whole, see these exams as beneficial and that they are a major part of the cycle of teaching, assessing and reporting just as professional development days might be or in-service days.

* (0940)

Ms. Friesen: Could the minister tell us approximately what proportion of the markers were not current classroom teachers? There were, for example, I know some retired teachers that the minister had hoped to involve. Some people also suggested to me that there were student teachers involved. So could the minister perhaps give us—is there any kind of summary analysis of who was involved?

Mrs. McIntosh: We had 75 percent—these are approximate figures but they are accurate. It is just that I do not have the decimal points or anything—but 75 percent of the language arts teachers marking the exams were current language arts teachers. There were no student teachers marking. The remaining 25 percent of teachers marking the exams were retired teachers who had retired within the last two years so they were still current in that sense. They were language arts teachers who had retired who were no more than two years away from the classroom.

Also, in that group we had current substitute teachers who had been trained—well, all of the markers of course were trained but of that 25 percent those who are currently hired as substitute teachers were language arts people also trained, as were the current and retired teachers. So that was the breakdown, 75-25, but no student teachers involved in the marking process.

Ms. Friesen: This is an area of assessment and evaluation generally, and I am wondering what this

section of the department is doing, what is visible, what could be tabled, to encourage other forms of assessment? I am thinking now throughout the school system not just in connection with Grade 12 or English language arts. But one of the fundamentals, I think, is that a variety of forms of assessment be involved. So what is this section of the department doing in areas other than the formalized standard provincial testing?

Mrs. McIntosh: Mr. Chairman, I am going to provide for the member the student assessment handbook. I do not know if she has had an opportunity to see this one before. We put it out in 1995, but it is a fairly recent book, and primarily, it is a resource for developing Seniors 3 and 4 divisional examinations. However, in it, it does have a lot of references to ongoing student assessment, which I think is what the member is getting at. It has assessing student achievement, types of student evaluation, planning student evaluation, et cetera and evaluation through teacher-made tests. Again that is back to a test but it is a deviation from the departmental examining. I do not want to just table it or give it to her but that might be of some interest to her.

We have in the department in the assessment branch, of course, a major portion of their work spent on developing assessment tests and evaluation and so on. The branch does do other things. They will, for example, and again I am still talking testing but not departmental testing. Many divisions, as the member is aware, have divisional exams and upon request the department is available to assist divisions with the development of those, or suggestions and ideas concerning those. In the document that I have handed the member, she will see several items in there, ones that could be of assistance to divisions in that.

In the subsequent curriculum implementation documents there will be additional suggestions for assessment. We have always indicated and firmly believe that there are many ways of knowing about a student's achievement. The provincial standards testing is one of many ways of assessing students in terms of diagnostic information, in terms of identifying areas where there are strengths and areas where there are weaknesses. We have been encouraging schools to implement other ways of knowing about a child and the child's progress, and that again is the partnership that I talked about earlier. We have over time in the education system, and I am

speaking generically now, known that good teachers instinctively, without direction from anybody at any level, on a daily basis are always testing, reflecting and assessing.

* (0950)

Those parts of teaching are seen as so integral to the whole process of teaching that right from the university where people are taught to be teachers through to professional development activities or performance evaluations where they occur, that is always one of the areas that is looked at in the teacher as part of the ability to teach: How well are they able to assess on a daily basis the progress made that day so that the next day's work could be planned appropriately in presenting a lesson? At the end of the lesson, has the teacher ascertained in a variety of ways, and there are many, whether or not that knowledge has been absorbed and understood? For the next day, does the teacher have to come back and review some aspect of it, or is the teacher confident that the knowledge has been known and absorbed well enough that she or he can proceed to the next level of teaching, confident that there is a good base?

So those are daily ongoing aspects of teaching that we need to be conscious of in Faculty of Education training, evaluation of the teachers and basic lesson plans. As the teacher's lesson plans are reviewed and examined, they always need to have a component in them that will give the teacher some reassurance that the student is ready to move on. So that is an individual thing. It is extremely pertinent to the question. It is vital; it is a key ingredient of teaching. I mention it only because it is so basic a truth that it is often overlooked. It is often taken for granted and not indicated as a valid assessment technique, and in reality it is the most valid one of all.

But there are some assessment processes that can be done on a provincial level, so I will go back to that. I just wanted to deviate to indicate our stressing here in the department of the knowledge of that other fact that I just mentioned. There are some that could be done at a provincial level, I mean, provincial standards test being the one that you wanted to know alternatives to, and the projects, portfolios—the Chamber of Commerce, for example, working with one of the school divisions, has helped to develop an Employability Skills Portfolio that the department worked with and endorsed, and that is a

very strong assessment tool, as it turns out, much stronger, in fact, than I had realized, in terms of meeting and talking to the students who developed their own Employability Skills Portfolio because it does much more than simply look at employability skills.

As they develop their portfolio, students become aware themselves of their strengths and weaknesses, and that has proved to point out to some of the individual students some remarkable observations about themselves. I had one student indicate to me that she had no idea the variety of skills that she had identified from some of her extracurricular things that she had never thought of as skills. Once she identified them as being bona fide skills, she then began to consciously use them in a variety of ways, and it was intriguing to see that happen. It is the old—I do not know if the member ever experienced this, but I, at one time in my life, had people say to me, do you work or are you just a housewife? I was very incensed. I said, yes, but then you break through that. You consciously start to identify, well, what do I do in this other role that seems to be negated as a nothing role; you start to identify the skills and then say, I can do all these things, and I am going to use them consciously in other aspects in my life and not have them relegated as insignificant.

Many divisions are examining their local student assessment policies and practices to determine how they could be strengthened, and staff from this area, as well as from other areas of the department, have been invited to work with divisions in this regard. I mentioned the Employability Skills Portfolios because I thought it was a good example of a form of assessment. The other component of it was that it was working in conjunction with business or industry, the province, the school division and the student, his or herself, under the guidance of a teacher. I think the other forms of assessment that need to be done can often have that expanded outlook; they need not be insular. We can encourage assessments that come not just from within but from outside the system. The document A Foundation for Excellence makes reference to some of the ongoing assessments that should and could be done in the classrooms.

I will maybe stop there. I am sure there are others, they just do not come to mind right now, but I will confer with

staff if there are other things I should be indicating to the member.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Chair, yes, I had the opportunity to see the video on the Employability Skills Portfolios. I was going to ask the minister some questions about how that has been distributed, what funding the department provided for it, and is the department involved in the distribution of it or is that the other partners who are doing that.

What I was getting at with my other question was not so much the department indicating, yes, these others areas are available, but what has this section—or any other part, I guess, of the department—been doing in terms of professional development. Yes, obviously, I am thinking of portfolio development as one of the areas that is attracting a great deal of interest from the kindergarten level to the Grade 12 level. Has there been any thrust from the department to develop professional development courses, summer institutes, anything like that oriented at other forms of assessment than this most public one of the provincial exam?

Mrs. McIntosh: Mr. Chairman, I would start by saying that the one thing that we found, and I mentioned it earlier so I do not want to beat it to death by endlessly repeating it, but I will just mention it because I think it is a very pertinent answer to part of this question. Involving the teachers the way they have been involved in the development of the assessment tools and the examinations that were just written was a powerful professional development experience in and of itself. We are expecting that, as the word goes out into the field, we will have more applications for this. Being involved in developing the assessment tools is a very high consciousness-raising experience, and the word “powerful,” I think, is not an understatement in terms of usage here as a professional development experience. As well, the regional orientation sessions for kindergarten to Grade 4 mathematics included and contained assessment information, training, et cetera, as part of the regional orientation for the K to 12 mathematics. The curricula being developed, the new curricula will be including the assessment information and assessment guidance right in the curriculum.

The Program Development Branch is assigned the task of supporting teachers and schools in the whole area of

multifaceted assessment and evaluation, and it is done by the inclusion of assessment and evaluation information in all curricula, as I indicated just a moment ago, and the standards section of all curricula in the Frameworks document presents a number of suggestions on multifaceted assessment. So the guidance is given right as the material to be taught is put forward for teachers, and I think those are some of the direct ways the province is involved in ensuring that the assessment tools are built right into the curricula and that orientations are provided as each new curriculum is brought forward to ensure that there is an expert there with them as they go through that. So, when they embark upon the teaching, they will have that built in as part of the ongoing daily teaching mechanisms, back to what I had said in my earlier response about that daily ongoing step-by-step assessment being so critical and vital to the ultimate success of a student's progress.

* (1000)

Ms. Friesen: The English language arts tests that we have just had are the first ones of a particular type, and so we really do not have the basis of comparison, the historical evidence that would give us some indication of really what we have learned. So I am wondering what the department has done in terms of comparing it to other forms of exams in English language arts that there have been—the Canada-wide ones, the standard achievement tests—that have been there over the last, I think it is probably at least 10 years now, but certainly I think the last English language one at more or less the senior high level was about two or three years ago. So what has the department learned from this exam? I know the comparisons will not be exact, but what do we know that we did not know before?

Mrs. McIntosh: I just wanted to indicate, before I go into this answer, just a very quick final thought on the previous question, and that is that staff has indicated that they do have requests either by individual schools or by divisions for a staff in the Assessment and Evaluation Unit to go out and conduct sessions, workshops or seminars on assessment for P.D. days or things of that nature. They always do that and are always pleased to be asked to do that. So while that is not something that is initiated here in the department, it is a response mechanism that we have that is triggered by request and that, I am informed, schools and school divisions will

often ask for a seminar or something of that nature. We always go.

In regard to the questions that she has just asked, in terms of comparisons there are some things that we cannot compare and they are sort of the obvious things. With this new type of examination we cannot really compare knowledge of content, because they are not set up that way. You know, if you are going to look at Macbeth, for example, the old style of exam they might ask for a piece of memory work, and that is good. There is nothing wrong with memory work. I love memory work. You see people on the radio advertising, come take my course for \$1,500; I will improve your memory and make your life wonderfully successful. So I think there is a great benefit to having a well-trained memory, and I think any Alzheimer's patient can probably verify that the loss of memory is a devastating thing. However, our tests are not geared to memory work. But you might ask a question, you might put a reading from Macbeth in to test to see how well the student can read and understand what is there. It is a different style of English; it is an older style of English. How comprehensive are they in analysing that? You could still have Macbeth but it would be a different kind of experience. So I just mention that as something I think we both know.

What the member is looking for is what can you compare, I believe, in her question. The uniformity and the consistency of the provincial examination process did provide some hard comparable data, and staff has provided me with a little information here that might help. There was data that contributed to an enhanced understanding of student achievement across the province, because the examinations help to minimize conjecture and misunderstanding about the level and quality of student achievement. We did provide a benchmark to review local student assessment and evaluation procedures and policies and standards. The results provided an understanding of strengths and helped to set directions for areas of improvement in student learning, in classroom programs and school effectiveness, and the test results from the English language arts exams indicated that students required more learning experiences and opportunities using language arts to inform, explain, instruct, persuade and argue. Similarly, in the math exam, they required more learning experience and opportunities expressing themselves in a consistent

logically and mathematically correct manner. I am identifying with things that need improvement.

There were many things that showed there was a good skill level, and the previous style of examination could indicate the skill level of things that did well, and this does that also. We are able to say, for example, in the mathematics exams that, at both the old one and the new one, students could do well on computation. Here we are saying that in the English language arts students have achieved a certain level of understanding of words, et cetera, the basic difference being that these are, I believe, a more clear assessment for diagnostic purposes of what needs to be worked upon in the unit as a whole. There is not any data on file from the 1960s on any performance that existed at the time. The member is correct. We are starting anew in that sense. These tests will be much more useful as time goes on and we can start to truly assess all range of thinking and the progress that is being made. So the comparisons between the old exams and the new ones can be made in those ways that I indicated, but they really cannot for the more intricate probing into the actual learning in terms of literacy that both mathematical literacy and language literacy and so, in that sense, the comparisons that can be made are very limited with the old-style exam.

We should begin to be making observing patterns of strengths and weaknesses in a quantitative way within a few years as the exams we are currently doing get put into place. Right now we are still comparing apples with oranges a little bit and the similarity has come about in that they are both fruits and they are both foods, but we are still not in an apples-to-apples comparison.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Chair, there are two things that interest me from this. One, of course, is how does the current kind of exam—and I am thinking in the context here of the English language arts in particular—how does that compare with what we have learned from the continuous kind of assessment of curriculum that we did before? That is one of the reasons I am interested in the evaluation of this project, if we call it a project for the moment, because there was continuous assessment. There were reports that were done about a curriculum, about professional development, about student achievement levels, and I am interested in how different this one is and also has there been any comparison or is there intended to be any comparison between what we

learned on the last round of that English language arts assessment—and I would like to know what year that was—and when the report from it was published and what we have now.

Mr. Chairman, it is slightly on a different topic, but it is the same area, is the national comparison. Obviously, one of the things that all provinces are looking at in different ways are those kinds of comparisons. So how does the test that we have just had compare with the achievements of students on the previous national testing? Again, I understand there are differences in the two types of tests but one of the goals, I think, of the department has been to look at that kind of comparative area. I just leave that with the minister for a minute.

* (1010)

Mrs. McIntosh: Mr. Chairman, these questions get at the very heart of meaningful assessment and measurable standards, and they are tough questions. We had talked in the earlier question about comparing from now to the future. We know right now that we have a base with this English language arts exam, for example, that we will be able as time goes on to use as a base comparison to see whether we are progressing or falling behind or staying the same.

(Mr. Mervin Tweed, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair)

We know in the past they had similar comparative things done a little differently that are hard to compare in a straight accurate comparison with what we are doing now. We know that we are in discussions with our colleagues in other provinces who are wrestling with the same kinds of questions to try to ensure that we are in harmony with each other and not working at cross-purposes, and these are major challenges, very exciting challenges, and they do require a high level of co-operation and dialogue.

In terms of the comparison between the old and the new, the data on the old that does exist would be in the archives, but what it would show would be averages, pass-, fail-rates, et cetera. The results would be of questionable use for our purposes today since those results were all marked on a curve, and because they were marked on a curve with so many students doing well or not so well, depending upon where they were in the

curve, they could not be a valid comparison to today's marking which is not done on a curve, where it is possible theoretically but not probable that every student could achieve the highest possible mark, the attaining of the standard.

In the old days, there were always some who would not and always some who would excel. So that is one of our dilemmas. The last Grade 12 exam in English was written about 1969. I do not have the exact date, but we know it was in that time period. It would likely be in the archives. It could be researched, but, again, the concern about the comparison's validity would be something that would make any results coming out of the research for comparative purposes somewhat difficult and maybe not that useful, unless we could find some way to break out the common areas.

It might be useful to show how assessment today is different. You might find some data in there as a research project if you could break out the things that were different and the things that were the same that could show disadvantages or advantages of one way of measurement versus the other.

The last writing exam was done in 1988 of the curriculum assessment—[interjection] Oh, I am sorry, the last curriculum assessment was done in 1988 for writing and for reading it was 1992. They had different purposes. The curriculum assessments of the 1980s cannot do what the exams can do in terms of exams being able to communicate a reasoned standard arrived at by a committee of teachers.

Exams and assessments can both provide a system monitoring function but exams are intended to deal with the variety of standards among schools, districts, divisions and individual students. So the curriculum assessment and the exams are differing kinds of assessments and for different purposes, but I can indicate that those curriculum assessments were done in '88 and '92. Are there more that she would like?

An Honourable Member: The national comparison.

Mrs. McIntosh: Oh, the national comparison.

The SAIP tests that were done nationally were tests designed for specific age groups. They were not being

done against a particular set of learning criteria but rather against the age of the student, so the SAIP, S-A-I-P, School Achievement Indicators Project was done by 13-year-olds and by 16-year-olds regardless of where they stood in their chronological progress through the system. At that time, the results for 16-year-old students in Manitoba showed they were at or near the top in terms of reading.

We do not have the SAIP report here today so we cannot provide the full conclusions, but they are available. They are more easily obtained than things that might be archived, and we could table them, if the member would like them, at the next sitting. Unless staff, if they are able to find something here, we will table it here later today.

Those were a little different because they were age related, not curriculum based. The ministers, in getting together and talking about national tests, love to talk about national comparisons and different ways in which they are assessing their students, so I am quite confident that at some point in our discussions, whether it be late at night after the day is over or formally on an agenda, these types of topics will be coming up for discussion with the ministers when we are together—next week, I guess it is now—at our next meeting in Edmonton.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Chair, yes, I would be interested in seeing the last SAIP one in English, but if the minister just gave me the date of it, then I can get it from the library

I was interested in how the provincial English language exam can mesh with the next SAIP examination. We have some historical background here and presumably there would be interest in that kind of comparison. Has there been any attention given to that, any thought?

* (1020)

(Mr. Deputy Chairperson in the Chair)

Mrs. McIntosh: Mr. Chairman, we will table these SAIP results for the member, and we believe we could probably have them here before we conclude today. If not, we will bring them in Monday. Our own standards tests, for example, the one we just wrote with the Grade 12s—pardon me, the Senior 4s—is still evolving. It is not

yet the way SAIP would show things. The Grade 3 test this year, though, will report a profile on the student that will be a three-point profile that will be similar to the SAIP method of reporting; and, ultimately, as our evolution continues, we should be able to do the same thing for the senior high English language arts exams.

The way in which the SAIP exam is written is that it is a standards test totally. These students would take the test at age 13; they would take the identical test again at age 16; and they report back on a five-point profile. They would have the ratings showing on a scale of 1 to 5, from very low to very high, although they do not use the terms very low and very high, but on that scale and somewhere in the middle would be the standard. Students would show progress at the standard, below the standard, above the standard, and on the continuum of their learning they would move, presumably from below the standard to the standard to above the standard depending on their progress. So that is why it is possible to write the same test at age 13 that you write again at age 16; you are measuring progress.

The more sophisticated component on that will be then to have on a three-point profile, which is what we will be using provincially, not just the standard one-two-three, with the standard being somewhere in the middle, but measuring also all the various components of the standard, for example, how well do they do in certain areas of the learning experience. You would have a chart that would be broken down—I think the member is familiar with what I am talking about—so you would be graded not just on the standard, but all the various areas that are components of the subject area.

We expect to evolve to that point in terms of the reporting, to provide a student profile that will do more than it did this year and that will be very similar to SAIP's method of reporting to those who need the results. That would be, first of all, the central authority trying to get an overall picture of how the populace as a whole is proceeding in terms of its acquisition of knowledge skills and achievements, and then to the divisions, to the individual schools to give them an indication as to what areas are strengths, what areas show need for extra work. The profiles for Grade 3 will go to the teachers, and then the teachers, in turn, can share it with the students or family members responsible for the students, and that

will give then everybody in the system the opportunity to benefit from the profile.

SAIP, unlike us, has been unable to declare a standard for the age because the test was administered to two ages, and there was no agreement across Canada on what was expected to be the standard for each age, but in our province the tests will be more curriculum-congruent. Since we are the ones who developed the curriculum and the test on our own, no other provincial views will need to be included in our own picture. We will be able to describe a standard for the province that we think will be useful and helpful for the people in the system, most importantly the students.

(Mr. Mervin Tweed, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair)

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Chairman, one of the concerns that is expressed by every country that is involved in this kind of testing is whether their tests are, in fact, of an international standard. In the United States there are a number of states which have moved to this form of standard testing. One of the concerns and critiques that is being developed there is, where do these state curriculums, where do these state examinations fit in an international context? They do not consider Canada in an international context for the most part—and I suppose that is always something that grates—but there are obviously other English-speaking countries. There is Europe, in particular which has had a long history of this type of examination.

When the department was developing its own examination, was there that kind of international English language context that was considered?

* (1030)

(Mr. Deputy Chairperson in the Chair)

Mrs. McIntosh: Mr. Chairman, and I should indicate that for the last little while we have had at the table with us Mr. Norm Mayer who is the director of the Assessments and Evaluation Unit for the Department of Education, Province of Manitoba, and I thank him for all the help he gives us in this area.

In terms of national and international presence, the maths test by SAIP and our western consortium

curriculum and thus our own mathematics curriculum and then thus our own tests will be very close in approach. They are being used by the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics which is a body composed of people from both the United States of America and Canada, and in that sense has that international presence on the North American continent, but we are embarking on a whole new area in the world and it is—[interjection] No, it is only her.

The international work is just beginning in English language arts, but it is beginning and that is the exciting part. Our work here in Manitoba is being used by the International Reading Association, and there are several indications that lead us very optimistically into being considered a leader in this area in terms of international reading. So we are very pleased that our work is being used there.

Mathematics and science, of course, are much easier to see on an international basis because mathematical and scientific fact are not localized in the same way that language is, and I am very pleased to indicate some of the things that are happening on the international basis. If you recall last year here at the—this was not mathematics, necessarily. I am going to be hopping, skipping and jumping around a little bit just to indicate where we are going internationally with some of the education work and curriculum development testing and assessment that goes with it.

Last year at Estimates the deputy was not here, and I was both pleased and not pleased about that. I was a brand new minister so I missed his presence very much, but I was very pleased for the reason for his absence and that was that he was in Finland last year as the chair of the Canadian Educational Stats Council, and the topic was international comparisons and approaches for the international indicators. That was a very important topic, a very important thrust, and that Manitoba, Canada, should have been chosen to chair that, I think, is an indication of the leadership that this province is showing not just in Canada but around the world.

As well, from our Planning and Policy Department, Jean Britton, whom the member may know from the department, has just come back from Spain where she was working on an international working group, again on indicators, and she is very highly thought of in that circle.

Again, we are very proud that Manitoba is playing a lead role in that particular arena.

Norman Mayer, whom I have just introduced, was Canada's representative to an OECD conference in England in February of this year on assessment issues and trends in member OECD countries. That is again a tribute to Manitoba and the people we have here to be Canada's representative on an international area such as that, particularly on assessment issues and trends in our member OECD countries because it does show a reaching and a striving for an international standard and international co-operation.

Norm Mayer was also Manitoba's representative in the second international assessment of educational progress, which was a study of mathematics and science achievement at age 13 in Canada, and that age, of course, being a significant age for the SAIP tests. The development of standards is closely related to the curriculum process, and, therefore, the research base of our curriculum development process. I can share some of our research that underpins the curriculum framework in that regard.

The curriculum development, when work began on the western Common Curriculum Framework for kindergarten to Grade 12 mathematics, which we now call kindergarten to Senior 4, the following sources provided the major foundations for both content and philosophy: curricula from the four western provinces and other countries, including Great Britain, Australia, New Zealand, Germany, Hungary, Romania, Czechoslovakia and Japan; the curriculum and evaluation standards for school mathematics by the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics; Armstrong's work, *Seven Kinds of Smart*, *Identifying and Developing Your Many Intelligences*; Caine and Caine's *Making Connections: Teaching and the Human Brain*; Jack Hope's *Charting the Course, A Guide for Revising the Mathematics Program in the Province of Saskatchewan*. Those are some.

* (1040)

During the entire process the Manitoba mathematics steering committee helped provide the direction and the vision to maintain the philosophical shift in teaching mathematics that had begun in Manitoba in 1991. The work that was done by Freudenthal and others in The

Netherlands revealed the following information: Students learn by attaching meaning to what they do; therefore, they must construct their own meaning of mathematics.

You can see that reflected in our mathematics assessment, where we are asking in terms of problem solving that students do a number of very interesting things. One is to what I call play the Jeopardy game: Give them an answer and ask them to construct the problem. It is intriguing, not only that students can construct their own meaning of mathematics, but to see how much fun they can actually have doing it, which brings me back to a fundamental premise, that you must instill a love of learning. One of the ways you instill a love of learning is to make it not just meaningful but also pleasurable.

Meaning is best developed, again, following a piece of information from The Netherlands, from Freudenthal, that meaning is best developed when learners encounter mathematical experiences that proceed from the simple to the complex and from the concrete to the abstract. This, of course, is similar to other theories that are known, a need to shift from having students repeat rote facts to having them demonstrate their knowledge of mathematical concepts and their ability to reason.

Those are some of the international premises that we are incorporating into our own work here, those ones that I just read, of course, being basically from the Netherlands, whose work in turn was based upon other philosophers.

The big ideas indicated in the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics standards were integrated into all areas of teaching mathematics, in communication, connections, estimation and mental math, problem solving, reasoning, technology, visualization. The van Hiele's work on the Development of Geometric Thought was used to determine the teaching strategies for teaching mathematics throughout the early and middle years. In applied math some of the traditional math content is replaced with applications of technology, and there is a far greater stress on investigation on problem solving and communication. Curricula and student books from European countries provided much of the support for the applied mathematics.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Chair, could the minister tell me whether there are any reports available from the three

recent conferences attended by members of her department, the one in Finland, the one in Spain, and the recent OECD one on current assessment issues and trends? Is there, not necessarily that you could table, but at least a reference that I can follow up in the library?

Mrs. McIntosh: Mr. Chairman, because the three trips that I referenced here, they were sent as Canada's representatives, they were Manitoba people, our department people, but they were selected by Canada to go. The reports, the deputy's report on the chairing that he did in Finland is filed with the Council of Ministers of Education for Canada, CMEC. The deputy has filed his report with the Canadian council. The conference, the Finland conference itself apparently has not yet filed its overall conference report, but the chairman's report has been filed, and the chairman, of course, is our deputy, and the Manitoba perspective, of course, permeates his report. We have that report as well, but it is on file there.

Similarly, Mr. Mayer's experiences in Great Britain on behalf of Canada have been filed with the Canadian Council and, again, I understand that the overall conference there has not filed, but Mr. Mayer's report has already been filed.

Jean Britton's trip to Spain has been filed with the deputy here. It has just last week been forwarded to the Canadian Council because her trip was more recent, but we have those here as well. I just want to indicate they are available through CMEC for anybody interested. We have them here, and if the member would like them we could make them available or table them, but we probably would not be able to table them today because we have to go find them and bring them out. We could do that sometime next week if the member would like.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Chair, yes, I would appreciate that.

I think that the minister has received various forms of petitions, letters, that kind of thing, from some parts of the province asking for a 35 percent proportion of the standard provincial exams to remain, rather than to move to a 50 percent. I wondered what consideration the minister has given to that.

What consideration have you given? Is that being included in the evaluation? Has the minister been talking to people who have been suggesting this to her? Has she been addressing those concerns?

* (1050)

Mrs. McIntosh: I have heard from some who feel they would like to stay at 30. I have also heard from some who say, why are we stopping at 50? It is, you know, one of those philosophical things that you have to make a decision on. I think, though, as far as I feel, it is also beyond the philosophical into true measuring of certain skills and abilities. Given the way in which we are testing, which is away from standardized to standards, I think that the 50 percent mark is a fair mark to use. Fifty percent makes the test truly meaningful, still allows for the classroom to influence 50 percent of the mark as well, and it also is similar to what is happening in other provinces where 50 percent is beginning to be seen as the preferred and appropriate percentage.

Almost all of the provinces who have testing of this nature are above 30 percent. I believe there is one that is still at 30 percent, and one or two, I am not sure of the number, who may be at 40, but the rest are at 50 percent, and the trend is moving towards 50 percent. Interestingly, to my knowledge, there is no place that chooses to go above the 50 percent. It seems to be zeroing in at that as a common point for usage. I have, as I indicated, heard from some who say, could you please leave it at 30 percent or put it at 35 percent or 40 percent? I do feel, based upon all that I have learned about this type of marking, that 50 percent is the appropriate place to put the percentage. If you are testing for literacy, for example, in English language arts, there is no way that a person can cram at the last minute for this type of exam the way they might have been able to do for the previous type of examination that used to take place. I think it is an important thing to note, if people are concerned about the percentile or the percentage, I believe, based upon their past experiences of how examinations used to be done.

In the old days, and I will put myself in that category, when I wrote my departmental exam in English, because I enjoyed the subject and had a lot of ability to memorize, because I could cram and memorize, I was able to do very well. My year's work, had it not been good, could have been given a great boost up by my last-minute cramming. Similarly, a student who had had a good year but did not do the required last-minute studying could have the reverse occur. But, when you are testing for literacy, the way in which these exams are done, either you can read or you cannot read, and there is no way you can really

study for it. You have to have had a long, consistent period of preparation to develop your reading ability, and, given that these tests are done that way, similarly with problem solving in mathematics and so on, I believe that 50 percent is the right percentage. While I am willing always to listen to people's opinions, I feel that there is not much more that could be said in terms of offering of ideas and opinions that would dissuade me from the conclusion I have come to.

Ms. Friesen: One of the comments that I have heard, and it seems to fit, I think, with my experience of high school exams, is that one would anticipate that in the situation that we are in now, we have had one—and, again, I am thinking in the context of the English language arts where there is much more flexibility and it is a different kind of exam. One would anticipate that the students who write in the second exam are going to do better than those who have written in the first. The teachers will be more aware of the exam; they will be more aware of the process. There are some teachers, I know, who were keen to be involved in the marking of this first exam, so that their students who wrote in the second exam would be better prepared.

When the minister says that this was a good professional development exercise for teachers, I mean, that is the purpose of it, that it would in fact enable to improve the abilities of their students to deal with this type of examination. How is the department looking at this in its evaluation of this first year's round?

Mrs. McIntosh: Mr. Chairman, the member raises a very interesting question, and we will certainly be looking to see if there is any change there. Traditionally, the experience between January and June exams has not shown any difference, but this is the first time through the English language exam, and our anticipation is that we maybe will not see any difference in the one-year spectrum in that the teachers are teaching to the curriculum. What we think is happening and we will be looking to see that this has, is that in preparation for the January exam, the teachers were teaching to the curriculum and will continue teaching to the curriculum for the June exam. If the curriculum is being followed, then we should be seeing similar types of results.

The member's question, if the quality of teaching has improved because of the P.D. experience, will that show

a difference in June, is something we will find out. But basically if the curriculum is being taught, we would hope and expect that teachers will always improve and that each time they teach a course that they would be better and better. If they are constantly upgrading their skills and knowledge and knowing that the assessment tests are coming and the curriculum is expected to be followed, I think that will assist teachers in continuing to improve their teaching skills. It will encourage them not to become lax, hopefully inspire them to keep alert. I am not saying that they are not, but it will be extra inspiration for them.

In that sense, then one would expect that every year that the professional development occurs, the teaching will become better and better so that students who take the exam next year will be in a more advantageous position presumably than the ones the year before, and we are looking for a continuing progress. We are hoping to see on an annual basis scores becoming higher and higher, the standards being met more frequently, et cetera. That is our goal.

* (1100)

The member's concern, I think, is that in one given year, depending upon when a student writes the exam, competition for things outside of school in that one given year might see the June students having an advantage over the January students. I think the advantage would, if there, be statistically not significant given that we are really talking about a matter of months as opposed to another whole season.

I come back to teachers who might in the course of any given year take advantage of a professional-development experience in February that might advantage the students in that semester in their division more than students in the same semester in a neighbouring division that did not partake of the same P.D. experience. So it is a matter of growth and personal development that is there. It needs to be encouraged, and the advantages or disadvantages could occur across division or between divisions as well.

I know, from my own experience taking part in professional development exercises that were division-run, feeling that the teachers in our division were getting a leg up with teachers in a neighbouring division that did not have the same professional development experience that we had gone through; therefore, our students would

similarly benefit from our learning. If we are wondering whether teachers will now be teaching the curriculum and, as a result, students would be improving, we would hope that would be happening, but it does remain to be seen if this would result in a higher result in June. We do not think it is likely, given that it would be the same teacher teaching to the same curriculum. We would hope the teaching would have improved, but the results would probably be statistically not that much, but we will be looking for it.

The P.D. experience for teachers in January was in assessing, not in teaching to the curriculum and so, in that sense, the professional development skills that were required were slightly different from teaching to the curriculum, but they would have carry-over application. Any time you improve your assessing skills, you have an indirect benefit in terms of teaching.

I want to indicate, as well, when we were talking about the 50 percent mark on the provincial exam that, at the moment, it is 30 percent and it will remain 30 percent until such time as the system has had a good number of years to strengthen the student learning using the new improved curriculum and becoming familiar with the concept of writing these kinds of tests. So we will not be moving to 50 percent until those things are in place. So it will remain at 30 percent as it was this year and will be next year. When the system has had a number of years to become familiar with the way of testing the strengthening of student learning to be learning this way, for teachers to be teaching this way and acquiring the knowledge of how to assess this way and understanding how that assessment applies back in the classroom, exams will stay at 30 percent until we reach that comfort level and then they will move to 50.

The exams given over the last five years have shown no statistical difference between the January and the June marks. They were done a different way. The circumstances are not identical, but statistically January to June, we have not seen that much difference. It is expected that pattern will probably be there but, again, a new circumstance, a good question, so we will be looking to try to find that out.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Chair, the minister put something on the record which was new to me and that was that there is no definite date—and I am assuming it is in any

subject—for a move to a 50 percent final grade. Now that is new to me and so I just wanted to confirm it, that the department does not have a specific date in mind in any subject for a move to 50 percent, that each will be flexible, each will be based upon assessment within that subject area and examination results.

Mrs. McIntosh: Mr. Chairman, no, and I am sorry if I have expressed it in such a way that it is not clear. When I say that we will not be going to 50 percent until we have these things in place, we have a time line for getting those things in place and it is expected it would be the year 2002 for Senior 4 English language arts and math exams. That of course is five to six years from now—I will backtrack. We had originally, when the original blueprint came out and the guidelines and the framework and so on, indicated an earlier date. Then we had expressions of concern from the field about a number of items.

The member may recall a letter that was referred to by the member for Radisson (Ms. Cerilli), I believe it was a couple of days ago, that I had sent out to the field. In that letter I indicated that based upon response from the field and concerns expressed by the field about needing to lay down certain understandings, acquisition of comfort around the procedures and the policies, et cetera, that they required more time. So we consulted with the field and identified that in order to have in place those things that I identified in my previous response to the member, we would require allowing time until the year 2002 for the piloting, for the assessing, for the professional development, for becoming accustomed to the new way of doing things. We accepted, based upon that feedback, that it could not be done as swiftly as had been originally hoped.

So when I say that we will not be moving to the 50 percent until we have achieved those items, we at the same time say that we expect those things to be achieved by the year 2002. So there is a date that we are working towards, and that date has been transmitted to the field.

Mr. Gary Kowalski (The Maples): I have very few questions in regard to this line, because I think the discussion that has already taken place has covered quite a few issues I had concerns about in this line.

Just to take a few minutes to wax about assessment. Yesterday I went to Miles Mac Collegiate to make a

presentation to the student body for their Enrichment Week about the value of knowing a second language. It was significant because that is the high school I went to. I had an opportunity to meet many of my former teachers who were very surprised to see that I had amounted to anything because I was not the best high school student.

* (1110)

At that time there were no departmental exams, and thank goodness. It called to mind that I was not the only one that did not excel in high school but went on to be very successful by some people's standards. I remember Levi Reimer who is former president of Seven Oaks Teachers Association telling me that he barely got through high school, and it was not till he got to university that he did well.

Education is an indication of what we value as a society, and what we assess in education is also an indication of that. But sometimes there are things that are difficult to assess: people's work ethic, people's drive and ambition. As I said, although I was not a good high school student—my marks would have indicated that—many of the people who had excellent marks are now not doing as well as I am, by a number of criteria, whether it is by financial criteria, or position in life, criminal records, marital status, whatever. So what I am concerned about, and although there has been a lot of talk generally about assessment, is that I hope this standards testing never becomes an impediment to someone to succeed in life, in that it will close gates, it will close doors to people who just were not ready at that time in their life to excel.

That is one general concern I have about standards in testing. As I say, I would not have been able to go on to post-secondary if there had been departmental exams at the time that I was going through high school, and I am concerned that there are some people who just have not decided to put the effort into their academics that they should, and because of that, and because of the departmental exams, standards testing, it will close doors. So that is my brief philosophical comment, and other than that, I think the topic has been covered quite well.

One question I do have is: How does the standards testing relate to enhancing the document about teachers' remuneration—in the setting up of the standards testing,

was one of the considerations how it was going to be used in teacher assessment? We now have a document out there, and it is a discussion document, as the minister has said. Part of that discussion is, will the success of schools' or classrooms' or individual students' results on this standards testing—how will that reflect on how teachers are assessed and, therefore, receive raises and that? What is the relationship between the standards testing and teachers' pay and promotion in the future?

Mrs. McIntosh: You had indicated that when you were in school, on the departmental exams some of the students performed a certain way in exams, but it did not necessarily reflect the way they ended up in terms of their success in life. I indicate to the member that the old-style departmental exams, I think, likely could have been detrimental in some ways to students, because they counted for 100 percent. They were pass-fail exams. They would not likely have assessed accurately and, therefore, could not have rewarded students who were inclined to hands-on and higher-order thinking. The old tests rewarded lower-order thinking, recall, with some application, but not a lot, but they largely ignored analysis, synthesis, evaluation, application, problem solving, critical thinking, deductive reasoning, logic, and those types of areas. They were, what we used to call, sort of standardized. You could take them, off-the-shelf exams, and off-the-shelf exams that are examining or testing old-think probably did have detrimental effects on a lot of people.

Our standards exams are looking to do the opposite. We are looking to give people a standard that can be measured and identified, that can be arrived at by a solid, well-developed curriculum. They are curriculum congruent and they address skills, not rote application or lower-order thinking. It then provides opportunity through that curricula to reach a higher standard that is identified, and I think that is ultimately to the benefit of all students. But I agree the old way of doing things, I think, might have had the effects. So I just want to assure the member that it is a different type of testing, and it is not intended to have some of the side effects that the old exams used to have.

In the old exam process, they actually set out to fail people. In the old exam process, they marked on a norm. They had a norming process, and they actually drew a curve and said, before they began to mark, a certain

percentage of the students will fail, an equal percentage of the students will do extremely well, and the majority of the students will come in as average students—a very destructive way of marking. In that scenario, you could have had students, all of whom were performing at the 90 percentile, and have some of them fail, or you could have had worse, in some respects, the majority of the students performing in the 30 percentile and some of them having an A. So the marking process was designed absolutely to see certain students fail, and in my book, that is a terrible way to mark.

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

* (1120)

With our marking, you set a standard that it is conceivable and possible. Every student in the class can reach the standard to some degree or another and achieve a passing mark with no failures whatsoever. So I just indicate that.

The member asked about the Accountability document and were these assessment tests put together to determine a way of assessing teacher's performance for pay purposes? No, the assessment and curriculum-congruent teaching and assessment and evaluation at the end of it were designed for the benefit of students. The whole aspect of assessment was seen as critical and integral to the whole process of teaching. It was determined that to teach year after year and to have a system that makes it possible in some, not all, praise God, circumstances for a student to pass through his or her entire learning experience without a formal evaluation or a formal ability to be assessed or the opportunity to be assessed was pedagogically unsound, and that students have the right and the requirement to have on a regular basis some assessment of their performance done so that it can be determined how well they have absorbed prerequisite skills, so that they move on to the next stage of learning with a solid foundation.

If you move a student on to teach them mathematical tables before they have learned how to add, you do the student a terrible injustice. To say, all right class, we are now going to learn to multiply without pausing to assess whether or not addition has been learned is to guarantee that that student will never ever really be able to grasp the concept of multiplication, and you increase that year after year, you end up with a student who becomes

incapable. Just because it was never identified that the basic prerequisite was never learned, you eventually reach the stage where it becomes impossible for the student to move on to higher technical skills, just plain technical skills, let alone the more intricate higher level critical thinking skills. The student then becomes doomed to failure, low self-esteem, uncertain confidence, and it is a very damaging thing to do.

So we have said it is not an option to avoid assessing. You must pause periodically. We have chosen three critical ages or levels of learning at which you must pause—Grade 3, Grade 6, Grade 9, Grade 12. We have said, you must pause at these levels and do a proper assessment to ensure the children or the students are well able to move on to the next level, otherwise you severely disadvantage them. Now if these tests were designed and this assessment was designed to rate teachers for pay purposes, a logical question to ask then would be, why are you only going to rate for pay purposes Grades 3, 6, 9 and 12 teachers? What about the teachers who teach Grades 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 8, et cetera? So, clearly and obviously just by the fact that we are only doing the assessments formally and provincially at those four grade levels indicates that it is not being brought in for that purpose.

The question that could be asked, though, is, as you provincially develop information about the results of the assessment and you begin to identify, as we just did with English language arts, overall trends, as we said in the mathematics exam that we just put out the marks on, students in mathematics it was shown in their Grade 12 exam this year did very well in the computation, they did very well in the $2 + 2 = 4$ or the algebraic functions, et cetera. Where they needed extra help and work was in problem solving or in written identification of the methodology. So we can give that information to the field and say, you are doing well here, you need improvement there. The teachers then have some ability to diagnostically improve the student's performance in areas where they have been identified as needing some improvement. That is very helpful to everybody concerned, but it does not pinpoint people, individual people, in that sense in the provincial reporting of the marks from the standards tests.

I would say, however, that a student whose class repeatedly, year after year after year, consistently fails

every year, every year, every year, that that would indicate that student, that teacher would need some help, some very severe help. The question then legitimately is put, should that teacher be given a merit increase in a situation like that while re-enforcement is put in to improve performance? That is a question I do not have the answer to, but it is a question that has been asked and it is one that I ask as well.

Mr. Kowalski: I thank the minister for both asking the questions and answering them too. It makes my job even easier. So thank you for doing that for me. [interjection] That is right. But the last part of her answer gives rise to the question: If she is talking about a teacher whose students do not pass consistently or do poorly in the test, would she also say that it could go for a school where there is a trend, a division where there is a trend, that in one division consistently—is that what the minister is indicating, that would be something that would be looked at as far as merit increases?

Mrs. McIntosh: I thank the member for his question, and I apologize that I was given a document to sign while he was asking it, so I hope I have it clearly in my mind. The member, I think, was asking a follow-up to the same question on the assessment results in the exam being used for teacher appraisal or school appraisal or division appraisal, and I think there are a number of things that we can do with these assessment results that will be of benefit, first of all to students, because that is what our first priority always is, but also to schools and divisions and the system as a whole.

* (1130)

I can make, as I did, a generic statement that in Manitoba, our students in mathematics do quite well in the technical computation part of mathematics but seem to require generically more work and more emphasis on problem solving. It is not that they did badly; it is just that they could do better in that area. So we passed that on to the field as a generic statement. On a division-by-division basis, then, you could do a further breakdown and say, as we did—well, I guess this is not a division-by-division breakdown—but with the French and the English language arts we found that the English students had certain skills that were being well done and others that needed more work and, similarly, in the French language, but they were different.

(Mr. Deputy Chairperson in the Chair)

The French language students, we felt, needed more work in the poetry area, et cetera; the English language students in the extrapolating of complex analysis from reading. So they were not the same, and yet we could provide to both of those fields information that would help them focus in on areas for improvement.

Similarly, you can do it division by division. Each division would show different strengths and weaknesses. Then, within each division, you would have schools with a similar breakdown available for the division to use. So we provide the division with all the data on it, and the division can then say, School A at one end of our division, you really did well on problem solving, better than most of the province, but you need more work in whatever. Similarly, they could give the profile for the school on the other side of the division, which would be, presumably, somewhat different, because no one facility is going to be identical to any other. Then, again, within the school, you will have pupil profiles which can be shared with parents, that would give the parents some idea of where their children are and how they are progressing.

When you see trends coming out of these, it is easier to identify problem areas than it is when you do not do this kind of thing. We have known, and divisions have known, through the years that the vast majority of teachers working in the system perform adequately, comfortably and well in the classroom. They are competent people who go to work every day and do their job teaching the children of Manitoba. That is the vast majority of teachers.

At either end of the spectrum, however, you will see teachers who stand out for one reason or another. The superb master teachers tend to stand out by virtue of their outstanding achievements, and they are easy to spot. They are easy to spot because parents fall all over themselves trying to get their children in Mr. So-and-so's class because they know that, if they get into Mr. So-and-so's class, their children are going to do well. They will also go to great lengths to fall all over themselves to make sure they do not get Mr. Such-and-such because they know in Mr. Such-and-such's class the children do not do well, and students themselves will be able to point that out quite clearly.

The bulk of the teachers that I referred to in the first instance really form the majority and set the tone for the division. There is nothing in place right now, short of a promotion, and they are not always available, to do something to reward with extra reward those outstanding teachers who go above and beyond the expectations of the field, those master teachers, I call them, who shine with brilliance. They can be given an award, they can be given thank you letters from their students, but there is nothing to reward them in the system in terms of financial compensation. Similarly, for the teachers at the opposite end of the spectrum, whose students consistently complain and avoid trying to be in that class, where you can see by virtue of the next year's experience that the bulk of the students who were in Mr. Such-and-such's class had not acquired the knowledge needed to build the next level of learning upon and yet they were all given the go-ahead to move into the next grade, there is nothing in there to prevent those at the bottom end of the spectrum from receiving a financial reward. So you see the bottom-scale teacher and the top-scale teacher moving through the system receiving their automatic increments equally, and yet you are not comparing like value to the system at all, not at all.

These assessment results would, in all likelihood, on a school-by-school basis, reveal trends. You may have a teacher who is having a bad year. Perhaps they have had a serious illness or some horrendous trauma in the family or some other circumstance that would create an anomaly year, a year of unusually bad performance, say, because of circumstances outside the school setting, or it may be that you have some other thing that has happened to that teacher which is correctable. So you see that surfacing, you ask yourself, first of all, is this an anomaly, if you are the division personnel, because the department would not do this but division personnel would in assessing their teachers, which we would hope they would be doing on an ongoing basis. Regular performance evaluations are something that teachers are entitled to receive. If it appears there is a problem, then they are not only entitled to receive a performance evaluation, it is essential that they be given one, for their own sakes and for the sakes of the students they are attempting to teach. The division can ask itself: Is this thing that we saw this year an anomaly. Was there something unusual, or is it a trend? Is there a pattern in this particular problem here that needs to be looked at?

I want to make it very clear that there are certain teachers whose students will never do well, not based upon the teacher's performance but about the kind of class they have been given. There are certain teachers who are put into classroom situations year after year after year with low-achieving, low-functioning students because those teachers are skilled at bringing those students from a 10 to a 20. If they can bring a student from a 10 to a 20 and every year their students show they are not passing, that is not a reflection on that teacher. If they have brought some of those kids from 10 to 20, they may have done a better job than some teachers who bring them from a 90 to a 95.

So when you do this kind of assessment, you have to take into account the types of students being taught, the type of setting in which they are being taught, and you know when you put a teacher in with a whole series of FAS students that you cannot expect the same results from that teacher's class but you may see a trend of the students in that class never performing well, not because the teacher is not good, it may be because the teacher is very good and therefore consistently assigned to work with those kinds of troubled students.

But presuming that the division is aware of all those factors, and they should be, because when they place teachers they should be placing to mix and match talents—some teachers are very good with gifted children, some with the bottom end of the scale, and they may not be good if they traded roles. A person may shine brilliantly teaching gifted children and be hopeless teaching the other end of the scale and vice versa. So a division must place the teacher carefully so they have the right mix between teacher and student. Presuming the division has done that, if a trend shows that repeatedly year after the year the students are not fulfilling whatever potential they may have, then the division should know they need to get in there and help that teacher. The question that has been asked is if the division is in there helping that teacher because of low performance, should the teacher be given an automatic raise during that period of revitalization and help?

* (1140)

Mr. Kowalski: I am very happy the minister finished her response the way she did, because early in the response I was getting very uneasy because there was this

concern that the effectiveness or the quality of teacher was directly related to the performance of the student, and as the minister finished her response she indicated, yes, there are considerations as to what is a teacher given to teach. You know, she is not responsible for that student, how they come to them. As she said, there will be teachers who some administrators will notice the ability of certain teachers to work better with high-risk students so that a principal will have a tendency to assign the high-risk students to some teachers.

With everything there is good and bad, and in the standards testing, one of the concerns—and I think I even put them on the record in last year's Estimates—is interpretation of this, because as the minister has said, when we are looking at teacher performance and if someone did not think it through, they could say, well, the students from that teacher consistently are below the Manitoba norm and therefore that must be a bad teacher. But the minister has indicated that, yes, it may be because that teacher may have gotten all the high-risk students. But, also, it goes on beyond that. The interpretation is very important. You could go to a school, maybe one school consistently has lower scores. Could it be because that community where that school is located has a satellite dish that broadcasts TV 24 hours a day into that community? Could it be because that community where that school is has an emphasis on sports and they have some champion baseball team or football team and the focus is on that? Then we could even go to divisions. If one division consistently has lower scores in these tests, but maybe there are other explanations.

I think the Department of Education has a responsibility with the introduction of the standards tests to educate the public in the interpretation of the results. Otherwise, simplistic interpretation of these results could lead to misunderstanding, could lead to attacks on either teachers, schools or school divisions because there are other reasons for low student or high student scores, with anything to do with what happens in the classroom or in the school. It could be outside the classroom; it could be what is happening in the home, what is happening in the community and many other factors.

So I guess, simply put, what is the Department of Education doing to educate the public so they could interpret these scores not in a simplistic way but in a knowledgeable way?

Mrs. McIntosh: Mr. Chairman, I quite agree that we need to help people understand the difference between this way and the old way. I realized as I was providing my answer to the previous question that I needed to put some clarity around what I meant by the students doing well, that a teacher consistently performing well or consistently performing not well, that most people interpret that automatically to mean, by high mark, low mark. I think it is very important that when we talk about a student's progress, that a good teacher will see that student come as close as possible to full potential, whatever that potential is. It may be a low potential, but a good teacher will move that student to full potential and a poor teacher will not. It is that simple.

That is separate and apart from measuring the standards, and it has traditionally not been seen that way. We are saying that we need to measure a standard and we need to know where all students fall on that standard measurement, recognizing that we can pull out of that assessment areas to work on, et cetera, but that it does not necessarily indicate the amount of progress a given student has made during the course of the academic year, nor the successful teaching that has been exercised in that classroom.

The one example I used that the member has understanding of is the teacher who does an exceptional job with low-achieving or high-risk students and, therefore, year after year is assigned to work with them. His students on a standards test may or may not do well, but it would not be a reflection of the progress that he has made or she has made with that student. But having said all that, it cannot be ignored that some teachers achieve results with their student which are poor or unacceptable, taking all of those factors into account, and we need to find a way to address that too. I do not pretend to have any answers, but I am looking for them.

In terms of the member's specific question on—oh, I had a note here that indicates that local principals and divisions would be considering all data and not just focusing on one indicator, and I agree with that.

The Grade 3 standards process is developing supports for schools for interpretation and use of the results, and I have my action plan for renewing education, New Directions, in front of me. There are some schools which

could be effective, but they are not. The literature on effective schools is pretty clear.

I will just read to you from the New Directions No. 3, School Effectiveness. It indicates, first of all, that principals should be designated as the primary instructional leader in the school. If you wanted to, if you have the document, you could just check it on page 16. It says: The principals shall be the chief educational leaders of the school; shall administer and manage the school; shall participate in the hiring, assigning, and evaluating teachers; taking parental and community input into consideration in making recommendations to the school board.

I will just pause there for a moment to indicate that when I talked earlier about hiring, assigning and evaluating teachers, and I talked about the division making sure when they hire and assign a teacher that they make the mix and match good, teachers are hired by the division to teach; they are not hired for a specific grade or school necessarily. They may be in some instances, but generally they are hired by the division to teach, and therefore the onus is on the decision makers to assign that teacher to a certain place in the division. I think it is imperative when they are assigning a teacher that they have a good sense of whether this teacher would be best working with young children, middle-years children, high school students, or whether they would be good working with bright children, children performing in the middle range or children who are slow or who have behavioural problems or whatever the area is.

In the high school level, it is important wherever possible to try to place the teacher in the discipline of the teacher's experience. It is not always possible, and both boards and teachers are frustrated when it is not always possible, when a teacher who is a teacher of English also has to teach a subject that is not English. It is assumed, and the society will tell us, that teachers are once a teacher, able to teach, and that the subject area can be learned if the pedagogy is sound. There is some merit in that, but, by and large, where possible, I still like the person who is the master in his or her discipline teaching the subject.

If the placement is good, then the evaluation usually shows a more positive result than if the placement is not good, but it is imperative that there be ongoing

evaluation of teacher performance. That would involve a whole wide variety of assessments that need to be done. One of them, of course, is to ascertain whether or not the students are absorbing knowledge and the ability to learn from that teacher.

* (1150)

The principal shall take into account parental and community input in making recommendation to the school board about hiring, assigning, and evaluating. By that, we mean that if there is a teacher in the school who, year after year, is complained about by the majority of parents in the classroom to the administration of the school division, that should signal a concern and should signal that some questions need to be asked. That does not mean that parents can come in and tell the principal what decision to make about a teacher and the teacher's placement because that decision is not up to the parents, and the reason it is not up to the parents is because you want to avoid a vendetta occurring, where if all students are treated a certain way that the parents do not like or whatever circumstances one might be able to imagine, you do not want a vendetta or a vindictive vigilante-type thing occurring.

But if the member has ever had an experience where his child has been in a classroom with a teacher who was in that unfortunate category and has ever had occasion to call the administration or school division to say, I am really upset about the way my child is being treated or about the type of learning that is going on in that classroom, the administration receiving those complaints on a repeated basis should definitely pause to ask pertinent questions about why those complaints are coming forward, and that is what is meant by community input. They cannot ignore those kinds of comments. They may come to a conclusion that is quite different from the complaint, but they should be looking at it.

We know that instruction can make a difference in the learning performance of a child, and we need to continually focus on improving the school's conditions that can assist with a child's growth because instruction and the interaction between teacher and child is at the heart of education. It is what it is all about, and if it has a flaw and if it is not working, we are irresponsible and abdicating our responsibility and accountability by closing our eyes to a problem, if it exists.

Mr. Kowalski: Earlier in Estimates, the minister acknowledged and said that she recognizes her role as an advocate for teachers. In questioning on this line, I have mentioned how these standards test scores could be used by ill-informed people or people who interpret them incorrectly to be used against either teachers, schools or administrators. So I would remind the minister that in her role as advocate for teachers and for educators that she has a responsibility to make sure that the public interpret these test results correctly. For example, in her news release dated April 30 in regard to the provincial examinations show strengths and opportunities, I would respectfully suggest that there could have been a mention in there—it talks about the strengths of students, but it could have mentioned something about the strength of our teachers and it shows that we have good teachers in Manitoba, and at every opportunity the Minister of Education should be advocating for the teachers of Manitoba and making sure that these test results are not interpreted in a way that attacks teachers.

Mrs. McIntosh: I am just looking for it here. I believe that it did indicate a special thanks to teachers for their work with students in preparing for—I cannot find my press release, but I believe it does have a statement in there. It may not be worded exactly the way the member has indicated, but I had asked for and, I believe, checked to see that it was included, a thank you to teachers for having helped—I am not quite sure how it was worded.

I have the member passing things to me. Thank you very much

I had indicated in there: "I was very pleased with the dedication demonstrated by teachers during the marking process. I thank them and their school divisions for their contribution. Both mathematics and language arts teachers indicated that marking the provincial exams was an excellent professional development opportunity to enhance their student evaluation skills."

I see what the member is talking about. You were asking for—I am thanking them for their participation in the marking process and the development process and thanking them for all they did with the preparation of the assessment and the marking, et cetera. You are asking for something a little more than that in terms of an addendum to the sentence, which could have gone something like this: We thank the classroom teachers

involved for preparing the students to be able to have performed as well as they did on exams, or something to that effect. I am maybe not wording it the way it should be, but is that the kind of thing that you are indicating? If it is, I agree with you, and if I am missing an opportunity, which I should be taking to thank teachers, then I think I should be conscious of not missing such an opportunity in the future because, God knows, they get little enough thanks for some of the things that they have to go through, particularly in certain classes on a regular basis.

I wanted to indicate one other thing, and I got so carried away talking about evaluation that I forgot the main point I was going to make in my previous answer, about page 16 in *New Directions*, because the member had asked how we could inform the public and make sure that the public was aware of why we were doing the assessments and how the results were to be used, that they were not to be used in negative ways. They are to be used in positive ways, to enhance the learning for students and to be helpful for teachers. The fact that they will pinpoint problems for which we can put in measures to assist is also a good thing; it is not a bad thing.

But point 4, on page 16, indicated that principals, amongst their other duties, shall provide pertinent and meaningful information about school and educational matters to parents and community members.

In some of the other points it also says that the schools are required to develop and communicate yearly school plans. School plans, of course, will include a number of these things. I think there are others in here as well, but I think those two, where they say you have to communicate these things to the parents, would be part of the onus on local decision makers to get this information out. Insofar as there are things that the department can do to help with that, I have noted the member has indicated it as a point of concern. The critic from the other party had also noted it as a point of concern. It is something, then, that I will be discussing with the implementation committee on educational change to see if they could provide any guidance as to suggestions we might put to the field, as to how to better communicate what this is all about because I think, especially with something new, there is always uncertainty, and, if we do not clear up the uncertainty, we will lead to misgivings, misunderstandings. It is our job, and I take it seriously.

It is the job of divisions and schools to support assessment tools and to make sure that documents and parents in the field reflect what our intention is so that no one is confused.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: The hour being 12 noon, we will recess until 1 p.m.

The committee recessed at 12 p.m.

After Recess

The committee resumed at 1 p.m.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: 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 2.(c)(1) in the Estimates book. Shall the item pass?

2.(c) Assessment and Evaluation (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$1,700,900—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$971,100—pass.

2.(d) Native Education Directorate (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits, \$160,800. Shall the item pass?

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Chairman, last time I spent quite a long time on native education. It is a branch which has, over the last few years, been downsized considerably, and the minister's explanation is that the same amount of activity is going on in different forms, in regional forms. My concerns at the time last year were that this was not evident and that much of the curriculum changes were not necessarily dealing with native education, and so I wanted to follow up on that and to ask the minister to put some information on the record about what is being produced, I mean in visible terms, whether it is multimedia curriculum, whether it is new curriculum units in different parts of the curriculum system, or whether it is curriculum guides.

What has actually been produced in this past year, and what does the minister anticipate for the coming year?

One of the ones I am familiar with is the updating of the resources guide for native education, which, I think, came out earlier this year, and which continues a long-standing, I suppose, bibliographic process as much as anything else in putting that together. Okay, let us start there.

Mrs. McIntosh: Mr. Chairman, just before I begin, I have here for tabling some information that had been asked for earlier. I have the names of the contractors for the Assessment and Evaluation branch, and the description of their contract and the amount involved in the contract. I have three copies that I would like to table at the request of the critics at the table here.

As well, I have the SAIP Council of Ministers of Education Canada reading and writing material, the reading and writing assessment material that we discussed earlier today, and I believe that in each one there is a summary in addition to the full report, the Reading and Writing Assessment 1994 highlights. So we have quite a few of them there. We have them for reading and writing, three copies in English and en français—I do not know if you want the français ones, but there they are—and also the Mathematics Council of the Ministers of Education, the SAIP Mathematics Assessment for 1993, again in both English and French, Mathematics and Mathématique. If you could reach them there, I will pass them over.

I would also like to introduce Juliette Sabot, who is the Director of the Native Education Directorate for the government of Manitoba, Department of Education and Training.

In terms of the documents produced, I would indicate to the member that we have the native studies teachers resource book and teachers resource book framework. We have the early years, K to Senior 4 released in the fall of 1995, the middle years ready for print, and the senior years printing in 1996-97. We have the teachers resource book Framework, which addresses the major goals of Manitoba Education and Training, and it intends schools to address these goals through the integration of aboriginal perspectives into curricula.

It provides the conceptual framework for teachers using the native studies resource books; it identifies learner outcomes, and assists the teachers in the development of specific lesson plans. The teachers resource book

provides background information about native perspectives on issues and suggestions for developing skills and attitudes. It is intended to be used along with the appropriate grade level social studies curriculum. We also have a document called Native Peoples Resources pertaining to First Nations, Inuit and Metis, and I have that here, if the member is interested. It is a fairly thick book that we have prepared. It has some 260 pages in it, I believe, of material, and I have that here, if the member is interested, as well as the teachers resource book framework. I only have the one copy, so maybe pass it down for her if she wants to take a look at it. I only have the one copy here, and I do not want to be without one, but, if she wishes to peruse it, just maybe pass it down for now.

The cost of maintaining a directorate: even though we are going into integration and permeation, we still felt it important to maintain a directorate, so that we would have that strong central focus and emphasis on aboriginal issues, and so we saw a blending of a directorate that would provide that leadership and focus plus a need to address the whole department and have the whole department address aboriginal issues from curriculum to implementation to parent involvement. Hence, you will see the two thrusts. Prior to this, as I indicated earlier, we just had the one, and we have the two now. We did not want to go to full—having everything go into the department without that directorate to guide or to be the central focus for the preparation of documents, specifically on this area.

One of the most important ways that we believe we can affect all Manitobans and aboriginal peoples is through the curriculum, and with curriculum now being mandated, this is one way of making systemic changes. So I do not know if that provides an answer.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Chairman, I thank the minister for passing these down. I will pass them back, but I would like to have a copy of them later on. Thanks.

I am familiar with the resources book, but I had not seen before the teachers resource book framework.

Mrs. McIntosh: Just for clarification, you can keep those if you wish to. We just do not have three here for tabling purposes, so you certainly can have those. It is just, we do not have the extra two copies with us.

* (1310)

Ms. Friesen: I am interested in the demographics, obviously, I think, as a government is, and I think in an earlier response, not under this section, the minister had talked about the changing demographics of Manitoba from the perspective of young adults around 2001. There is a familiar statistic on that of the one in four entering the labour force being aboriginal. But I think that, when the minister responded to the federal government's proposals for changing the Canada social transfer, there were some further projections in there which looked at the numbers of students in Manitoba of the age of zero to five, and I think, somewhere in that first decade of the 21st Century, that those numbers will be about a third of Manitoba's population if the current demographics continue. So I am looking through this line at some confirmation, I suppose, of that.

I know the minister's department co-operated in that study, and whether those numbers are the right ones. Are they ones that you are working with? Has there been any formal demographic study of, say, the first decade of the next century?

Mrs. McIntosh: I have just been talking to staff about the problems that we have attempting to get accurate numbers, and we do not have in the Department of Education and Training specific information about the numbers of aboriginal students for a wide variety of reasons. The number of identified aboriginal children, for example, does not equate to the number of aboriginal children who might be in the public schools of Manitoba because some are on reserve, in band schools, et cetera and would not be part of the Manitoba education system but rather the federal system.

That does not mean we are not interested or do not care about how they do, but in terms of counting and statistical purposes it puts them into a different category. The other thing is that we do not know many of the students who do not declare their racial background and many choose not to and, of course, we would not expect them to identify themselves by race unless they chose to. So we do not always have those numbers, and the best we can do is have an approximate and we do have some broad approximates. The member and I have talked about what the numbers are in terms of approximations.

We do know this that whatever the numbers are, there are certain trends and observations and needs that we are trying to address as regards aboriginal students. We do know that in the city of Winnipeg there is a large urban aboriginal student enrollment. We have some data that represents categories; they do not reflect total numbers. We have, again, approximately 9,000 Metis and non-Status students in 38 school divisions and that is from our Manitoba Education and Training English Language Enrichment for Native Studies listings, that is the source for that.

The Management Information Systems in the school divisions profile based on the 1991 census provides information on school age population, the total population by ethnic origin, a rough indicator of aboriginal student enrollment. The limitation is that respondents could have identified multiple origin rather than aboriginal under the ethnic information category. They might put Scottish, Irish, Indian or something, that makes the—and indeed that is the ethnic background of many people. They are such a mixture in Canada.

From the Indian and Northern Development Canada nominal roll source, we have information on the status students in provincial schools. We have 296 status students in provincial schools in Winnipeg No.1, 77 in Brandon, 59 in Portage la Prairie, 93 in Birdtail River, 45 in Swan Valley and 2,556 in Frontier, which, of course, is predominantly aboriginal. In other places in the province, we have 574, and they are not broken down so specifically. So we have about 3,700 status students in provincial schools.

The Frontier School Division, which is Division No. 48, has a total enrollment of 5,800, and about 5,000 of those in Frontier are aboriginal, including that 2,500 group that I indicated just a minute ago, and they pay nonresident tuition fees.

Winnipeg School Division No. 1 has an estimated 15,000 aboriginal students, which is a fairly large proportion when the total division is 34,300-some-odd students. Now, they vary in terms of their backgrounds. It is over a third of the student population there, and 296 of them, as I mentioned before, are status Indians, and they pay nonresident tuition fees. The division may survey schools to determine aboriginal enrollment more precisely in order to implement an employment equity

program. Stats Canada, The Profile of Canada's Aboriginal Population 1995 shows us that of the 195,308 provincial students, at least 30,000 are aboriginal. So if we round it off and say 30,000 out of 200,000—I always like to go in rounded-off figures—that would not be exactly accurate, but it gives you a pretty good picture when you do that. Putting 30,000 over 200,000 gives you an approximate percentage of the number of students.

I just want to indicate for clarification that when I say 15,000 aboriginal students in the city of Winnipeg, I am including the Metis, and the member, I think, is aware of some of the tensions over Metis being included in the aboriginal population and vice versa, that there are some who contend the Metis are not really aboriginal, and this debate goes back and forth between people. The member, I think, is aware of that debate that exists. We say that we have 15,000 aboriginal students, and they include the Metis students in that number.

Ms. Friesen: I thank the minister for putting those numbers on the record, and, obviously, they come from different places, probably have different definitions of selection, but they are, I think, taken altogether, a good indication of probably the different situation that Manitoba faces compared to many other provinces, perhaps except Saskatchewan. I am wondering if perhaps Saskatchewan and Manitoba or whether Manitoba itself is looking to the future and what the planning is that is going on. That is why I was looking for projections for the future, the next—not so much even the next two or three years, but the next 10 or 15 years for the schools and the Native Education Directorate as part of that. What role does the department see itself playing in the obviously expanding area of need here?

* (1320)

Mrs. McIntosh: Mr. Chairman, under provisions of the western provinces and the territories protocol, Manitoba, Saskatchewan and the Northwest Territories are designated as lead parties for aboriginal education, which, I think, is really appropriate because Saskatchewan and Manitoba have a very high per capita representation in terms of aboriginal peoples. Manitoba has, I think, the highest of the provinces in Canada on a per capita basis, and Saskatchewan is the next highest. So I think it is good that we, along with the Northwest Territories, which has a very intensive population of

native aboriginal, Inuit peoples—I think it is very appropriate that we are the lead parties for aboriginal education or have been designated as that.

They are just beginning their work. They had a meeting. They had only two years ago that the meetings began, so they met in January of '94, they met in May of '95, and in those two meetings they drafted an overview of kindergarten to Senior 4, aboriginal education of western provinces, and they also worked to identify potential areas for joint curriculum and resources development.

The aboriginal working group, as it is called, met in Edmonton on April 12, 1996, just last month, and the participating jurisdictions at that time then included the western consortium group again: British Columbia, Yukon, Alberta, Northwest Territories, Saskatchewan and Manitoba, that little merry band that is starting to meet quite frequently. This group on the aboriginal education and the ministers and the various department officials in that western consortium are really beginning to spend a lot of time together. I think this is very good.

The agenda focused on the development of a common curriculum framework for aboriginal languages. They will be meeting again in Regina next month, the working group, next month being June of '96, to develop a joint proposal for the development of a curriculum framework for aboriginal languages that will parallel the international languages programming framework.

That is expected to be submitted to the western assistant deputy ministers in October '96 when the assistant deputy ministers meet as a group. So the target is to have that working group material ready for the assistant deputy ministers when they meet in October. That is one of their projects. They have another project in the aboriginal languages programming framework, which is the development of a generic, levels-based curriculum framework for aboriginal language courses with general and specific learning outcomes and illustrative examples depicting levels of language proficiency. That is through the whole spectrum from kindergarten to Grade 12.

The responsibility of the budget and the time frame are still being determined, but that project has now been struck. A project on bilingual, aboriginal language

programming framework, again the development of a generic, levels-based curriculum framework for bilingual, aboriginal language programs with general and specific learning outcomes and illustrative examples, again from kindergarten to Grade 12, are now underway and their specific responsibilities, budget and time frame as with the previously mentioned project, are in the process of being determined at this time.

* (1330)

In terms of planning the program and curriculum development, including items and issues on aboriginal matters on curriculum planning and programming, having the people on those committees is something that we feel will give that perspective to curriculum development. As I indicated earlier this morning, we will be putting different protocols in place to ensure that we get the actual representation. As I indicated, not all superintendents have been able to provide aboriginal representation, so we are looking at other ways to ensure that representation. We are still allowing superintendents and divisions to submit names of people they think would be doing well on the committees for the actual work.

The Advisory Committee on Education Finance is also charged with looking at equity issues and aboriginal dollars and issues. The categorical grants, teacher training, multiyear plans for language are all areas that can be used with good results to assist in ensuring that aboriginal needs are not ignored or overlooked. I was going to say overseen, and I thought that is not right. Overlooked is the word. I was pretty close though; seeing and looking are related in some way. The days are getting longer.

In terms of the planning process we were engaged in with the Aboriginal Advisory Committee during the consultative processes leading to New Directions, that is now being realized and we are implementing 29 recommendations that were provided to us by that Aboriginal Advisory Committee. I think they put forward some 36 recommendations and 29 of them are underway. So that has been helpful. Also in terms of planning through Distance Education and Technology, MERLIN is beginning collaboration with Science and Technology Canada to look at a province-wide network which would include First Nations sites and be extremely useful to some of the more remote and isolated

communities. Well, as I said, that is in its infancy and it is a thrust that we feel has great potential.

Special needs review. When we are looking at that, of course, we will also include some of the problems that have been identified in aboriginal students that are higher in statistical concern than the nonaboriginal population. The member and I have discussed before and expressed concern about some of the statistics that affect the children in the aboriginal community, and they are worrisome and they do need to be addressed. So some of them would then enter into special needs. For example, if you look at the high incidence of alcoholism, we know, as well, then, that ultimately can come from that dilemma and that distress FAS children, and so there are connections all the way through. Many of these do need to be looked at cross-departmentally. We are aware of that.

The Native Education Directorate in terms of recommendations from the native education advisory committee has—just to give the member a sense of the types of recommendations—made recommendations on the learning environment. They made three recommendations, and those three are in progress or have already been implemented. They made five recommendations on teacher training, four of them are in progress and one will not be implemented at this time. They made four recommendations in the parent and community role. Three of them are in progress. One is supported but cannot be legislated. Special education, and I just made slight reference to it in my comment a few moments ago, there are four recommendations, three in progress, one will not be implemented at this time. Career guidance and counselling, there was one recommendation which we cannot implement. Curriculum, there were six recommendations, five of them are in progress, one is under review; native studies, there were four recommendations and all four are in progress; native languages, there were seven recommendations, five are in progress and two are under review; implementation, there were two recommendations and two are in progress. That gives the member maybe a bit of a feel for the way in which those recommendations are being addressed by government.

Ms. Friesen: I wonder if the minister could table a report from that native education advisory committee

with the responses of the government as to which can be and which may not be or may yet be implemented.

I wanted to ask the minister a number of other questions in this area. One is the transition from a native education advisory committee to a steering committee. Earlier in Estimates the minister talked about the proposal, I think. I do not think we talked about the composition of that steering committee. I am also interested in who is the Manitoba representative for the western consortium and particularly in the area of aboriginal languages. Which languages are being considered for the western consortium. Obviously I would think some are common languages, Cree and Ojibway, in particular, and these are ones that do have the potential to survive because of the numbers. Dene, I would think, because the Yukon and NWT and British Columbia are participating, but for Manitoba there would be two other additional ones, Sioux and Michif, which are specific to Manitoba—well, there would be Sioux in Saskatchewan as well, but very small. So I am wondering if Michif in particular is considered as an aboriginal language in the context of this western Canadian consortium.

* (1340)

Finally, I am concerned about aboriginal teachers and what the department's information is, what numbers did they have at the moment and what kind of projections do they see and what plans do they have for that. It may be something that came up, I am sure it would, in the native education advisory committee, so it may be something we could discuss from that.

Mrs. McIntosh: Just indicating in terms of the information the member requested, we can table it, we will table it. We do not have it here today. We will table it Monday or Tuesday, early next week. In terms of the question that was asked, one of the—I hope I have not omitted anything; if I do, the member can restate it for me and I will include it in the next answer—one of the department's partners in the area of education is called MANL, which is the Manitoba Association for Native Languages. The Department of Education receives many requests for services and materials in the area of native languages, and some school divisions and other jurisdictions are currently developing curricula and materials in this area, but there is no inventory of existing

or materials in development that we have, and we are needing to develop that so that we can get a better handle on where we are going across the province, division by division.

Manitoba Education and Training has initiated the collaboration of education partners to participate in a project to inventory, revise and identify materials for further development as required in the province. So we have entered into an agreement, therefore, in order to accomplish this project and get the inventory properly done so that we know where everything is in Manitoba and what we can access easily. We have entered into an agreement with the Manitoba Association for Native Languages, Inc., to hire a native language researcher to carry out the work.

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

The status of that is that currently the researcher-writer is working under the direct supervision of the Manitoba Association for Native Languages and is currently researching and compiling an annotated bibliography of existing native language materials right across Manitoba. The overall project direction is provided by a subcommittee. The membership on the subcommittee includes the Winnipeg School Division No. 1, the Manitoba Association for Native Languages, the Manitoba Métis Federation and the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, and I might just pause to add here that this is the first time that those bodies have been brought together to do this kind of work, and I commend the staff in the department for initiating this project and for bringing these partners together to work on what I believe is a very important project. A draft of the bibliography is expected to be submitted by August 31, 1996. That is this summer. The future plans for the group are: To print and distribute the bibliography; to analyze the inventory of materials requiring revision; to identify areas for further development, and this area has been identified as a common-needs area by the Western Canadian Consortium. Completed materials will be made available for use and adaptation not just for Manitoba but for all western provinces and territories. We think it is an excellent project that will be very important in helping us with our continued work in this area.

In the transition from a native education advisory centre to a steering centre, the make-up will be

representative of all native groups in Manitoba. The former committee provided broad advice and consultation. The next committee will provide input and will work in partnership. The current status of the native education steering committee is that it is currently being established. The terms of reference include: To act as a steering committee for the development and integration of aboriginal perspectives in the provincial curriculum; to validate the process and content as developed by Schools Program Division; to review materials and meet with subject area committees as required; to ensure that the diversity within the aboriginal population is reflected in the content and perspectives; to act as representatives to the various stakeholders within the aboriginal community; and to advise the deputy minister of Schools Program Division in matters related to the development and implementation of aboriginal perspectives in the provincial curriculum.

It is important that process developed by Manitoba Education and Training be validated and the diversity within the province's aboriginal community reflect it. We have existing basic introductory courses in the schools in Ojibway and Cree. We also have some resources but no curriculum in Dene and Dakota-Sioux. When I say we have some resources, I mean that we have teacher-support materials and things of that nature, but there is no full curriculum.

* (1350)

Once we have the framework in place—and I just want to clarify something because I realize that the member had asked a question. I think I should answer that before I go on to the next; it will make the rest more clear. The western consortia, the western work will not be developing local languages. It will be creating a generic framework for bilingual aboriginal language programs, with both general and specific learning outcomes, but not the actual language curricula.

In Manitoba then, for example, we will use that framework as we implement our own Manitoba-developed specific language curricula. Our partner in this is the Manitoba Association for Native Languages, and we will be working with them for all our languages. They have a specific interest in more than just the Ojibway and Cree that already have a curricula, but it is old curricula for Ojibway and Cree. Once we get the new

framework, we will be modifying that Ojibway, Cree curricula to the new framework. MANL is most interested in languages, not just one but all, including Michif, which is one I think the member mentioned specifically.

I think that as we see the framework come in, the provinces then have an ability—I say provinces, I am meaning Manitoba but the western provinces will be using the same framework. So when I say provinces, I am referring to a process that the western provinces have agreed to enter.

I think that framework will be a great value to us to update existing curricula and to implement new curricula in languages that are not currently in curriculum form. Although we do have some resource materials in some of the other languages, they are simply that, resource materials, and there is no curricula to fit them into.

So just make a final comment, that the framework would be inclusive of the big ideas, the philosophy, the general outcomes and the specific outcomes.

Ms. Friesen: The last part of my question had moved on to another topic and that was the teacher education and specifically the numbers of teachers of aboriginal descent who are employed in Manitoba schools, and, of course, also the supply of that labour market as well. The planning for that would interest me.

There is obviously an enormous growth in the number of aboriginal students across the province, particularly in certain areas of the province. What I am concerned about is the planning for the preparation of teachers of aboriginal descent who are to be able to be part of that educational system.

Does the minister have numbers on how many aboriginal teachers are employed now, and that I assume would be by self-definition. Does the minister have a sense of where the department wants to go with this? I know there are other lines for discussing teacher education, but I wanted to draw the minister's attention to it here, given the very large increase and the possible projections for the next decade.

Mrs. McIntosh: The member asks a question for which it is difficult to reply. The number of teachers who are

aboriginal—we do not have statistics on that in that there are some teachers who we know are aboriginal because they are coming through a federal system or something where that is known, but we also know that we have many teachers in the public schools who are aboriginal who just simply do not state it or indicate it for whatever reason. I am thinking of one specifically, one of my daughter's favourite teachers, now retired, who is aboriginal, but it was never indicated anywhere on any form and was never utilized in any way as a factor that maybe served as a positive role model or whatever. It just was never mentioned, so he would not be registered anywhere as having aboriginal ancestry. He, on paper, could have been any ethnic background.

So we do not always know who and where the aboriginal teachers are. But having said that, we do not have figures is what I am trying to say and trying to give it a rationale at the same time as to why we do not have those figures. It may be that division by division, a division like Winnipeg No. 1, for example, might decide to track that as they consciously hire for a specific ethnicity for a specific purpose. They may have those tracked for their own usage. We do not categorize them that way here.

Having said that, we do have programs that we target for teacher training that are there for aboriginal students to take to learn how to become teachers. We presume that their employment would then be in Manitoba. The member, I think, is familiar with BUNTEP and WEC, et cetera.

We have Dr. Shapiro examining our teacher training at the universities here in Manitoba, and amongst all the other things that he is doing, he is examining the needs in the system. He has made the statement already because he has done this type of study before, he has already indicated to us the very vast differences between Nova Scotia and Manitoba for a variety of reasons, one being the make-up of our peoples.

* (1400)

So in commenting upon the types of things that are required coming out of the faculty, I am sure our large aboriginal per capita population will receive inclusion in terms of access and equity, which are issues we have asked him to examine. He is looking at access, equity

issues and program needs as well as the type of training and the co-ordination that might be required between teacher education institutions.

Having said all of that, I come back to our desire and need for this full integration and understanding, this cross-cultural awareness that we feel our teachers must have. Teachers, including principals, play a critical role in the renewal of kindergarten to Senior 4 education in Manitoba. They have to be empowered. They have to be equipped with the necessary tools to help students become successful learners, and that means they have to have a whole, wide variety of skills, including knowledge of how children and youth learn. Inherent in that is so important, an understanding of the child's cultural needs and backgrounds.

To help a child come to full potential, the teachers have to understand the integration of teaching methods with subject matter. They have to have an in-depth knowledge of the learning process, which includes a thorough knowledge of and an ability to apply theories of learning, including such dimensions as motivation, retention, practice and transfer. They must have an in-depth, integrated and probing mastery of the other foundational topics. They have to have a wide variety of personal characteristics which they must display when interacting with students. These characteristics include the ability to inspire and intellectually stimulate, the ability to convey appropriate high expectations, moral virtues such as caring, compassion, fairness, honesty, a sense of humour, and they have to be skilful in helping students develop fundamental values and ethnics.

I think, when we start looking at this and what I am about to say next, it does not matter if a person is nonaboriginal or aboriginal. If they understand the need of the child they are teaching, then they will understand the need of the aboriginal student they are teaching or the nonaboriginal student they are teaching.

For students to prosper economically, socially and culturally in the 21st Century, there are fundamental values they will need to develop. Those will include a sense of social responsibility, respect for self and others, respect for private and public property, honesty and tolerance. Teachers have to have the skills to function effectively in an educational system that is committed to partnership and collaboration and they have to be able to

respond to student diversity. They have to know and understand that Manitoba is diverse in terms of culture, family structure, values and interests and be able to respond to those cultural differences.

We say that at the teacher training institutions, the student teachers, be they aboriginal or nonaboriginal, must each understand the backgrounds, needs and aspirations of aboriginal students and nonaboriginal students so that they can provide the best opportunities for all of the students that they teach.

I do not know if we will be able to locate someplace the actual numbers of aboriginal teachers, but I think they would have to be extrapolated from other sources since we do not have that information here.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Chairman, the minister may not have with her the numbers from BUNTEP, but that would be one indication as perhaps a five-year look at the BUNTEP numbers graduation rates and whether in fact those—I do not know whether this information is kept—but whether those students are in fact in the classroom, whether it is in federal schools or in provincial schools.

Just to clear up a couple of things that I think got lost. I am not sure I took down, and I do not know whether the minister actually said this. Who is representing Manitoba in the western consortium?

Mrs. McIntosh: I am recognizing that the member should be allowed to continue her question, but I will just throw that in because I am afraid I am going to forget again. It is Juliette Sabot who is here with us at the table today, and the other information she is asking for can be obtained. It will be in the Universities Grants Commission line, but we do have figures on BUNTEP we can get.

Ms. Friesen: Then I wanted to ask about the decrease in the budget for Native Education Directorate. In the second part it is in Other Expenditures. The Salaries and Employee Benefits remain similar, but in the other area, in a number of places there are reductions, and I wonder if the minister could give us an account of what those reductions are and what the impact will be upon the functioning of the directorate.

Mrs. McIntosh: The Native Education Directorate—I will just provide some information here, I think, which

would answer the questions. There is no impact on programming. We are literally looking at decreased costs due to planned efficiencies and also a little bit of luck. We had, for example, a \$1,100 decrease in telephone long distance, a saving due to lower rates. [interjection] Yes, MTS gave us lower rates. Probably they will become lower now in the future, right? But that was something that happened not because we did anything in particular except enjoy the benefit of a lower rate.

Some of the other adjustments and decreases we have had to work more actively to produce. We have a reduction of \$7,800 in space lease costs by having a lesser cost for the adjustment there. We have a slight increase of \$300 for technology repair requirements, but still we have that overall reduction of \$7,800. We have a decrease of \$1,000 from savings in printing costs, which has been redirected to offset part of the additional requirements in professional fees. We have a decrease of \$2,000 from savings in staff travel, which has been redirected to offset part of the additional requirements in professional fees, and those are the types of economies that we were either wise enough or lucky enough to acquire in terms of a decrease, but the programming has had no impact by virtue of these types of economies.

(Mr. Deputy Chairperson in the Chair)

* (1410)

Mr. Kowalski: First of all, I am looking at the last annual report from the Department of Education, the last annual report for '94-95—just to make sure we have some things covered. It mentioned, this year the director of the Native Education Directorate chaired a department task team which will produce a comprehensive document including protocols and guidelines for Manitoba Education and Training's involvement with First Nations in the education of band children in the province.

Has that document been completed, and is it available?

Mrs. McIntosh: I first want to indicate that Manitoba Education has always had a positive relationship with First Nations schools, and is looking forward to continued partnership. Also, since the time of the annual report, there have been significant events by the federal government and therefore our timetable and our process has been impacted a bit. I want to indicate a few things

in that the First Nations schools now, and presumably in the future, that come under the jurisdiction of First Nations, by and large, do use Manitoba certified teachers and for the most part use the Manitoba provincial curriculum.

The work that we have been doing, and the member may have had to be in the other committee room when I was going through the curriculum work that we are doing in terms of aboriginal education, but that work on curriculum framework and preparation with the western consortium, given those two realities that it is generally Manitoba curricula and generally Manitoba certified teachers, then the impact of the work we are doing, both in curriculum and in teacher training, would have hopefully, positive impacts in the First Nations schools.

The member, I know by his opening comments, and also just because we are aware of these things as MLAs, will recall that in March '94 when INAC announced that Manitoba would be the lead province to dismantle Indian Affairs and—their word not mine—hopefully will be the model for the rest of the country. Although I am also hopeful, I would have left the hopefully out. I would have just said, and will be the model for the rest of the country.

However, the provincial government does support that statement, and we support the concept of First Nations self-government. There still has been a lack of definition around what self-government is in its fullest sense, and I think that will take some time yet to properly flesh out and develop, because it is a very big and complex issue.

Where we are right now as educators, or as the Education department, is wanting to be there to assist, wanting to be there to be a partner, wanting to be there to ensure that First Nations people who live in our province have opportunities for partnerships with us, and we with them. Education and Training related issues and opportunities continue to be explored and areas for potential partnerships with First Nation peoples would include the Distance Education and Technology, which I think will have tremendous applications for some of the more remote First Nations communities for joint ventures in curriculum development so we have curriculum-appropriate learning taking place and for teacher training. Since we have the whole integration model in mind in terms of having aboriginal education and aboriginal

issues permeating other subject areas, this one would be most useful I think for First Nations people, and also would ensure some sort of consistency across the province in terms of the measurable-standards issue that we talked about this morning.

Band schools are regularly invited to professional development activities and they do receive our written documents. So, while they have a jurisdiction of their own, we do have a very good relationship, as I said at the outset, and we want to have partnerships with them. I believe that they have the same feelings in return for us.

Mr. Kowalski: I am not too clear on the answer. In the annual report, it indicated that there would be a document. If I understand the minister's answer correctly, it is because of certain events that have transpired, that the wisdom of doing one document at this time, when so many things are in transition, would not be a wise move. Is that the minister's answer?

* (1420)

Mrs. McIntosh: Mr. Chairman, in essence, the member has made a correct summary. Part of the thing that we face as this growth evolves, as this situation evolves and develops, is that we need to be invited to the table by the federal government and with the native peoples. Because there have been a lot of issues that have been circulating back and forth interjurisdictionally between all of those jurisdictions, we are not yet at that stage. So the member has essentially summed it up correctly. There are some other nuances there, but we have had to modify our original plans. It does not mean that we have changed our original intent by any stretch of the imagination.

Mr. Kowalski: Also in that annual report it states that the directorate will also co-manage the planning and delivery of an aboriginal educators' conference, an event which will be held annually in the future. Is it being held annually now?

Mrs. McIntosh: The aboriginal teachers' circle at Red River Community College and the department together came to an agreement that they would be better spending their energies this year with a summer institute, so they did not have a conference. They are interacting. I understand, all the time. They are having a summer institute, or they had a summer institute? You are having

a summer institute in July and not bothering with the conference this year.

Mr. Kowalski: Could the minister tell us, do Saskatchewan, Alberta, and B.C. have Native Education Directorates in their Departments of Education?

Mrs. McIntosh: Yes. I always wanted to do that.

Mr. Kowalski: Now, as far as size of those directorates in comparison to Manitoba—and we talked about this earlier in Estimates about the actual number of staff, because there has been integration throughout the Department of Education. I do not want to compare apples to oranges, but I would like to get a sense of the amount of resources put into native education in Manitoba in comparison—I am most interested in Saskatchewan because I think the native population, percentage of the population, is similar, so how do our native directorate departments compare?

* (1430)

Mrs. McIntosh: Mr. Chairman, we do not have the exact figures. We do know that Saskatchewan—when I said, yes, they do have directorates or branches. Alberta's is slightly different in that they fund projects as opposed to having what the other—like British Columbia has a very rich—well, British Columbia is rich, let us face it. Would that we could only have their money. They have in Alberta when I say they just go, projects—I would gladly go there and help them out if they are looking for ways to spend it. But Saskatchewan, I think, which you asked specifically about, Saskatchewan has—they call it an Indian Metis branch. They do not integrate their branch people through other departments as we have done, but they have a branch. We are not sure of the exact number of people and I am giving you an approximate—please do not hold me to the figure—but it is in around seven to nine people.

I may be off a few people one way or the other, but it is in that ballpark and theirs is, as I say, all contained within that one branch. They do work on curriculum, a little different approach. It is actually the approach we used to have. We had a similar set-up here a few years ago and then we dispersed the people. We went into the philosophy of inclusion, and I think the model we have honours that inclusion philosophy.

The mandates of these other provincial aboriginal branches, directorates, whatever they call them locally, they vary. They are not exactly the same. Some still do separate curriculum development, but we are starting to come together, as I indicated in earlier comments, on focusing in on a number of areas and issues that we think we can help each other on. We are seeing that just as a generic statement. Now I am not talking about aboriginals specifically, but in a generic sense, we are trying, right across the board, to identify, particularly with our western colleagues, as many areas of common interest and common work that we can.

Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, British Columbia, the Northwest Territories, and the Yukon really have formed partnerships. We see it in so many ways where various endeavours will come together to look for the common thread where we can support each other. I think, ultimately, be it education, whatever the issue, whatever the topic, that we can each grow stronger by that kind of co-operation, not just in terms of cost-effectiveness, but in terms of creating a quality of life that is picking the best from all, I think, will be very good for us.

I am sorry I do not have the specifics on Saskatchewan and the other provinces in the West, but I think that gives you a sense of it.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Item 2.(d)(1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$160,800—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$50,400—pass.

Item 2.(e) Program Development (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$2,481,000.

Ms. Friesen: I wanted to ask, first of all, about the staffing in this department or this section of the department, and including in that the professional fees and the contract staff. Does the minister have a table laying out the positions, vacant positions, as well as, I assume, a separate listing of contract personnel and their responsibilities?

Mrs. McIntosh: Mr. Chairman, I have the listings here. I am just assuming, for clarification, that when the member is talking about contract she is meaning term. Is that correct?

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Chair, including term. I was looking at the Professional Fees line as well, including those kind

of writing contracts, short-term contracts, as well as term employees.

Mrs. McIntosh: Mr. Chairman, the staff is looking that up and while they are doing that, I will provide the Program Development Branch information. The director is Pat MacDonald who has joined us at the table. The administrative secretary is Louise Hardy. There is a Technical Support Unit which has a consultant and information writer, a word processor and editing clerk. Do you want the names or does it matter?

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Chairman, there are 51 staff years here. So I am sure it would take the minister a long time to read it out, and if she would prefer simply an organizational chart indicating what positions are vacant, what are filled, and how the section looks

Mrs. McIntosh: Mr. Chairman, that will save a lot of time, and I do have an org chart as well which I can submit. There is one vacant position. The member will notice under Curriculum Frameworks unit there is one vacant position there and it is noted. All the others are filled. So I will provide both. I will give you the org chart and then the contract positions as well—staff has now located and handed over. Did you want the contract one read or just handed like the other?

I can indicate generically on the contract writing, and I will just give this brief overview and then—just to save time maybe I can give this brief overview and then provide the list of names themselves. Brief overview would indicate, looking at the first page, that all of the people on the first page are teachers, either current, seconded or retired, the majority being current teachers. They were hired to write illustrative examples for the common curriculum framework for English language arts to prepare English language arts, K-12, common learning outcomes in partnership with the Western Protocol and to participate in the Western Canadian Protocol for the English language arts workshop. Their honorariums—I do not know if we call them honorariums or fee for service—range from \$300, several at \$300 and several at \$1,000, and one at \$7,000. Then on the second page, again all current teachers, and they were hired for English language arts and mathematics, participating mainly in Western Canadian Protocol for English language arts and for mathematics to develop curriculum and curriculum frameworks with detail as to exactly what those were

attached. On this page the amounts—a lot of people getting \$200, one getting \$7,000, one getting \$5,000, one getting \$9,000 for the bigger projects in mathematics

* (1440)

Then, on the next page, all teachers again, one a retired teacher and one a consultant, the rest current teachers, again, working on the preparation of mathematics. We are mostly into mathematics on this page. There is a wide variety of things being done in mathematics, but again, a lot of contracts on the preparation of curriculum frameworks, outcomes, Grade 3 standards tests, et cetera, the K to 4 mathematics curriculum, et cetera, distance education courses in mathematics, the preparation and revision of those, preparing a script and supervising the filming and editing of a video for parents of kindergarten to Grade 4 students detailing the rationale and background for the existing mathematics curriculum.

I am pleased about that when that fits in quite well with the questions I was receiving this morning from both party critics about trying to get the word out to parents as to what this was all about, and I did not realize this one was being done. It is a good piece of information on that particular question. So again it is mostly, it is all mathematics on this page. The range of honorariums or fees for service again range from a lot at \$300, then the bigger projects ranging up to \$5,000

The next page has—again, they are all current teachers participating in regional in-services for K to 4 mathematics and facilitating regional in-services for divisional representative teachers and administrators for senior mathematics and participating in the Western Protocol for collaboration of basic education, et cetera. The fees for service on this page range from \$100 to \$324.

We then get into science and there are contracts that have been given for science. Now these are not all teachers on this page—well, a professor is teacher, sorry. I meant, like, they are not in the kindergarten to Senior 4 system. The others were all kindergarten to Senior 4. We now have a university professor preparing science education background for the pan-Canadian science project which is just beginning. We also, though, have some organizations appearing on this page. You will see

the Manitoba Association for Native Languages being given an honorarium or fee for service to help develop native language material. That is a big one on this page; it is \$40,000. It is the biggest one I have seen so far, but the project that they are being asked to undertake is huge, so it is not surprising it would be in that range.

There is also an education renewal project under the Manitoba Reach for the Top program, which has a small honorarium of \$150 attached. There is a consultant contracted on this page for multimedia software, which is to prepare instructional materials related to the thematic multimedia teaching unit for the interdisciplinary middle years multimedia project, and that is a mouthful. That is \$2,600.

We also have a consulting group from the grants program pilot projects to evaluate round one and round two of the distance education pilot projects, and that is the next-to-largest one on this page, again a huge project. It is called Proactive Information Services Inc., and you do have a teacher on this page who has received a \$2,000 honorarium to integrate multimedia with the Physics 30-S Curriculum Framework implementation document.

Oh, and there is a last page, I am sorry. The last page has two teachers and a translator receiving a fee for service for other education renewal projects, and the one teacher is developing resources to assist other teachers in the differentiation of instruction, which will be extremely important now that we are going into the New Directions in the high schools. We have a translator who received a fee to translate correspondence to superintendents and principals regarding an appendix to the educational changing document, and we also had a teacher who wrote the support document Towards Inclusion: Success for All for kindergarten to Senior 4.

The total amount comes to \$155,208.73. You will see a variation in there, and all the names and details and backgrounds are attached. I have sort of given the highlights for the record, but the member may wish to look at further detail included with them.

I was asked, Mr. Chairman, if I could get some material which has now come up. This was promised this morning, and I do not know how they are doing this when they are all here with me, but somehow they have been able to provide for us, as promised this morning

[interjection] Yes, the deputy says it is because they are such an efficient team, and I think I should say that into the record. I am extremely proud of this staff. It is an inherited staff. I did not get to choose them myself, but when you talk about someone being blessed with an inheritance, this is one that I really got lucky on, so I am tremendously pleased and proud of my staff.

We have three copies here each of the Canada Report on Finland at Lahti for the OECD/INES Project. We have the Canada Report on the OECD/INES Project in La Palma, Spain, and we will table the third requested report on Monday, which was the one to Great Britain. There are three copies of each, Mr. Chairman.

Ms. Friesen: Could the minister tell us about the process of the contracts? How many were untendered contracts? How are people selected for the writing of curriculum, in particular?

Mrs. McIntosh: The process that is used is that we will advertise in the newspapers, and what we advertise is a generic kind of request. We will say something like—and I am paraphrasing: Wanted. People who want to write for the Department of Education, that type of thing—you see, we each look at things from our own perspective. This is a very good class, instructional. Look, the member from Maples (Mr. Kowalski), when he sees “wanted” at the top, with his background as a police officer, thinks of something quite different. He sees the top 10. But for this purpose, we probably do not put wanted at the top, Gary. My deputy passed me a note; I will not read it into the record.

* (1450)

However, they will put an ad in the paper. The department puts an ad in the paper that says that they are looking for people who would be interested in doing contract writing for the Department of Education, and if they are interested, could they send in their resume and some samples of writing, or whatever they are asking for. It is generic. It says, like from time to time throughout the year. So applications will come in that way, and we then have a stable of resumes or a collection of resumes on the shelf, so to speak, from which we can make selections. Our selections are normally based on these, and the other way that we will get names on the shelf, for want of a better way to put it, is that frequently in

selection interviews, people will apply for jobs, and you may have 10 people applying for a particular job. You select one, but you know, in the ones that were not successful in getting the job, that there are some capable people that you now know have particular talents because they have been through the selection process. So sometimes those names are kept and held as possibilities for contract writers because they fared very well in a competition process.

In a couple of cases we were not able to use the existing eligibility list for a variety of reasons, usually because of the very specialized requirements of the task. So then we will go to the two lists that we have on the shelf that I mentioned or we will approach people that are known to be master teachers that have been brought to our attention in some way.

I will give you an example on the ones that have been submitted of that. The people who wrote the English Language Arts illustrative examples, they wrote illustrative examples for the Common Curriculum Framework for English Language Arts. Those people were chosen directly and not from the application or the response to the ad or any of the other vehicles. We went as a department directly to them and said, would you help us out here? You will see that list. The total amount there was \$2,700. Each of the participating teachers received an honorarium of \$300, but they were selected outside of the normal way; because of that we did not have names on the list that fit that. So that will happen from time to time but, generally, the majority of the time, people are selected by the first method that I identified for the member.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Chairman, were there any other untendered contracts in this department, this section of the department, I should say?

Mrs. McIntosh: No, there were not.

Ms. Friesen: One of the areas that has been brought to my attention, and I think the minister has already been asked questions on this earlier, and that is the writing of the phys ed curriculum and the resignation of the person who was writing it. Does the minister have any comments that she wants to put on record about that, and what has been the impact of the resignation upon the changes in the curriculum? Has it delayed any timetables

and are there philosophical issues at debate here that are of broader significance rather than of individual significance?

Mrs. McIntosh: Mr. Chairman, the curriculum writing for the physical education, as I indicated the other day, has not yet begun. The work plan is on target. The outcomes are due to be released June 29. The work at the staff level was on topics, themes and structure. Then it was a team approach. It was not being done by any one individual. The person that was referenced the other day, I do not know the individual myself, but my understanding is that her decision to seek employment elsewhere was irrelevant and inconsequential to the work of the committee because it was a team approach and not the work of any one person.

They were laying down topics and themes to be included in the curricula and whether it would be that particular staffperson or another particular staffperson really did not make that much difference because she was just one person out of many, and there are lots of other people as well qualified and as knowledgeable and able to work well with the team. I understand her reasons for resigning were personal. It has never been brought to me as an issue but in terms of the work that is being done, her retirement has really made no difference to the work being done. It is irrelevant and inconsequential.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Okay, it looks like a nice day out there. I am sure it is going to be a nice weekend. Everybody have a nice weekend.

The hour being three o'clock, committee rise.

HEALTH

Mr. Chairperson (Marcel Laurendeau): Would 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 Resolution 21.3, item 3.(b)(1). The minister may want to introduce any new staff present at this time.

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to introduce, again, to this

committee Mr. Reg Toews who is the director of the Child and Youth Secretariat.

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): I thank the minister for accommodating our interests by bringing Mr. Toews into the process as per our request yesterday.

We are going to be dealing with the Healthy Child initiative, and I note that Mr. Toews is directly on-line in the department as in Strategic Planning and Policy Development. I am wondering if the minister could outline how the structure works with respect to Mr. Toews' position, whether that is a direct line item dealing with Child Health or are there other duties involved, et cetera?

Mr. McCrae: Mr. Toews is seconded from the Health department to head up the secretariat, and he is assisted by people representing other departments as well in the secretariat on a full- and part-time basis.

Mr. Chomiak: I do not believe, and I stand to be corrected, that Mr. Toews was on-line in the department under last year's organizational structure. Can I assume that the Healthy Child initiative is now centred at Department of Health?

Mr. McCrae: It is not centred in any department. It is a stand-alone secretariat, and the lead minister responsible for the secretariat is the honourable Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Mitchelson).

Mr. Chomiak: Is Mr. Toews devoting himself full time to the activities of the Youth Secretariat?

Mr. McCrae: The majority of Mr. Toews' time is committed to secretariat responsibilities, about 80 percent, and he still maintains contact with the Health department.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, I believe we went through this a bit last year, but can the minister give me an understanding of what the budget is for the Youth Secretariat, what the overall budget is, and how the various departments interact with respect to that budget?

Mr. McCrae: If the honourable member looks at the Estimates book, Manitoba Estimates of Expenditure for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1997, on page 18, he

will see the line for the Children and Youth Secretariat. The total appropriations for the secretariat is \$144,000. Those are operating expenses. The salaries of the people attached to the secretariat are paid out of the various departments involved.

Mr. Chomiak: So the overall operating expenditures are a line item. The salaries for the various officials who are seconded are paid for directly by the departments. How is specific programming handled with respect to the Child Secretariat? How are those functions paid for?

Mr. McCrae: Program dollars are provided by the various departments, and the programs are co-ordinated by the secretariat.

Mr. Chomiak: Can we get a chart of a listing of who belongs to the secretariat or who has been seconded or who comprises the secretariat?

Mr. McCrae: Yes, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chomiak: I thank the minister for that response.

Last year during the course of the Estimates, we spent a considerable time and a useful time, I think, going through the specific initiatives as laid out in the report The Health of Manitoba's Children. The minister will recall I had a slightly different copy than the final copy, but we managed to work our way through the various recommendations and the various points as raised in the report.

I am not anticipating doing that necessarily this year, but what I would like is if the minister could provide us with specific information about which programming and development has taken place through the Youth Secretariat in all areas since last year.

* (0910)

Mr. McCrae: We would like to bring forward that information at the point in the Estimates where we need to pass that item in the Estimates book. In any event, we think that would be the appropriate place. However, we can compile a document for the honourable member that would set out the programming changes that have happened.

If I may, Mr. Chairman, the problem that we encounter is that the secretariat reports to a number of departments and not just mine and that is where, I believe, Mr. Toews is having the difficulty. I think he would be more comfortable—and I tend to agree with him—in having these questions answered at the appropriate time in the Estimates process.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, just for clarification then, is the minister saying that the desire is to answer the questions when we get to the appropriation line in the Health Estimates or is the minister saying the desire is for Mr. Toews to answer the issues when we get to the Department of Family Services or through the Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Mitchelson)?

Mr. McCrae: Mr. Chairman, I think I have a useful proposal for the honourable member. If the honourable member has health-related questions related to the work of the secretariat then we will attempt to deal with them. The other thing the honourable member could do is put any questions he has in mind on the record and at the time when the honourable Minister of Family Services is responding for the secretariat, at the time we get to vote No. 34 as listed on page 18, then the Minister of Family Services could answer the broader questions the honourable member might have.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, I am at a bit of a disadvantage with respect to putting questions because I am not entirely clear from our extensive discussion last year in Estimates to this year what has been done by the Child Secretariat. Until I get a listing of what is done, it is difficult to pose specific questions. I basically was hoping to use the exercise to update ourselves as to what initiatives have been undertaken.

Would we be able, therefore, to get a listing or an update as to what has happened in the health area with relation to the Child Secretariat?

Mr. McCrae: Very simply, yes. However, I am advised that because of the multisectoral approach taken by the secretariat, it does not break out as easily as one might hope. For example, when it comes to the transfer of funds from the Department of Health to the Department of Education for certain special needs children, that is something that we can only speak about in a multisectoral sense.

That is why I think it is we are suggesting that if the Estimates of the secretariat were examined separately, that with the lead minister involved, I think the honourable members opposite might get a clearer understanding of what it is the secretariat is doing.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, it is a difficult area because of the nature of the secretariat, and yet that is one of the reasons for some of our differences from that of the government, as to the structure and the method by which the secretariat functions and operates, but that is a structural question.

Last year we had a fairly extensive discussion on specific initiatives that had been announced in March of last year by the government concerning protocols and some special needs initiatives that were put in place by the secretariat, and we were able to go through some of those issues. Is the minister indicating that we are not in a position this year to go through that information, and that the way that we will have to obtain that information is through the Department of Family Services during the course of their Estimates?

Mr. McCrae: Mr. Chairman, the director of the Child and Youth Secretariat reports to the government through the Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Mitchelson), and that is the difficulty that Mr. Toews and I are having today.

We are not unwilling or not interested in discussing technology-dependent children, for example, and the progress that has been made on a program that has already been announced, but there are other things that are in progress that are more appropriately discussed through the Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Mitchelson).

* (0920)

Mr. Chomiak: I appreciate what the minister is saying.

I guess my next line of questioning then is, we do have the report *The Health of Manitoba's Children*, which was submitted by Dr. Postl last year and which, more or less, for the most part deals with matters of health, as the title denotes. I guess I am wondering if it is possible to get updates from the minister as to what specific initiatives have been undertaken by Health in regard to recommendations contained in this report.

Mr. McCrae: Again, I think it comes down to the issue of the involvement of the various departments. There are some 117 recommendations in the Postl report, and, no doubt, the Health department is involved with many of those recommendations, but it is only part of the involvement.

I think that it is hard for us, where we have traditionally thought of the government as having been broken down into the various departments, here we have a secretariat that is moving to break down those departmental lines and even issues that appear in the Postl report to impact only certain departments, the appearance is not in conformity with the facts. The facts are that on virtually any recommendation there is input from various departments whether it has to do with technologically dependent children or aboriginal issues, which makes it even more complicated because of the various jurisdictional crossovers.

I certainly would like to be more helpful to the honourable member today, and I believe Mr. Toews would, too. It is simply—we came here prepared to answer, I guess, general questions about the nature of the work being done, but when Mr. Toews brings his appropriation to the Committee of Supply he will be prepared to discuss the multisectoral aspects of the work of his secretariat through the Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Mitchelson) who is the minister responsible for the secretariat.

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

Ms. Marianne Cerilli (Radisson): I am pleased to be able to join the Estimates in Health to ask some questions specifically on this issue of the Youth Secretariat. I have been listening to the responses of the minister so far to some of the questions and I am kind of concerned about the way that the government is dealing with this secretariat which has the main purpose of answering questions related to co-ordination of youth services. It seems like we are having difficulty getting some answers then to specifics in the departments. I was asking questions in Education the other day with respect to the Youth Secretariat, and the minister there was unwilling to answer questions specific to, especially, funding from each of the departments for the Youth Secretariat.

I understand there is approximately \$144,000 in the itemized line for the budget for the Youth Secretariat, but

I am also of the understanding that there is an additional amount of money to be identified from at least five different departments to be co-ordinated by the Youth Secretariat to meet these new approaches to delivering youth services, especially for high risk youth. So I want to ask the minister and his staff if this is still the case, if the departments are to be identifying funds within their department to be appropriated to the secretariat, which would then be reallocated according to the decisions made by the secretariat, for co-ordinating youth services.

Mr. McCrae: I appreciate the honourable member's difficulty, Mr. Chairman. I think when you make a change it sometimes does make people uncomfortable, but we will go forward because we believe the children of Manitoba deserve the best that we can provide for them.

I think that the problem the honourable member is having, and the member for Kildonan as well, and I, is reflective of the fact that we are dealing with this at the wrong point in the Estimates. The proper point for this Child and Youth Secretariat to be dealt with is Appropriation No. 34, which is listed at page 18, and it is a separate appropriation, and the Minister of Family Services is the minister responsible. So I think that is where the difficulty is created. Each of the departments, as the secretariat proposes initiatives, the dollars are made available when approvals for those initiatives is given.

Ms. Cerilli: Well, Mr. Chairman, quite frankly I do not accept that. The secretariat is in the process, currently, of establishing itself, as I understand it. I understand that there is a time frame which was to be completed by, at some point, around May 1996 when there would be recommendations put forward to the co-ordinating body of the secretariat from all the different committees with representation from a number of different departments.

Until that is done, I believe, that each department has a responsibility to tell this House and the public of Manitoba where the money from each department is coming from that is going to fund the secretariat. There is no line in each of the budget Estimates that specifies where up to, as I understand it, \$2 million from Department of Education and Health and other departments is going to be reallocated from.

I want to ask the minister, if he would not agree that it is responsible for him and his department to account for any monies that are going to be transferred from the Department of Health to the Youth Secretariat for new delivery of youth services, and would he not then tell this House and this Estimates committee where in the Department of Health the money is going to be allocated from, what have been identified as priority areas for the departmental resources to be reallocated from?

* (0930)

(Mr. Chairperson in the Chair)

Mr. McCrae: Resources will not be allocated to the secretariat. Resources will be spent by the various departments.

Ms. Cerilli: Is the minister telling the committee that the \$144,000 is all of the budget amount, that the Youth Secretariat will be able to utilize to do all the things that it set out to do in terms of reorganizing and re-coordinating and integrating youth services? That is all the amount of money that it is entitled to use, or is that amount of money not just for the administration and the staffing of the secretariat itself?

Mr. Chairperson: Order, please. Before we get too far into this, I would just like to remind honourable members to pose their questions and their answers through the Chair. It will contain the decorum just where we have it now, and that is where we plan on keeping it.

Mr. McCrae: Mr. Chairman, the \$144,000 listed in the Estimates book is the operational expenses of the secretariat.

Ms. Cerilli: I wonder if the minister can then answer the other part of my question which is: will there not be monies from the Department of Health identified for reorganization of youth services for the health services of youth in the province of Manitoba? Will there not be monies identified from his department to be co-ordinated by this Youth Secretariat?

Mr. McCrae: Yes, Mr. Chairman.

Ms. Cerilli: I would then like to ask the minister if the department has identified where those resources in the Department of Health are going to come from?

Mr. McCrae: Funding identification will be carried out on a project-by-project basis.

Ms. Cerilli: Who is going to do that funding identification on a project-by-project basis in the Department of Health?

Mr. McCrae: Yes. for the Health department it would be staff in the Community and Mental Health division and the other departments would have their allocated staffs identifying funding sources.

Ms. Cerilli: I am wondering if the minister can specify who it will be, either by the person's name or by the job classification. I am interested in knowing the staff people, as well, that are involved with the variety of steering committees and subcommittees that exist in the Youth Secretariat.

As I understand it, there are to be staff from the different departments on all of these bodies: care and protection of children, adolescents and pregnancy; high risk youth, early childhood and critical health incidents. So I am wondering if the minister can explain who in the department is going to be assigned to do that priority identification and identification of resources, if all that will come from Community and Mental Health Services, as the minister has indicated, or if there would be other people involved.

Mr. McCrae: We will make available for the honourable member the names of people in the Health department who are involved in that.

Ms. Cerilli: I am wondering if the minister could then tell the House the number of people that are involved in this co-ordinating exercise with the new secretariat and some appropriation in the amount of time that has been spent. I mean, I have documents that show that in 1989 this government undertook the exercise of trying to create a more multidisciplinary approach to youth services, particularly for high risk youth.

Since 1989, they have been looking at this whole issue of better co-ordination of youth services, particularly for youth that are involved in a multiple number of department services from the provincial government. So I am interested in knowing, in the Department of Health, the amount of time and staff that has gone into this

process thus far of having the Youth Secretariat look at identifying objectives and priority issues and areas from which to reallocate resources.

Mr. McCrae: Mr. Chairman, we will attempt to ascertain that information for the honourable member.

Ms. Cerilli: I would appreciate that.

I am wondering if the minister could tell the committee though, especially given that we are on the line in the Estimates for Community and Mental Health Services, what have been the priority issues identified in this area for the Youth Secretariat and Youth Services?

Mr. McCrae: Yes, Laurie Thompson leads a group dealing with early childhood issues which include a study of fetal alcohol syndrome and lack of stimulation with young people which affects their future performance. In addition, there is an aboriginal health agenda. Included in that is the whole issue of injuries to children. In Manitoba, we have identified asthma and other respiratory problems to be important matters for us to address.

* (0940)

Ms. Cerilli: I just want to clarify again then, sort of staying in the line of questioning related to dollars and resources and staffing. The minister has just outlined, I think, it was four areas: early childhood, aboriginal, then injuries, as well as asthma. I am wanting to see if indeed there are staff from the Department of Health who are involved in all of these subgroups and if there are staff from the Department of Health who are in subgroups that are in other areas.

At risk youth, I understand, there are a number of subcommittees under there which would also invoke the services of community mental health. They are dealing with young sex offenders; they are dealing with behavioural disordered youth; they are dealing with violent youth. I am wondering then, too, if there are staff who are being allocated to provide support from the Department of Health to all of those other working committees?

Mr. McCrae: Yes, Mr. Chairman.

Ms. Cerilli: I appreciate the minister's very brief answer. It does not give me a lot of specifics, but I understand he is going to provide me with some names and some estimate of the amount of time because it seems to me that there is a large structure working, feeding information into the Youth Secretariat. There are a lot of people from the community; there are a lot of people from different government departments. I also understand that they are looking at having potentially millions of dollars reallocated from different government departments to be re-coordinated in a more integrated kind of approach to delivering youth services.

What really gives me cause for concern is the minister saying that this is going to happen on a case-by-case basis. That does not sound very co-ordinated to me. I thought there was a process of prioritization going on in the departments so they would identify the areas of high priority where there is an overlap of services, where there is duplication and where there needs to be better co-ordination. I am wondering if that is not the case, and if there is not somewhere in the department the minister could confirm where there is going to be a reallocation of dollars, and how much money we are talking about from the Department of Health?

Mr. McCrae: Yes, that will happen as policy adjustment takes place. We have identified some priority areas of effort and concern, and I have listed them as relating to early childhood, fetal alcohol syndrome, lack of stimulation which affects future performance, the aboriginal agenda, child injury, asthma and other respiratory issues.

Ms. Cerilli: Through the staff who have been working with the Youth Secretariat from the Department of Health, what has been identified as the amount of dollars to be reallocated from the Department of Health? What has been any recommendation? What kind of figures are they looking at, and where is that money going to come from? Is it going to come from the item line that we are on, Community and Mental Health Services?

Mr. McCrae: There have been certain monies transferred and as decisions are made about other policy initiatives, further monies will be transferred according to the policy changes. Those amounts are not something that we can tell the honourable member at this time,

because those policy changes have not been made or announced.

Ms. Cerilli: I think the minister just said there have been dollars that have been reallocated or earmarked to be reallocated. Is that correct?

Mr. McCrae: Yes, the honourable member will recall \$650,000 transferred for technology-dependent children and that transferred from the Department of Health over to the Department of Education and also to the Department of Family Services.

Ms. Cerilli: What is the total amount of dollars that the secretariat is going to have allocated from the Department of Health for this year and for next year?

Mr. McCrae: If you remember that in the Department of Health there is an expenditure of \$1.8 billion and that a certain amount of that is spent for children's health programming, when you look at the Department of Education and Training, you will see that about a billion dollars is being spent there, Department of Family Services about \$665 million, Justice about \$172.5 million, and that programming dollars are being spent in those departments on child and youth initiatives today, and then you look ahead to how those dollars will shift between departments depending on the program initiatives that are going to be changed, those are the dollars. They are not new dollars. They are dollars that will be reallocated.

Ms. Cerilli: So is what the minister telling the committee is that all of the current dollars budgeted for any service in any department related to youth is open to have the secretariat make recommendations for how it should be re-coordinated or administered, or is it that the departments will be identifying specific dollars for re-coordinated services?

It seems like we are getting some mixed messages here. I am wanting the minister to clarify, is he saying that in the figures he has just read off that any dollars throughout the government are available to have the Youth Secretariat make recommendations for reallocation or co-ordination or whatever?

Mr. McCrae: Yes, Mr. Chairman.

Ms. Cerilli: Has there been a change then since last September, I believe 1995, when the departments were to identify approximately 2 percent, I think it was 2 percent, of resources to be prioritized for reallocation by the Youth Secretariat?

Mr. McCrae: It has been estimated that approximately 2 percent of the spending of these departments is related to programming for children and adolescents. That is the underlying understanding as we go forward, but as I said to the honourable member previously, the dollars will change hands as program changes take place.

Ms. Cerilli: What I am wondering then is how that planning is going to take place and if that is not the job of the existing structure for the Youth Secretariat, to plan for how that money is going to be reallocated and identified.

Mr. McCrae: The committees I referred to will make recommendations to the secretariat which if found acceptable will move forward and up the structure of government, and the dollars would then be redirected accordingly.

Ms. Cerilli: Mr. Chairperson, I am wondering if the minister could give us an example of this, perhaps in the area of mental health services as it relates to violent youth, let us say. If there is a recommendation made, how would it work inside the Department of Health for the reallocation of that money?

I guess I am starting to wonder—I can imagine the auditors having a field day with this whole area, quite frankly. I do not think in all the years that the Youth Secretariat has been struck, we have seen an annual report from the Youth Secretariat. So I am wondering how this is going to be accounted for and how it is going to be planned throughout this case-by-case basis, as the minister has referred to. I wonder if he could give us an example.

* (0950)

Mr. McCrae: I know that honourable members opposite have had trouble ever since the days when the Seniors Directorate became a directorate. I remember in this House, especially the Liberal members who kept saying, well, what has the directorate done today and how

much money did they spend. This was the mindset that the opposition had, that you had to keep spending new money all the time, borrowing and taxing and then spending some more new money. That is not what this is about and it never has been, and that is where I think the honourable member is having her trouble, and that is understandable. When you have a certain expectation which is not in accord with what is happening, then you can be somewhat confused by what is going on.

The example I could give the honourable member is the example of the technology dependent children, where there was a change in terms of funding directly from the Health department to funding provided to the Department of Education and the Department of Family Services.

Similarly with the example the honourable member gave, dollars presently spent in Health may indeed be more appropriately spent in some other setting, for children who are prone to violent behaviour, for example, and when these committees design a better way to deliver services to those children, then recommendations would be made to the secretariat which would take the funding proposals forward to the government.

Ms. Cerilli: I just want to make a comment on the minister's answer to begin with, because I think that our side of the House, and I know myself, I would strongly encourage a multiservice approach to youth services, and a co-ordinated approach. I think it is better for young people receiving services through community agencies and government when service providers talk to each other, know what they are doing in relation to other services when there is not the requirement for families to have to go to a number of different agencies in a way that can often be frustrating, and especially when there is not a lot of communication between those different government agencies with respect to the client.

I just want to go on record saying that I think that would be a good thing to have more integrated and co-ordinated services. I just want to also say that I think the reason to do it is because it is good for the client. I think that there may be financial efficiencies or administrative efficiencies, but I think we have to keep in mind that the priority is to provide effective services for youth.

So, given that, and given the minister's example, I am wanting to know if the department has had to prepare any

statements that would go to a summary that would be provided to the public at the end of the year, that would give an overview of what the secretariat has accomplished.

Mr. McCrae: The type of summary the honourable member is looking for of the activities of the secretariat, I would invite her to come to Estimates when the Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Mitchelson) is answering questions relating to these appropriations, and she can, I believe, answer that question in the way the honourable member wants it answered.

Ms. Cerilli: Mr. Chairperson, I thought we had just established this already, that we are in the Estimates for Health. There is money coming from this department for the co-ordinating function of the Youth Secretariat, so there is a responsibility for the minister to answer questions related to specific recommendations or dollars allocated from this department for Youth Secretariat activities.

So I am wanting again to ask the minister to clarify if there has not been a requirement to supply any summary of the initiatives or undertakings from his department in relation to the Youth Secretariat for a report.

Mr. McCrae: There will be reference to these matters in the annual report of the Department of Health and perhaps reference to the secretariat's work in reports of the other departments involved as well. But if the honourable member is looking for some reference to the secretariat's work and how many dollars are attached to it, she is going to have a problem because the dollars are still spent by the various departments.

Ms. Cerilli: Are the chiefs of staff, for lack of a better word, of the Youth Secretariat—and I believe the staffperson is at the committee today—required to submit an annual report?

Mr. McCrae: There is no legislation establishing the Child and Youth Secretariat so therefore there is no requirement for a formal annual report.

Ms. Cerilli: Has the Department of Health's participation with the Youth Secretariat included going through a process for setting benchmarks in areas related to health and youth, for example, in the area of adolescent pregnancy, let us say?

Mr. McCrae: Yes, Sir.

Ms. Cerilli: Can the minister tell the committee what benchmarks or targets or goals, whatever we would like to call this, have been set in the area of health as related to the Youth Secretariat?

* (1000)

Mr. McCrae: They are not related to health. They are related to the work of the secretariat, which is multidepartmental.

Ms. Cerilli: Have there not been benchmarks or targets set in areas such as adolescent pregnancy, teenage suicide? If that is the way that we could have these explained to the committee, I would be happy to hear those in which areas there have been benchmarks set. Perhaps after I get that answer, we could look at what those benchmarks are. So, first of all, we will just deal with what areas there have been benchmarks set.

Mr. McCrae: As I said to the honourable member, benchmarking is part of our process, and we are establishing benchmarks in areas like teen pregnancy, in areas like youth violence, low birth weight and fetal alcohol syndrome. Those benchmarks are not, in a formal sense, finalized, but that benchmarking is very much part of the work of the various committees reporting to the secretariat.

Ms. Cerilli: Will the minister make a more complete listing of the areas that are being benchmarked by the Youth Secretariat available. Now at the committee I think that there probably is the opportunity, with the staff's assistance, to list for us all the areas. The minister has mentioned a few. I would appreciate knowing the number of areas that have been identified. I would also like some explanation of the model that is going to be used for addressing the targets or benchmarks.

Mr. McCrae: I would invite the honourable member to ask this question when the secretariat's Estimates come before the Committee of Supply. That would be the appropriate time.

Ms. Cerilli: I am not quite understanding why all the hesitation to answer questions. I think that part of having a more co-ordinated service would be that everybody

involved in those services would know the answers to questions like this. Everybody in the government committee for Human Services in cabinet, for example, would know what the government's goals are going to be in the areas of teen pregnancy or adolescent suicide or youth violence. I would think that would be what would occur with a secretariat like this. So I do not understand why the hesitancy or the refusal to answer questions, and perhaps the minister could explain that to me.

I am wanting also to know what is the time line that the Department of Health, in its involvement in the secretariat, is working towards with regard to the benchmarking process?

Mr. McCrae: Mr. Chairman, there is absolutely no hesitancy. We are simply deferring these questions to the appropriate minister in the appropriate Estimates examination.

Ms. Cerilli: Would the minister not agree that in a more co-ordinated system, all the members of cabinet belonging to the Human Services committee, or all of those ministers that have responsibilities into the Youth Secretariat, should be able to answer questions as significant as a government's benchmarks for teen suicide or adolescent pregnancy?

Mr. McCrae: Yes, Sir.

Ms. Cerilli: The minister said, yes, that he believes all the ministers should be able to answer these questions. Then I would ask the minister to explain why he is not willing to tell us the benchmarks that are being set, especially as related to the Department of Health, and I can appreciate that probably a number of the areas being dealt with by the secretariat would relate to the Department of Health.

The other question I ask is, given that the department has a large amount of resources and staff active with this process and with the Youth Secretariat structure, can we have an explanation of the time line that this is working on?

Mr. McCrae: I already answered the question, Mr. Chairman. I said to the honourable member that these questions ought to be put at the appropriate time in the Estimates. When we talked about benchmarks, I said to

the honourable member that in the various areas the committees reporting to the secretariat are establishing those benchmarks .

Ms. Cerilli: But he also listed a number of areas that have been identified and what I asked was to have a complete list. Since then I have asked two other questions. I have asked about a time line and I have asked about a model. The Department of Health is working and participating in this process, and I would think that it would be reasonable that the staff and the minister would be able to explain that to the committee.

Mr. McCrae: I think the honourable member is right. The Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Mitchelson) can very appropriately be asked those questions and will no doubt answer those questions when the Estimates of the Child and Youth Secretariat are before the Committee of Supply.

* (1010)

Ms. Cerilli: I am wondering if the minister can tell me if, in consultation with his staff, the secretariat in going through this process is on target for meeting its objectives for going through the process of benchmarking and coming up with a plan.

Mr. McCrae: In terms of the planning function, we are on target. In terms of implementation, there is no target. We expect the Child and Youth Secretariat to be working for a long, long time.

Ms. Cerilli: The minister says that they have been working for a long time, but they are on target. My question specifically was, when can we expect the process of identifying these benchmarks to be completed and is it on target? Is it something that the minister would be willing to answer?

Mr. McCrae: What we have is an ongoing process, Mr. Chairman, and the planning for the structural organization of the secretariat is on target, but we expect that children and adolescents will always be with us and that there will always be issues associated with them, that we can work in a more co-ordinated way to provide appropriate programming.

As I have said, we are on target with respect to the planning and the structure of the process. The

implementation will obviously be an ongoing undertaking.

Ms. Cerilli: From that, is it the intention of the secretariat to continue to operate with the existing committee and subcommittee or structure after this initial period of organization and goal identification is completed?

Mr. McCrae: It is expected that the present system of steering committees will come to an end, but it is also expected that as the work of programming for children and adolescents continues in the years ahead that there will be requirement for the striking of various committee structures to deal with the issues that arise.

Ms. Cerilli: I want to, I think, start winding this down and ask some questions about the changes that may have occurred in the direction of the secretariat. As I understood it, initially the secretariat was to look at how to co-ordinate services specifically for multiply handicapped young people. Then I understood that one of the main tasks they were to undertake was to implement the Postl report, The Health of Manitoba's Children. Now it seems that there is a lot of emphasis being placed on going through this process that we have been talking about of trying to sort out how it is that the government is going to better co-ordinate the youth services that are so important to so many young people in Manitoba.

So I am wanting for the minister to clarify if indeed there has been a change in the direction of the secretariat and the involvement to the Department of Health. Is the Postl report still a priority for the secretariat? Is that going to be integrated into the work of the other function of co-ordinating the services or is there a specific person or specific other way that the Postl report is going to be implemented?

Mr. McCrae: No change in the direction. Yes, the Postl report is fundamental to the work of the secretariat.

Ms. Cerilli: The minister did not really answer my question though. It was, how is it going to be implemented? Is it going to become just part of the co-ordination workings of the secretariat and the government, or is it going to have some specific attention given to it to see that these very worthy recommendations

are going to be implemented, or are they going to be given to the various committees or working groups that are part of the secretariat to ensure that they are implemented? How is this Postl report going to be implemented by the secretariat?

Mr. McCrae: I guess the problem I was having was that the honourable member asked a number of questions all at once. I think we move the Estimates along—I have found working with the honourable member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) when he asks a question, I answer it. It works very well. So I am sorry if the honourable member did not feel I was responsive. I was trying to be responsive to her question.

Yes, the Postl report's recommendations are integrated and will indeed be integrated into the planning function, and the whole idea is to get as much of that report as is feasible, implemented in the future.

Ms. Cerilli: Has this report been given to all the committees and subcommittees of the groups working at the secretariat, and have they taken from this beginning some guidance in their work of setting objectives and making recommendations?

Mr. McCrae: I think everybody has a copy of the Postl report. It is a very important report, a piece of work that we are proud of. We think it is the most useful report, probably, relating to children and adolescent issues ever created in Canada. So we know that the first printing, I think there were about 1,500 copies of that, and everybody working on the various projects has that report. Indeed, Dr. Postl himself is co-chairing one of our key committees.

Ms. Cerilli: Can the minister tell us if, generally, the orientation or the approach of the Youth Secretariat will be to reinvest or refocus from tertiary treatment to more preventative treatment or approaches to health venue services?

Mr. McCrae: Consistent with health reform, generally, yes.

Ms. Cerilli: Can the minister elaborate on his previous answer, please? How is that going to happen?

* (1020)

Mr. McCrae: We give an example. When I visited the Health Sciences Centre one day, a nurse was telling me that a number of children from remote northern Manitoba communities were being brought to Health Sciences Centre to have all their teeth removed. Would it not make more sense not to prop the bottle in the first place, with the babies? That seems to me a pretty good example.

Another one brought to my attention by senior health personnel is the example of the one community in Manitoba where an inordinate number of children are admitted to a nearby hospital, having respiratory problems, and the suggestion was made that maybe if their environment was different, they would not have to come to hospital for pneumonia, or whatever kind of respiratory problems they were having. Maybe if the homes they were living in did not have wood-burning stoves, or if they had to have wood-burning stoves, if they had appropriate ventilation, they would not end up in hospitals. Those are a couple of examples of what I am talking about.

Ms. Cerilli: In that example then, could the minister elaborate on how the secretariat would make recommendations and how those recommendations would be followed up to ensure that the health, respiratory problems, given the example the minister just described, would have some intervention and would not have to continue?

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

Mr. McCrae: I am expecting specific recommendations, for example, in those areas and others, from the steering committees to the secretariat, to the government.

Ms. Cerilli: Let us take the process throughout to its conclusion. Then there would be a recommendation that would go to the government, and that would be discussed at cabinet, I understand, and then what? How would this then filter back through the various departments, and how would dollars flow?

I would like some description, because this is a new way of delivering services in government, and I am wanting for the minister to just elaborate on how the government envisions this occurring.

Mr. McCrae: As I said, the steering committees recommend to the secretariat, which brings to government, recommendations. Government then makes the decision about whether to go with those proposals. At that point, the dollars, depending on where the dollars are presently being spent, would then be reallocated.

In some cases, we might want to work with an aboriginal First Nations community, which is federal responsibility, and yet those citizens come to provincially funded health facilities for tertiary or secondary care when it just makes good sense that they not come to hospital when something like that can be avoided through appropriate remediation in the community.

In some cases, we will want to work with federal authorities, and community authorities, First Nations authorities to try to cut through the bureaucratic red tape that exists between these various jurisdictions.

I do not know if the honourable member feels the same way about this as I do, but I have long felt quite frustrated that aboriginal women and children are not getting a fair deal in Canada. If we want to point fingers of blame, I guess we have to have a pretty long finger, because it goes back 150 years. There is no one chief, or no one non-native politician who can be blamed for all this. So rather than trying to blame the federal Liberals of today, or the federal Tories of the last time, or Jean Chretien himself when he was Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, or New Democrats who really—you can point in any—and the chiefs, obviously. You cannot leave them out of here, if you are going to point fingers of blame.

It is for that purpose that I sat with Grand Chief Phil Fontaine, and talked about these things, and said that, you know, with your acquiescence, Grand Chief, I would like to move in some of these directions, and we would like your co-operation. I believe there is a wish to be co-operative here. Sometimes it is hard though, and it is nobody's lack of interest in resolving the problems, but we continue to see problems unresolved.

It is an item of never ending frustration for me as a citizen of this country that my compatriot Canadian citizens, because of where they live, or because of circumstances of their birth, get some kind of a different treatment. It is not right. It certainly cries out for

attention, and yet nothing happens. Generation after generation, nothing happens.

So I am going to be working with the secretariat to cut through some of that. I have reason to believe that there will be First Nations co-operation. I hope there will be federal co-operation. I cannot go and spend money in areas I am not supposed to spend money in, I am told, and yet, our health system is being put to unnecessary expense and people are being put to unnecessary suffering because of political problems that exist in our country. They have never gone away.

I have asked Mr. Toews and his people to bring me proposals that could help deal with the items I have referred to, and others that can be identified through our population health data that we have in our province. We know, for example, that diabetes is a serious issue with aboriginal people, and it is more serious for aboriginal people than for other people. Well, not everybody knows all the reasons for that, and I do not either, but certainly we know that education is one of the keys, and we already have in our Manitoba communities a more comprehensive diabetes education program than you will see in most other jurisdictions in Canada. Rightly so, because we have a greater issue here in Manitoba.

So it is in those kinds of areas that I really expect to see some hard proposals coming forward from the secretariat and very often these issues, well, they always will have an impact on children and adolescents, because I believe, as I believe the honourable member does, very fervently, that the right time to intervene, if intervention is necessary, is from the point of conception to a very early age in a young person's life when the right environment can make such a great difference to the rest of their lives, and by extension, to costs in the system.

Costs are always on our minds, unfortunately, but those costs are generated in the Department of Health, and in Family Services, Justice, and any departments that have dealings with people affected by things like low birth weight and fetal alcohol syndrome and all of those things that come from a disadvantaged start.

So I feel very strongly about that and I know the honourable member does too, and this is one of the reasons for setting up the secretariat, to bring some attention to those sorts of problems that we have in our

country. I will not be able to change the world; I know that. I will not even be able to change the system for the dealings with First Nations in our country. I wish I could. I have always wished I could, and I feel sometimes helpless. But I am not going to quit trying.

We may be able to measure our progress by some small steps, but those small steps might still be significant for real people in our province.

* (1030)

Ms. Cerilli: The minister made some provocative comments in his response, and I want to pick up on a few things, first of all by saying that poverty remains one of the biggest challenges in ensuring health in children, in ensuring educational attainment. We know that the highest indicator for success, academic success, is the socioeconomic status from which the children attending school come.

It does not jibe or make sense, given what the minister is saying, when we look at some of the actions of the government. I think it is appropriate that we discuss this in relation to the Youth Secretariat.

I could refer to the cuts in social allowance for food in families that have babies. I could talk about the cuts to education, and how that has affected services like mental health services for youth. We know that the cuts in education have meant a reduction in the kind of support staff that provide that front-line service for youth at risk.

I am wondering if the minister could tell me if the Youth Secretariat has discussed this. I know, from my own experience working in the Winnipeg School Division, that a young person disclosing childhood abuse or sexual assault would have to wait six months or more to receive any kind of counselling assistance. They would have to go through a referral system, and that would take quite a bit of time. I am sure that that has only gotten worse since 1990, given the cutbacks in all areas but especially given the cuts to education and how that has meant a reduction in the number of people in a school who are available to provide that kind of transition support from the academic setting, or the school setting, to Child and Family Services or Community Mental Health or Youth Corrections, or wherever.

So I am wondering if the minister can tell the committee if this has been discussed at the secretariat, at any of the levels of the secretariat, from cabinet on down, if the minister is serious about a more co-ordinated approach and a more preventative approach, which the minister has just told the committee is the thrust of the approach of the secretariat, if they have discussed the effects of the cuts in education on health services, particularly children's mental health services given that is the line we are on, looking at how the reduction in services at the front-line school/community level is probably increasing the demand for services in more serious treatment through hospitals and clinics—and I would suggest even Corrections—that we probably are seeing an increase in crime because that is a way that young people often feel they have no other choice to deal with their anger or frustration and they may act out in ways that they would not have if there had been more support, particularly through the schools. There is still, through the schools, the greatest opportunity to have access and offer support to children since still all children start off in that system as of age five.

I am wondering if the minister can comment on discussions related to this with either of the examples that I have given. I have talked about services in schools, as well as the impact on health, for a cut to the welfare allowance for food for families with children under five.

Mr. McCrae: Mr. Chairman, I appreciate that the honourable member has raised this because what she has done is identify the problem of enforced dependency in our country and some dependency that is not enforced but happens as a result of some problems we have in our society. I am a strong believer in the independence of the human being. I know that is in contrast to the views of others who look at things more communally than I do, and I recognize that is a legitimate discussion.

I do not say there is anything wrong with those who wish to preserve the reserve-type system that we have where you have status—[interjection] Well, the honourable member is not sure what I am talking about. I am talking about the enforced dependency that the Indian Act imposes on people. I would like the honourable member—I know she is interested in this—and I would like her to read all the treaties. I would like her to read the history relating to the treaties and how it is that we find

ourselves with people living in—[interjection] I am talking about aboriginal people to a large extent.

If the honourable member wants to assume that the problems we have as a nation do not, in some measure at least, relate to the fact that we have an identified population which has a suicide rate which is well higher than any other identified part of the population, has a drinking and alcohol abuse and substance abuse problem which far outweighs that and any measurable other community in our country, if the honourable member does not recognize that we have jail populations that the participation rate—as they call it—in the justice system of aboriginal people being at very high levels and does not see that as an aboriginal issue, I do and I am quite unabashed about it.

I was called a racist one day by somebody when I raised the point when I was at one time at a conference on adolescent juvenile justice issues, and I raised the point that crime was higher in communities where there was a predominance of First Nations people. I was called a racist for saying even that much. I responded by saying, well, if we are going to carry on in this country denying that there are issues that need to be resolved, then we will never resolve them.

I think a lot of my aboriginal friends will tell you that sometimes I say some things that make them mad, but the fact is, my bona fides are right on. I care very much about alleviating some of these problems that have been identified for 150 years and certainly for the last 50 in a big way. All you have to do is read the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry report to know that in the last 50 years things have got much worse, not better. So let us not be shy about this.

I think that some people, in their attempts to be so politically correct, totally ignore the real issue, and the real issue is that we have suicide rates and illness rates and every other kind of rate that you could imagine that points to poor health determinants being present amongst First Nations Canadians, and if we do not address that through mechanisms like the secretariat, then we are not doing our jobs. In fact, we might as well pack our tents and go on home, because we are doing a disservice the longer we ignore these problems.

You cannot look at a fiscal year and a social allowance budget or a fiscal year and a health budget or an

education budget and come to some wild conclusion that you are working against all that which is good and sacred. It does not do anybody any good to have to tell aboriginal and other Manitobans that we cannot give you more money for welfare because we are trying to pay off \$600 million for interest on debt this year. Working within a balanced budget is the best guarantee we have that there will be services available for people who need them.

So why do we want to force people to be dependent? Why do we not try to encourage people to be independent and look after themselves. Their chances are going to be better of getting out of that rut that the honourable member refers to, where economic status has a direct link with one's health status. That is proven over and over again. So knowing that, why do we want to have a fifth, sixth, seventh generation of welfare dependents, for example? Why do we want to have that? Why do we argue for more welfare when some people measure the quality of our welfare system by how many dollars we put into it?

* (1040)

Point of Order

Ms. Cerilli: I just wanted to ask, Mr. Chairperson, if you would either call the minister to order or ask him to deal with the matter raised in my question. Part of it was dealing with welfare. The larger part was dealing with the whole issue of the cuts in education and how that is affecting the demand on services that are more treatment- and tertiary-oriented, that there is a cost for the cuts in education, that we probably are seeing higher costs in youth corrections, in youth mental health services at the hospitals and clinics because there have been cuts in services in schools. That was the issue.

Mr. McCrae: With all due respect, Mr. Chairman, I think the honourable member may not like what she is hearing or agree with it, but it is right on the point of the question that she raised. She linked social and economic status with health status and I am dealing with exactly that, with all due respect.

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Radcliffe): Thank you very much. The Chair has the arguments and would rule

that this is not a point of order and would ask the Minister of Health to continue.

* * *

Mr. McCrae: Never in the history of this country have we spent more on a handout and never have we seen more people needing that handout. So if you were to reduce the handout, I do not think you can automatically stampede to the conclusion that you are somehow doing the wrong thing. I feel strongly that, for example, never before have we spent more on justice services, and never before have we had more criminals, so there is something wrong with that thinking. I am not sure what all is wrong with it.

I know you have to have services for people who genuinely need them, and, of course, education is a great investment, no one is suggesting otherwise. If you look at social services spending in Manitoba and new spending in Manitoba in the last eight years since the Filmon government came in, 90 percent of all new spending has been in the areas of health, education and social services.

We do not take a second backseat to any other jurisdiction in this country when it comes to social spending, but we also need to look very hard at what we are getting. What are the outcomes? I do not think we have done that well enough. Instead of measuring outcome, we have measured how many dollars. It is an easy argument to make, and it is not always easy to defend, I admit, being on the government side now for eight years and hearing daily in this place critical comment about a cut here or a cut there when overall spending is up very significantly. That is one part of it, but the other part of it is the issue itself. If there were further reductions, what would be the outcome?

Well, there are people who very quickly conclude a negative outcome, and yet look at the spending over the last number of years on health, education and social services. I say, have we solved the problems? No, because members opposite keep bringing forward complaints and anecdotal circumstances of people who are finding themselves in difficult circumstances and finding ways to link that to the government somehow, as if the government was everybody's big brother.

Well, I do not think the government is or ought to be everybody's big brother—

An Honourable Member: Big sister.

Mr. McCrae: And sister. Which reminds me, I enjoy my annual bowlathon in Brandon. Big Brothers and Sisters put on an annual event, and the member for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans) is usually there as well. I think I beat him at bowling when we do that but there are all kinds of activities that are nongovernment activities too. I would be happy to discuss this further with the honourable member. Simply to link reductions in spending to a societal issue of the magnitude we are talking about is to look only at the tip of this issue and not to get into it at all.

Ms. Cerilli: Well, for the minister and the government to think that some new co-ordination of services is going to compensate for the massive cuts in funding to youth services. I think they are the ones that are being misadvised or ill-advised or just perhaps confused or unrealistic.

I also wanted to say that the minister perhaps put a lot of his own ideas on the record, but I do not think that he answered the question about the effects of reductions in supports in schools, be they for aboriginal children or other children, on mental health services and the demand on mental health services for youth in the province

That is the issue I was raising. I do not know if the minister wants to answer that, but I am also going to add a few other things I think that are related because I am wanting to know if the Youth Secretariat had discussed that. I am wanting to know if the Youth Secretariat is looking at issues of the demand for services. I always say I would rather see money going into education now than into prisons later. And I think the minister has, in his comments, agreed that it is better to invest in children and in education and in preventative care than into prisons and intensive treatments later on.

With respect to the minister's comments on social allowance, I would suggest that babies cannot work. Babies, no fault of their own, are often dependent on families who are poor, and the cuts to social allowance for food are going to have a costly impact on this government and future government, because it is going to

mean that those babies are going to be unhealthier, and that is going to mean that there will be increased health costs.

I think that an organization like the Youth Secretariat would have something to say about that, and I am wondering if that occurred. The other thing I am wondering if it has occurred through the Youth Secretariat is if there has been any analysis or discussion of the government's move again to reduce physical activity time and physical education time in schools. This government seems determined to not have young people take physical education.

They have backed off the proposal in the Blueprint's New Directions document which initially eliminated phys ed as a core course in high school, but now they are reducing the amount of time on phys ed again. I am wondering if the Youth Secretariat has discussed this. If they have discussed that what happened with the New Directions document was the elimination of health education for kindergarten to Grade 8 students. And now to try and backtrack on that, they are taking away 40 percent of the physical activity time for kindergarten to Grade 8 students to teach health, if that is not going to be counterproductive.

I have discussed this with the Minister of Education (Mrs. McIntosh) and she is of the opinion that the amount of time on sort of classroom health education topics is going to help children learn why they should be physically active. But I wonder if the minister would not agree that time spent being active and learning by doing is more advantageous and that health education should not have been reduced from the core curriculum. I am wondering if this is something that the Youth Secretariat has again discussed with a view to the long-term impact on the demand for health services in mental health as well as other kinds of health services.

I am hoping that this has occurred. I am hoping that the Youth Secretariat will be looking at these kinds of issues in government if, in fact, it is going to be serious about co-ordinating youth services. I am wondering if the minister will tell me if there is any physical education representative or professional that is part of the health representatives, either Department of Health or other community representatives, the Department of Health has invited to participate in the Youth Secretariat that would

advocate for physical activity and fitness for children as part of preventative health.

I am wondering if any of those kind of individuals, either from the community or physical education departments in a school, are part of the Youth Secretariat. That is, I think, an important consideration. So I would hope the minister can respond to those few questions.

* (1050)

Mr. McCrae: Yes, Mr. Chairman, there is representation making physical education needs of people known to the secretariat. I am very glad the honourable member has opened up the discussion for a wider discussion about these issues linking socioeconomic status with our health and our well-being, because it is very key to the fundamental basis of what the secretariat is doing and what our department is doing.

We are not ignoring the determinants of health. The determinants of health are the part of the mindset of the members of the secretariat, as is the mindset of senior health planners here in Manitoba and elsewhere. Again, I have to take issue with some of the things the honourable member has said. I think that what she is putting forward in general is hard to disagree with, but there is a shortsightedness to the approach being taken by the honourable member here that I would like her to recognize because we are working on a much broader and wider picture than simply this year's budget.

We are trying to look at a person's lifetime and how the start that person gets has an impact on the rest of his or her life. I am the first to acknowledge that there are some people in this province and in this country getting a terrible start. I lack, even with the good work of the secretariat, the ability to solve all the problems. I think we can do some very good work here, and I have high expectations for the work of the secretariat, but I am trying to encourage people to get at the real issues.

When we talked, we have talked about child poverty rates and how at one time Manitoba, on the measurement they were using, had a low rating. It has improved somewhat, but that measurement, we can quibble about it and we can say it is true or correct or that it is based on numbers that are in effect in Toronto or in Vancouver and does not have as much application here, we can say all

that, but as long as there is one child suffering in our province because of poverty I think we still have a job to do. So let us just all acknowledge that and go forward.

I would prefer not to have a partisan debate about these discussions, and I would encourage the honourable member not to bring that into it so much. I am quite sincere in my wish to get something done here.

I think I know what politics Ovide Mercredi practises, but he and I have worked pretty well together in a very nonpartisan way. We tried, along with a whole bunch of others, to resolve some longstanding aboriginal issues through some kind of successful completion of an accord that Canadians could agree with. We did not succeed on that one. The Charlottetown Accord was something that did offer some hope at least if it did not offer the concrete things that people wanted.

I thought it offered hope. I am not trying to refight that battle, because I have been put in my place on that one by the people of Canada and I accept that. But I say maybe that was not the right mechanism and obviously it is not going to be the right mechanism, but some kind of work to give aboriginal people what they need in terms of the pride they can feel, that they have some sense of self-determination is what I am getting at.

I bring that right down to the individual. I am not talking about inherent right to self-government and how the chiefs can kind of take over running the show from the Indian Affairs department. That is not what I am talking about. I am talking about individual empowerment of people. I know that does not always work because of the history of the way First Nations have worked. They work more communally in their communities than the system that we might talk about would suggest.

So without trying to tell anybody they cannot think that way, how is it that we can get people to find more self-realization or whatever language it is that we are supposed to be using to describe what it is when a person feels free and able to manage without having to depend on somebody else, to having to depend on some government somewhere or some chief and whatever this year's budget happens to say is going to have an impact on my livelihood.

I guess there are generations of people who live on welfare in this country. Why? Can the honourable member tell me that? You cannot blame it on this year's budget or last year's budget or next year's budget. There is something more fundamental than that going on. There are healthy people who feel that they should be dependent on somebody else for their existence. What do we do about that? How do we try to give people a hand up, I think is the expression, rather than a handout, because the people I know, even those who are living on money that other people have made available to them, are not particularly happy with that arrangement for very long, and yet we have people who for generations have lived under that yoke.

Well, no wonder they are unhappy. No wonder they are thinking something ought to be done, no wonder they are looking to their political leaders, both aboriginal and nonaboriginal, to change the playing field here somehow so that they have a fighting chance to enjoy the kind of pride that the honourable member for Radisson (Ms. Cerilli) or somebody else out there who is able to be independent can feel. That is a basic human thing. I think we forget about that when we debate the numbers every day in this House, that a cut here or a misplaced priority there has had some kind of impact on somebody. I am not here to deny that people can be impacted by changes in the rules as we go along. That is because we become so accustomed to those old hidebound rules.

We have members opposite, when I have been trying to encourage them to think about this, who daily come in here and say, well, everything will be better if you just spend more money on this thing or that thing or that other thing, if it is some education deal or—Whatever happened to the concept that we come into this world and we are given an equal opportunity to achieve for ourselves? That is what I am getting at. How can we make some changes that will change the system so that people can access an opportunity a little better? The honourable member is talking about cuts in Education, so in a partisan way she will come at me from that angle and say, well, you know, you are cutting here or there. I mean, I can get into that argument, but I do not think this is Education Estimates really. You know, we can talk about lower enrolment and all like that to make our case, but I would like to steer the honourable member to a higher plane if I could. [interjection]

The honourable member for Osborne (Ms. McGifford) tells us that the New Democrats are not going to be steered to a higher plane.

Ms. Diane McGifford (Osborne): No, no, I said not by you.

Mr. McCrae: And certainly not by me. So I guess I am wasting my time when I—

Ms. McGifford: And ours.

Mr. McCrae: As the member for Osborne says, and the time of the members of the New Democratic Party, by trying to engage in a reasoned discussion about what is really wrong in our country. I do not think it is a waste of time, and I will not let the honourable member for Osborne's comment put me to my seat, because if I did that I would be admitting that there is nothing that I can do, and as long as I have this job I am not going to give up trying to improve the lot of my fellow citizens.

Many of those fellow citizens are aboriginal people, and it is one of the reasons that I have been so pleased to see that population as a target group for planning for the Child and Youth Secretariat, as a target group for planning for the Department of Health. Not all aboriginal people are as set out in the Indian Act, one of those seven or 11 groups or kinds of Indians that we have.

I will never forget what Ovide Mercredi said to me a few years back. He said, I have been a Cree all my life, but I have only been an Indian for about seven years. He said that because of changes in the federal Indian Act in Bill C-31, which finally made Ovide Mercredi an Indian where he had not been one all his life. So when he said that, it reminded me rather dramatically that we here in Canada like to condemn what went on in South Africa for all those years with apartheid when we seem to me to practice it rather overtly right here in Canada, when you have I forget how many classifications of Indians it is in the Indian Act, but it is a disgrace as far as I am concerned and you can throw the whole book in the garbage as far as I am concerned.

* (1100)

I have said that. I said that in Lynn Lake. I said that to an aboriginal person and he said, good for you,

McCrae, good for you, I will be with you 100 percent. I said, well, I have not told you what I would replace it with yet, and he said, well, I would want to talk to you about that. So therein is the debate.

I look forward to the honourable member's next question so we can carry on this dialogue about what is really wrong and what really needs fixing.

Ms. Cerilli: One of the other issues I wanted to raise is how the Youth Secretariat will approach the delivery of these new, co-ordinated services for youth. For example there are some places that have health centres in schools, health centres on college campuses which ensure that young people have more easy access to health services. I am wondering if this is something that the Youth Secretariat could consider, that is, not only the recommendations for services, but how they could be delivered, as an example, to provide more health services to young people where they are likely to be, which is places like school.

Related to that would be problems, for example, related to this whole issue of young people having access to health services, would be the issue of parental permission. Young people, as I understand it, currently need permission to have an AIDS test in this province.

I am wondering if the minister could clarify that, if that is, in fact, the case, if young people, when they go to a doctor, are required to have parental permission if they are under the age of 16 to receive an AIDS test and if that is also the kind of issue that the Youth Secretariat would discuss and would look at to address and make recommendations to ensure that young people are going to have the kind of availability of health care that is going to ensure that their health is given the primary consideration that it deserves.

Mr. McCrae: We know, Mr. Chairman, you do not need parental consent to have a pregnancy test, and we are going to check on this question about HIV/AIDS for the honourable member.

Mr. Chomiak: By the way, just for administrative purposes, we generally take a five-minute break at 10:30. Maybe we should take a break now to accommodate everyone.

Secondly, just for where I think we are going, we will not have any more questions on the Youth Secretariat. I thought we could go back to the line item we were on yesterday. There will be some questioning, probably several hours of questioning in that area, before we then get to the Home Care line item, so that is generally where I see it going.

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Radcliffe): Is it the will of the committee at this time to recess for five minutes? [agreed]

The committee shall recess for five minutes.

The committee recessed at 11:04 a.m.

After Recess

The committee resumed at 11:18 a.m.

(Mr. Chairperson in the Chair)

Mr. Chairperson: Committee will come to order.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, I wonder if we might have leave of the committee to permit the member for Osborne (Ms. McGifford) to ask questions from the seat next to moi.

Mr. Chairperson: Would there be leave of the committee to allow the member for Osborne to ask questions from the front row?

Mr. McCrae: I cannot think of any reason why we should not allow for such things to happen in the committee. In the other committee room, you sit where you want to sit. Why are the rules different in this Chamber? In fact, we might even want to refer this to the Rules of the House committee or some group like that. I do not understand why leave is even necessary for a committee. That is my view.

Mr. Chairperson: If the honourable minister would like to bring that up with the House leader, the House leaders can have that discussion, but at this time it is required under the House rules. Leave has been granted.

Ms. McGifford: Mr. Chairman, I thank the minister, too, for being agreeable in allowing me to retain this seat and ask questions from here.

I notice in the Health Estimates that one of the outcomes for several years has been the development of a women's health strategy, and I would like to ask the minister if he could update me in relation to the development of a women's health strategy.

Mr. Chairperson: Before we continue, I will just let Hansard know that the member for Osborne is sitting in the Leader of the official opposition's seat. That is one of the problems we run into when members just move down two rows. Within the other Chamber, the microphones are numbered. It is a little difficult for Hansard to pick up when we have a number of people asking from not their seats in the House, so just to clarify that for the minister.

* (1120)

Mr. McCrae: I think in the circumstances that we have today with really only a small number of people participating in the discussions that if there is any problem at the console, as long as they let us know about it, we will be happy to try to smooth out whatever wrinkles might come along. It is easy to remember the honourable member for Osborne (Ms. McGifford) is sitting in the seat normally occupied by the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer) and, of course, that is a big seat to fill, I would suggest, in any political party. But I am satisfied the honourable member for Osborne will carry out her responsibilities very adequately from whatever seat she occupies.

We will just pause for a moment, and we will be able to answer that question.

A framework document for women's health is being developed to assist regional health boards and others concerned with women's health in developing policies, programs and services to meet the needs of women. Manitoba Health recognizes the health needs of women and is committed to developing policies, programs and services to preserve, promote and protect their health.

The framework document is based on a population health approach. This approach highlights the need for

intersectoral strategies and policies to address women's health as well as the need for health services targeted to at-risk populations. Manitoba Health was an active partner in the development of the proposal for a prairie region centre of excellence for women's health research. As well, a collaborative epidemiology women's health project team has been established through Manitoba Health to facilitate epidemiologic projects related to women's health in Manitoba.

I would like to put emphasis on the approach that is being used, and that is the population health approach, evidence-based approach, which was the approach used to decide on the policy to be followed with respect to breast screening services in Manitoba. There was some debate about what was the right thing to do, what was the right age group to be targeting, and at the end of the day, after much discussion, it was decided to come down on the side of what the evidence could justify or would justify our doing, which was to target that population age group between 50 and 69 years of age for the every two-year breast examination process.

And, yes, there were people who suggested that should be available on the same basis for people under the age of 50, as well. The position we took was that if and when the evidence justifies us doing that, that is what we would look at doing. That approach is the one that would be best justified in all of the circumstances, and in doing that we send a signal to health providers and others interested in the provision of services that that is the approach that we take and it more and more is the approach being seen in other jurisdictions, as well, that simply providing services so that you can say you have them is not a good enough reason anymore. You need to have evidence to justify setting up the programs we do set up.

Ms. McGifford: I understand the concept of the population health approach, and I understand it particularly when it comes to breast screening, having taken time to visit the facility across the street from Misericordia Hospital, and so I am very familiar with the work that is done there.

But the question was about the development of a Women's Health Strategy, and I have received two pieces of information back. One is that there is, by implication, a breast screening program. The other one is that this

strategy will take a population health approach, but what else has happened in the development of this health strategy besides determining that it will take a population health approach and breast screening component?

Mr. McCrae: A framework document for women's health is being developed to assist regional boards and others concerned with women's health in developing policies, programs and services to meet the needs of women. So with the help of that framework document, we can begin the process of consultation so that we can go from there to develop further programming.

We want the framework document to direct our attention and those with whom we consult towards issues related to breast cancer and other female cancers. There is a Manitoba working group on Cervical Cancer Screening, and that is chaired by the Manitoba Cancer Treatment and Research Foundation. They are preparing a report on the implementation of the final phases of a Provincial Cervical Cancer Screening Program. We think that there is agreement that the framework for the discussions ought also to include consideration of issues surrounding gynecology and obstetrics.

The committee of the Urban Health Planning Partnership is making recommendations with respect to obstetrical, gynecological and other women's health services in Winnipeg. Regulated midwifery will become an insured service in Manitoba. The Midwifery Implementation Council is developing recommendations with respect to all facets of the implementation process.

Another area is reproductive technology, and Manitoba Health is working in collaboration with other provinces, territories and the federal government to ensure that recommendations from the Royal Commission on New Reproductive Technologies are addressed.

Another area of concern for this framework and discussion flowing therefrom is the issue of eating disorders. I think the honourable member made reference to that the other day. A variety of care providers, including psychiatrists and other physicians, psychologists and counsellors provide services for individuals with eating disorders. The psych health eating disorders unit at the Health Sciences Centre receives consultations and treats patients on referral and provides consultation to care providers in the community.

The Women's Health Clinic provides counselling and support groups for women with weight preoccupation issues. Those are all areas that are appropriate for discussion as part of the framework document. We support programs and services to address a broad range of women's health issues. A framework document, as I said, is being developed and the items that I referred to will be part of that discussion.

We have work going on between ourselves and other jurisdictions. Health Canada, for example, is going to establish three to five centres across Canada for a period of six years. They will engage in knowledge generation, communication, networking and development of policy advice concerning women's health.

Manitoba and Saskatchewan submitted a joint proposal for the prairie region centre of excellence for women's health. The six-partner organizations demonstrate the strong partnership between community organizations and universities at the Women's Health Clinic, the University of Winnipeg, the Prairie Region Health Promotion Research Centre in Saskatoon, the Fédération provinciale des francosaskoises—that is in Regina—University of Manitoba, University of Regina.

There are 65 widely representative community organizations also committed to working with the centre. There are going to be five themes for this centre's proposed research and they are as follows: first gender analysis with a population health model and determinants of health; second, consumer input and control in relation to health policy; third, impact of social support on health; fourth, effects of health reform on women; and, fifth, gender-specific programing.

* (1130)

These themes address some of the most pressing issues affecting the health status of women today, poverty, employment and employment shifts, stress on families, social marginalization and the need for viable alternatives in health service provision within escalating financial constraints. Manitoba Health provided staff support and resources to assist in the development of the conceptual framework and proposal, and the successful centres are expected to be announced in May of this year. So those are some comments for the honourable member to give her a sense of what is happening. I think that she did ask basically what areas, and I will just very quickly run

through them again, breast cancer and other female cancers, gynecology and obstetrics, reproductive technology and eating disorders.

Ms. McGifford: I thank the minister for reminding me about the document. He did, of course, mention it in his first answer, but I realize I had not noted it so I thank him for that. I do have some other questions about this document and I understand the areas that the document will cover.

I would like to ask how long this document has been in preparation, when it is expected that it will be finished, who has been consulted in its preparation, and have ordinary consumers of health been consulted in the preparation of this document? That is to say, laypersons, not necessarily professionals, not professionals, laypersons.

Mr. McCrae: The document itself has been a long time in preparation. Perhaps, the last couple of years has been taken to bring us to the point where we expect we will have that document ready to distribute by summertime of this year. There has been some wide consultation just getting the paper together which is going to herald wider consultation still. It will be a discussion document and we will, of course, invite the various organizations that have an interest in the issues to take part. We will take into account the honourable member's concern that the ordinary rank and file Manitobans should have an opportunity for some input as well, and we will do some thinking about how best to make that happen.

The same people involved in the preparation for these upcoming consultations and in preparation of the framework document have been the same people involved in helping us get our breast screening clinics going and, as well, working with our midwifery implementation committee. So these people are extremely busy people and doing yeoman service for Manitoba Health and for the women of Manitoba.

Ms. McGifford: Mr. Chair, the minister did not tell me how long the document had been in preparation. He did say that it had been quite some time. I wonder if he could specifically answer that question.

Secondly, I understand that—I may have misunderstood so for a point of clarification, please—it is a draft paper

that we hope to have ready for summer of 1996 and once that paper is prepared there will be an opportunity for input from—I gather the minister was certain about there being an opportunity for various health care providers, but there may also be an opportunity for laypersons, i.e., the consumers of health. Those are a series of, I suppose, points of clarification.

Mr. McCrae: I do believe I told the honourable member that the preparation of the framework discussion document has been in preparation for a long time, as much as two years. I said that. When I talked about organizations to be consulted later on with this discussion paper, I meant to refer to consumer organizations, organizations whose goal is to represent women's issues, women's health issues, and so we do not want to restrict that consultation at all.

As I said, also in my last answer, we would examine different ways to reach even a wider audience, as it were, and if the honourable member has suggestions in that regard, we would be happy to hear them.

Ms. McGifford: Mr. Chair, I understand the minister then to say that this will be a discussion paper that we hope will be ready for the summer of 1996. At that time a broad range of women's organizations including I presume, for example, women's resource centres, groups that provide a range of services to women, will be invited to participate in discussions of that paper. I will leave it there for now.

Mr. McCrae: That is correct, Mr. Chairman.

Ms. McGifford: From the time of the discussion paper, and assuming that there will be public discussions and public input, I wonder how long it will then take, if the minister could estimate or guesstimate how long it will take, for this paper, for this strategy, to be developed. I ask this question because having formerly been part of the AIDS strategy, which seems to have landed on a rocky shoal and gone nowhere, I would hate to see the same thing happen with this paper on women's health.

Mr. McCrae: That is not happening with regard to the AIDS strategy, and we do not expect it will happen in regard to this one.

Ms. McGifford: Could the minister then answer the question that I asked about what his estimate is as to when the strategy will be ready for implementation?

Mr. McCrae: It would be premature for me or anybody else to get out in front of that consultation process and say that, you know, we will consult for a month or two months or whatever and then say, regardless of what those consultations produce, our minds are made up. It is one of those darned-if-you-do and danged-if-you-do-not situations, I guess, Mr. Chairman, where on the one hand, there would be pressure to have a consultative approach, and on the other hand, pressure to have a plan.

Well, you cannot have both, so we are going to develop a plan from that consultative approach, and for me to tell the women of Manitoba that we are going to impose deadlines on them, I suggest, would not be well received and would not be helpful in the development of an effective strategy.

Ms. McGifford: Mr. Chairman, quite the contrary, I was not trying to suggest that a deadline should be imposed on the women of Manitoba, but rather I was trying to suggest that the Department of Health may benefit from imposing a deadline on itself, especially since the development of the women's health strategy has taken, by the minister's own reckoning, a number of years. I think it is quite possible to have consultations, public input, and also at the same time to have a deadline.

Mr. McCrae: I can respect what the honourable member is saying. We do not want to proceed without having the necessary motivation to get things achieved, so I agree with the honourable member about that. I think that is one reason why we would like to at least adhere to the idea or the suggestion that we should get this thing going by summertime.

That is an important point along the way, but, you see, sometimes one could be led to think that we are having this discussion in a vacuum in the sense that nothing is happening anyway and that we are only doing this so that we can embark on something new. That is not true either. I am sure the work of the Community Nurse Resource Centre, the two of them that we already have in place in Winnipeg, the two Youville Centre locations, the plans we talked about for Thompson, Norman and

Parkland in the future, I am sure those centres will provide lots of services that have an impact on women's health. The work of the breast screening centres will be continuing. We still have Thompson to get up and running.

But we should not assume that we are not moving forward; the Victoria General Hospital, for example, with the LDRP that is already there. The plans that are in the process of being made for obstetrical service delivery in an integrated way in the city of Winnipeg continue. The Women's Health Centre is running. The work of the Midwifery Implementation Council is ongoing.

So I would not want a discussion about the framework document to assume a lot of things that we should not assume, such as that there is not already support for the things that are already going on or to arrive at some conclusion that little emphasis is being placed on women's health issues when, clearly, the evidence is overwhelmingly otherwise.

Ms. McGifford: I would like to take this opportunity to assure the minister that the reasons for my questions are only to expedite the development of the Women's Health Strategy. It would seem to me that whether the strategy is moving forward or backward is not the question. The question is that currently there is not a women's health strategy and that women in Manitoba, like women elsewhere in Canada, have waited far too long for the kinds of health services they need and, I might add, for other kinds of services. I think women are entitled to have these services now.

Having said that, maybe I can turn to another area of women's health, something that I have discussed with the minister before, and that is the regional health boards and women. I am assuming that the regional health boards have been developed and designed to improve the delivery of health services for all Manitobans, and I am wondering if the minister can tell me specifically how this method of service delivery will benefit Manitoba women.

Mr. McCrae: I invite the honourable member to read the report of the Northern and Rural Health Advisory Council. In that document and in the document Quality Health for Manitobans: The Action Plan, which goes back to 1992, there is a reference to the improvement of our health system in general. I recognize the specific

issues related to women's health, but there are general issues related to everybody's health, and everybody includes 52 percent of us who are women.

Ms. McGifford: He is not a woman.

Mr. McCrae: Fifty percent of us who are women—I was grammatically correct, if not a little misleading—52 percent of the population who are women. So we are dealing with sort of non-specific services too, and many, many services required by women are required by men and children, as well. So the honourable member's question relates to how it is a regionalized health care system will serve the purpose of improving the health status of women in the future. By virtue of spending the health care dollars that we have in a better way, it will allow for access to health services on a more timely basis for women, and, of course, men and children—and I am speaking in a generic sense here.

When I think of the concept of centres of excellence for various services in the various regions, for example, birthing, there are changes being experienced in our province in that area. We are having problems with attracting and keeping obstetricians in various parts of the province. We know that. We are attempting to address that through the services of the Physician Resource Committee, but by regionalizing we will have a more focused approach to these sorts of services in the various regions. We will be able to enhance the ability to attract and keep physicians, notably physicians with expertise in women's health issues, in our regions. We will be able to do so in a more cost-effective way so that we are not misusing scarce health care dollars as much as we have in the past, getting more of a focus on the community, more use of concepts that go with the idea of community health centre-type operations that we see in some of our communities which has been felt by communities to be a better way to approach health in a more team-oriented way.

So I think the environment within which we deliver and within which we make decisions about our health and deliver services, by changing that environment to a regionalized approach, we are going to see improvements in a lot of areas. So this year the boards are getting organized. They are hiring their CEOs and their administrative structures, getting ready for next year when funds will flow. I think we will use our hospitals

in rural Manitoba more effectively in the future with respect to women's health issues and other health issues than we are today. That is a general kind of answer for the honourable member's question.

* (1150)

Ms. McGifford: Mr. Chair, I want to assure the minister that I have read the 1992 Action Plan, and the minister is certainly right when he says that is a general answer, because it seems to me he is telling me that if services are improved generally, and he believes they will be generally improved by the implementation of the regional health boards and the work that those boards will do, he seems to be suggesting that if services are generally improved, then services, by implication or axiomatically, will be improved for women. Yet I would like to point out to the minister that historically this has not been the case.

When additional services—and here I am not confining myself to matters of health. When the climate changes or perhaps “improves”—and I put improves in quotation marks because improves is sometimes a matter of perception—it does not necessarily mean that the climate has improved for women. In speaking with the minister the other day, I made the point that, historically, changes in the lives of women have been made when women have been empowered to speak for their needs.

The minister told me in Estimates a couple of days ago that the female representation on the health boards was, to put it best, uncertain. Therefore, I do not know how the minister can tell me that the implementation of regional health boards will improve the lives of women and improve the health services to women. It simply does not make sense in view of history and in view of the lack of representation on these boards. However, the minister and I have already chased this one around the block a few times, so I would like to ask him more specifically if he can tell me how this method of delivering services will benefit women.

Mr. McCrae: The honourable member and I have talked about the makeup of the boards and the balance that needs to be improved on and I have acknowledged that. It is interesting though, the honourable member should know, that these boards are going through an orientation process. The whole regionalization process is being driven by two women in the Department of

Health who have very significant influence and power in this regard.

I hope they are not going to read this in Hansard because who knows what they might think about what I am going to say, but Arlene Wilgosh and Yvonne Hrynkiw are actively involved in the process of orientation for these board chairs and board members. Of course, they answer to Sue Hicks, who is the assistant deputy minister for community and mental health services in Manitoba. So it is not always as apparent as the reality suggests the impact that women can have.

We have women at very high levels, at all levels of our government—and I do not know how the numbers break out, but sometimes probably not as good as the honourable member might suggest—but in terms of influence and power and generation of change, there is a lot of that happening with the very active participation of highly placed women in our health system. So I say that by way of a counterbalance, if you like, to the lack of balance that exists on the boards themselves, we know that women are presidents of hospitals, Deputy Ministers of Health in certain places in Canada, deputy minister of other important social programs and structures. Our Minister of Justice, for example, our former Deputy Minister of Family Services, now Deputy Minister of Culture. These are the people that are the movers and shakers in this province and are helping to bring about very significant change.

You know, in a way I have to agree with the honourable member. I wonder if we would have as much progress made on breast screening in Manitoba if it were not for the driving force of women at senior levels in government and in our agencies. What regionalization does is afford us an opportunity to look at what is actually happening as opposed to trying to figure out the balance of power.

What is actually happening? We are looking very seriously at practice protocols that are going to make a difference in regionalized Manitoba. Why is it, for example, that tonsillectomy, there is such an imbalance of the way tonsillectomy is handled in different parts of this province?

To be more specific, caesarean sections, why are there more caesarean sections in some regions than in other

regions as a percentage of population when all other indicators are the same. These are the kinds of things that we are given a better opportunity than ever before to examine and develop policy around.

Ms. McGifford: I did want to make the point that the great leap forward may not necessarily be a great leap forward for women. However, I am very pleased to hear about the presence of women in high positions in the Ministry of Health. I am sure that the minister is right, that they have been very influential and were undoubtedly very influential in the development of the breast screening facility and the whole program. I certainly admire the women that he mentioned and recognize their contribution to women's health and to the women's community.

My concern, however, is having women in leadership positions, which is extremely important, absolutely vital. I am 150 percent a supporter. That is why I made a decision to enter electoral politics, but my concern here is that we also need involvement, not only at the leadership level, but also at the regional and community level, and the minister and I both know by now that the levels are not what would satisfy me and probably do not represent the population balance in Manitoba.

However, to move on to something more specific, I am particularly concerned with the delivery of services in remote communities. For example, regular physical check-ups, accessibility of services for women, breast screening in remote communities, these kinds of things. I wonder if the minister could comment on accessibility of service for women in remote and northern communities.

Mr. McCrae: Certainly, in that area, in that regard, as well, I share the honourable member's concern that access to women's health services and other services are not as up to par for anybody in a remote area as they are for someone living in a built-up urban centre like the city of Winnipeg, for example. That is a reality of the geography of our province, and we must make every effort to distribute services carefully so that women and men and children in Manitoba access services that they need to access.

I think the honourable member would be interested to know as well that, of the eight regional directors that we

have in the province of Manitoba for the delivery of health, four of those eight are women. I think that that balances more appropriately there than you might see in other places.

I think the whole health industry is something that attracts women at all levels. I know it has been said that they are found at the more service delivery levels in greater numbers, but we are seeing them in positions of power as well.

Mr. Chairperson: The hour being twelve o'clock, recess until 1 p.m.

The committee recessed at 12 p.m.

After Recess

The committee resumed at 1 p.m.

Mr. Chairperson: The committee will come to order.

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 Resolution 21.3.(b)(1). Shall the item pass?

Mr. Chomiak: Yesterday when we had left off, I had asked about the aboriginal health and wellness centre. The minister indicated that there was an announcement soon to be made about the aboriginal health and wellness centre. Can the minister perhaps provide a little more background about location, participating groups and the like concerning the aboriginal health and wellness centre.

Mr. McCrae: The aboriginal health and wellness proposal is something that comes to us from the board of the aboriginal centre over on Higgins and Main. They have been working with our department to define the goals and the mandate and the role of the aboriginal health and wellness centre. The proposal is near the point where we will make a decision about proceeding with it.

Mr. Chomiak: Is the scope and breadth of the project to be that it will be something resembling a community

health clinic or the like, or is the scope and breadth something of a different nature?

Mr. McCrae: Yes, but also incorporating traditional healing.

Yesterday the member for Kildonan asked about the possibility of getting copies of the bulletins put out by the Urban Health Planning Partnership design teams and I am tabling three copies.

Mr. Chomiak: Can the minister indicate whether there are any monies appropriated in this budget for the aboriginal health and wellness centre and what that amount is?

Mr. McCrae: The amount for the aboriginal health and wellness centre has not been decided, and when monies will flow they will flow from the Healthy Communities Development office.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, can the minister just give me some idea of a range? Are we talking about, and I appreciate it is difficult, but are we talking about tens of thousands of dollars flowing or millions of dollars flowing?

Mr. McCrae: I do not mean to be evasive, but simply that the dollars flowing will be in a phased kind of basis, on a phased basis. It will not begin with a large amount. It will begin with a small amount, and we expect that amount will grow as the services increase at the centre. So I am not trying to be evasive at all.

It is simply that we do not know—the amount has not been decided, the initial amount. You know, we look at other community health centres and I assume other community health centres started out in a similar way where services begin to be added on to the base that they begin with, so it should be a relatively small amount to begin with and then grow in the future.

Mr. Chomiak: Is it the ultimate goal to serve as wide a range of health needs as possible of the aboriginal community of Winnipeg?

Mr. McCrae: We expect the menu of services to be relatively broad. However, this like other initiatives will be based on a population health perspective. So we will

try to make the services appropriate to the needs that a population health perspective would suggest.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, does the minister have any background or study papers that he could share with us on the aboriginal health and wellness centre?

* (1310)

Mr. McCrae: This is not a document-based proposal so much. Reports like the Postl report, of course, are used to assist us in developing our relationship with the Aboriginal Health and Wellness Centre. We have been sitting at the table with the proponents in the planning of the programming there. They may indeed have put forward some initial proposal at the beginning of the process, and they would be the ones to provide that information, but I do not think it is as much paperwork as the honourable member's question might suggest.

We have our reports like the Health of the Child report and all the other kinds of reports that are available to health planners to assist us in assessing the need that exists in the community, and none of those things are new to anybody other than perhaps at the initial proposal. The honourable member might approach the centre itself if they wanted to share that with the honourable member.

Mr. Chomiak: Last year this branch was also responsible for co-ordinating a review of community health centres. Has that review been complete and, if it is, would it be possible to have access to that?

(Mr. Mervin Tweed, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair)

Mr. McCrae: The work of these community planners is now part of the work of the Urban Planning Partnership, and there has been significant participation by representatives of community health centres in that process.

Mr. Chomiak: Can the minister indicate where their input takes place insofar as I do not see anything that stands out necessarily as a participant in one of the design teams?

Mr. McCrae: If you look at the box to the left, the Strategy Teams, the first one named is the Community Strategy Team.

Mr. Chomiak: So the minister is indicating that community centres have input on the Community Strategy Team. Could we have a list of who are on each of these strategy teams?

Mr. McCrae: We will get a list for the honourable member of the representation on each of the strategy teams.

Mr. Chomiak: Are any people from the community health centres represented on the partnership committee?

Mr. McCrae: The community health centre representatives have an ongoing dialogue with various of the design teams themselves. They do not per se have representation at the executive end of the Urban Planning Partnership group, but they are certainly involved with the design teams.

Mr. Chomiak: Does the minister not think that it might make some sense to have, at the executive level and at the partnership committee level, representatives from the community health centres, insofar as one of the directions that we are supposed to be going towards is a more community-based system?

Mr. McCrae: What we have been talking about is the design of the urban acute care sector. As we work through the KPMG work, the community health centres will have a very large role in helping us with implementing the system that will flow from the decisions made by the Urban Planning Partnership group.

Mr. Chomiak: So the minister indicated the review of community health centres has been incorporated in the Urban Planning Partnership model. Nonetheless, would it be possible for us to get a copy of the review?

Mr. McCrae: When it is complete, I think that is quite possible.

Mr. Chomiak: Several years ago a review was conducted of the delivery of primary care, and it made fairly extensive recommendations concerning the delivery of primary care. I am wondering how that report and those recommendations are being considered by the department?

Mr. McCrae: The Community Strategy Team is using that as one of its main working documents.

Mr. Chomiak: I am sorry if I missed this comment. I asked if we would be getting copies of the participants in each of the strategy teams and the minister indicated in the affirmative, thank you.

At some point in the Estimates process, I usually ask for and the minister very graciously accommodates me by providing us with copies of an update of the now infamous 103 or so odd committees of the minister studying various aspects of health care. I am wondering if, obviously not today but at some point during the course of these Estimates, we could get an update as to the status of the committees.

Mr. McCrae: I think I know what the member is referring to. We will pull all of that information together for him.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, I thank the minister for that response. I apologize if I missed this during the course of the Estimates, but I am not sure if we have talked about the Cervical Cancer Screening Program.

Mr. McCrae: We discussed that earlier today when we were talking with the honourable member for Osborne (Ms. McGifford) about women's health issues.

* (1320)

Mr. Chomiak: I thank the minister for that response. We touched on briefly also yesterday the issue of the Cardiovascular Health Strategy. That has been an ongoing strategy for a number of years. I wonder if the minister might update us as to what the status is of the program at present.

Mr. McCrae: The department has begun work on developing a comprehensive strategy which will incorporate three approaches to improve cardiovascular health. The population as a whole is one approach. Another approach is aimed at individuals at high risk for cardiovascular disease, and the third approach is case management of individuals with cardiovascular disease. This will ensure that the health continuum from promotion to prevention and tertiary care to palliation is addressed in an integrated way.

It is important to recognize that many sectors other than health will need to be involved in a comprehensive

approach. For example, education and knowledge influences are risk behaviours. Other departments will be asked to work with Manitoba Health in the development of the strategy, and we are working on a suitable process to seek the participation of appropriate stakeholders. It probably means we have to set up another committee or something.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, undoubtedly there will probably be, which will provide valuable input and useful material for both the minister and the opposition critics to discuss.

We do have a lot of questions about the Urban Planning Partnership model and all of those changes. I am assuming that it really is an interesting process. A lot of the issues we have discussed in the last two days are directed in some way towards the Urban Planning Partnership model, so I anticipate we will probably deal with it more extensively when we get to the—it would make most sense, I think, when we get to the line under Hospitals because of the nature of it.

Mr. McCrae: I think I could say that at either of those times it would be an appropriate point for us to discuss those issues.

Mr. Chomiak: I thank the minister for that response. I was basically signalling for purposes of staff so that if it was not the case—the minister is agreeing it will work out.

My colleague has a couple questions in this area, but I am through with my questioning at this point, so I am prepared to pass this item provided my colleague will have the opportunity to ask some general questions, and I am prepared to move into another area.

Mr. McCrae: We have no problem with that, Mr. Chairman.

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Tweed): Item 3. Community and Mental Health Services (b) Program Development (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits, \$824,100—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$709,300—pass; (3) External Agencies \$819,500—pass.

Item 3.(c) Home Care (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, I may have one or two questions in this area. I wonder if the minister could give us an update as to what is in place in terms of the government's contingency during the course of the strike. What is in place at present in terms of the government's approach to contingency during the strike.

Mr. McCrae: Mr. Chairman, yesterday the honourable member raised a question regarding security provisions in the ISM contract. The Department of Finance is overseeing the administration of the new ISM contract for government, so that any further questions the honourable member might have about access and confidentiality he might refer to the Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson).

With respect to the home care service in our province, we have been thrust into a very challenging situation wherein, without the help of the home care attendants, we have to provide services to our clients and we have been doing that. It is not ideal, it is not the way I would like it to be, and I am sure that many clients would prefer having a better level of stability of knowledge and comfort about services that they are going to be receiving.

We have been coping, and coping is the right word, because for all the good efforts that Ms. Hicks has been attempting to co-ordinate during the course of this labour disruption and almost heroic efforts of many people who are not on strike and people who are trying to cover those needs that need to be met, it is not ideal and so coping is probably the right word to describe the situation.

We have people that we have had to place in hospital because we could not provide them with the kinds of services that they need at a time during a labour disruption. Frankly, a hospital is the wrong place for these people, and yet it is the only place that we can properly make sure they are getting the care they need.

It is a little on the inhumane side, and it is inhumane in my view and unconscionable and yet that is what we are faced with. So they are safe, they are not necessarily comfortable because they are not in their homes, and we would like very much to have them in their homes. Rather than trying to inflame the situation, or being accused of inflaming the situation, all I can do is if the union is not interested in the proposals put forward, I would just repeat what I have been asking for right from the start. If they insist on making their point on the

ideological side, they are entitled to do that, but we have people who are functionally dependent on the home care services. We would ask the union to engage immediately in providing those essential services to people who need them so much.

* (1330)

Mr. Chomiak: Can the minister give us an indication as to how many individuals are presently in hospital who would not normally be in hospital but for the present situation?

Mr. McCrae: In that part of Manitoba which lies outside the Perimeter Highway, we have 213 people admitted to hospital, people who should be at home. In the city of Winnipeg, we have 215 people in hospital and that is 215 people who should be at home.

Mr. Chomiak: Does the minister have any figures on the number of staff from the Department of Health and other departments who are undertaking responsibilities to deliver home care services and who normally would not be undertaking such responsibilities?

Mr. McCrae: Yes, I do, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, can the minister outline for us how many individuals are involved in providing those services?

Mr. McCrae: I could do that, Mr. Chairman, but it would not serve any useful purpose. It would not help anybody. It would not help the clients of the Home Care system for me to do that.

Mr. Chomiak: Does the minister have any description of what the contingency plan is within the Department of Health whereby individuals are being seconded to do this kind of work?

Mr. McCrae: Three weeks ago today, Mr. Chairman, the honourable Minister of Labour (Mr. Toews) and myself and Ms. Hicks and Dr. Wade, Deputy Minister of Health, had a news conference complete with press release setting out the contingency plan; that is the plan that we are working on.

Mr. Chomiak: I do not think that the planned release to the press conference is the full contingency plan as far as

I have been made aware. Can the minister outline, for example, how many day hospital sites have been opened up in order to accommodate individuals as a result of the home care situation?

Mr. McCrae: Mr. Chairman, there are all kinds of services being provided, all kinds of people providing them throughout our province. We have different circumstances in different areas. We have a lot of people who are quite prepared to look after their clients whether there is a strike on or not.

I have a lot of regard for a lot of people in this situation including the people who are out on the picket line for their reasons, but I have a lot of regard for people who put their clients first, even in these difficult circumstances where the union leadership has a strong sense of ideological disagreement with the direction the government is going.

I must say that I feel badly for people who face threats and intimidation for providing services to people who need them. I have a hard time coming to grips with that, how otherwise civilized people could actually do that sort of thing. We heard a report yesterday of a worker who wanted to work and had her tires slashed and reports yesterday of patients going to hospital at St. Boniface Hospital being harassed and frightened on their way in to the hospital. There is no room for that sort of behaviour in a civilized society. We have heard reports of it in other workplaces where there is construction or the manufacture of widgets or some such thing.

Here we have people who are ill enough to have to be attending hospital and being harassed as they find their way into the hospital by people with whom they have no particular axe to grind. People are mad at the government, so they harass their fellow Manitobans who are patients at a hospital. I cannot come to grips with that. I will never understand how otherwise civilized people can act like that. I do not know where that kind of mentality comes from, how it gets whipped up, and I readily admit I cannot understand that kind of behaviour.

I have a report in the newspaper from Brandon that talks about, for example, the Brandon Hospital. It says in the last paragraph in the story about picket morale still being up. It says in the last paragraph that while Brandon General Hospital was prepared to handle an

onslaught of Home Care patients when the strike began, only six have been admitted due to the walkout, BGH Executive Director Larry Todd said yesterday.

The fact that that is true is a credit to the contingency plan that has been set up. There is nothing perfect in this world, and I guess there are some people would like to see our contingency plan fail. Again I have trouble with that, because what that means is people are getting even worse service and care, and that is what people are hoping for. I am sorry, Sir, I am having trouble understanding people who can wish that their fellow citizens should have such a horrible time because of their withdrawal of service, that that would be a way to bring the government to its knees, and that would be a way for them to change government policy by virtue of a labour disruption.

We have people in the Department of Health at all levels who are out there doing service beyond the call of duty because their fellow citizens are in need, and I appreciate that and I thank those people from the bottom of my heart. I also thank people who are volunteering their services, who have no paycheque coming in as a result of their efforts. I have thanks for the nonprofit and profit agencies that are making their services available as well, to assist in this particular time.

One thing that has become very clear to me, we can never again allow the clients of our home care system to be held hostages by the MGEU or any other union.

Mr. Chomiak: In addition to the 200-and-some-odd individuals who are occupying hospital beds in Winnipeg and the 200-some-odd individuals occupying hospital beds outside of Winnipeg, does the minister have a figure for how many individuals are occupying personal care home beds or other institutional beds?

Mr. McCrae: There has been very little increased activity in the personal care sector. As the honourable member knows, personal care homes are usually full with a waiting list as it is. It is the hospitals that have the flexibility in terms of capacity and the personal cares are very, very little, if any, resort being made to the use of personal care home beds.

Mr. Chomiak: Could the minister indicate whether or not any individuals are presently or have been utilizing the Quest Inn or Ten Ten Sinclair in this regard?

Mr. McCrae: I understand a very small number of our clients are at the Quest Inn on Ellice Avenue and none at Ten Ten Sinclair.

* (1340)

Mr. Chomiak: I wonder if the minister can indicate when it became the Department of Health policy for the divestiture of all service delivery to non-government organizations?

Mr. McCrae: There has been discussion about the concept to which the honourable member refers. It is not a clearly formalized policy to this point. Obviously we have a disruption right now that is occupying a lot of our attention. General speaking, though, I can see a future home care program that is more accountable than the one we have today. A good program we have got here, but it could be better.

I see a more accountable program. I see one which is less inflexible and more flexible, one that is less nonresponsive and more responsive. I see one that is more cost-effective and one that does not see underservicing to the extent that we see it in some places and overservicing that we see.

I guess, in short, a number of the shortcomings that have been raised from the Price Waterhouse report of the late '80s to various responses to that report, to the work under the facilitation of the APM company, the report of the minister's Advisory Committee to the Continuing Care Program, various verbal reports made to me by the Home Care Appeal Panel people, hundreds, actually thousands of complaints and calls from home care clients in the last few years related to various concerns they have with the program, many, many, many home care workers with whom I have met over the last two and half years, all of those things tell us, you know, how long do we continue putting off doing what needs to be done in terms of making our program effective and more sustainable for the longer-term future.

Of course, I think the fact that the strike has happened, I do not think Price Waterhouse came right out and dealt with it, maybe others did not either. But how do you prevent a mass labour disruption like this from happening again in this kind of a sector of the health care system if you leave it all to a monopoly situation? That

is one important lesson I have learned in the last two and a half weeks, that never again would we leave ourselves in a position to be put in this kind of position by one union. It is virtually unthinkable, I say, on behalf of the clients of the home care system, that we would allow such a thing to happen again.

Mr. Chomiak: I do not think one single individual or recommendation, from all of these so-called reports the minister cited, recommended that the Manitoba government divest itself of all service delivery to nongovernment organizations, not one. And if there is one, can the minister table the one report, the one recommendation, even the one expert that recommended the Manitoba government to fulfill all of those needs the minister made reference to? Can he find one recommendation from one of those organizations or one of those studies or one of those experts that said, as a result, the Manitoba government should divest itself of all service delivery to nongovernment organizations? Can he find even one and, if so, will he put it on the record?

Mr. McCrae: Yes, there are lots of reports and people who have helped identify the shortcomings in the home care program. We get recommendations that, say, deal with this problem, that problem and the other, but recommendations do not go much further than that in the sense of this is how you do it and you do not upset the union at all costs. You would not want to upset the union leadership because that might pique their temper and their anger and cause them to conduct a strike vote even though they have not even seen what the government is proposing.

No, I think it is correct to say that a lot of these reports point more to the shortcomings that there are than they do to the specifics of the solution. We have in Canada a variety of systems which rely, for the most part, on a mix of publicly paid and for-profit operations. We have a lot of jurisdictions that have income-based home care services. Most jurisdictions apply user fees which, by the way, was recommended to the NDP in their Price Waterhouse report.

The NDP report also suggested cutting back the services which is not something we agree with, but the trouble with the position taken by the honourable member and the union leadership is their unabashed admission

that they are doing it strictly on philosophical grounds, it has nothing to do with patient care. The position they take has to do with the preservation of power for union leaders and not with anything else.

(Mr. Chairperson in the Chair)

We have already demonstrated through contracting out that we can improve home care services. We have done it. Through that experience it is that kind of experience that leads us to venture further in that area because we have demonstrated that we can do a better job than we have been doing. It is simply not good enough just to say, let us go back to what we had in the first place, because as I have pointed out, Mr. Chairman, in previous questioning in this area, what we had in the first place is too much inconsistency of service, too much lack of continuity of care, too much inflexibility, too much lack of responsiveness. How many times has Vera Chernecki said to me, your Home Care program is not responsive? So we try to make it responsive, and where is Vera Chernecki today? She may be out there on a picket line.

* (1350)

It is a credibility thing. Speaking of that, I have here a news release dated yesterday, the honourable member and his Leader have told me a number of times that the Manitoba Society of Seniors has taken a strong position against the government on this issue. But here we have a news release yesterday under the headline Manitoba Society of Seniors President Resigns, Uncertain About Unbiased Representation.

It goes on: The president of the Manitoba Society of Seniors has resigned today. President Gilbert Paul feels that the present MSOS board no longer offers nonpartisan representation to the seniors of Manitoba. In his letter of resignation he stated that the reputation and credibility of the MSOS is at stake with the recent actions of the executive committee and joint advocacy committee. We cannot risk being viewed as a lobbying group representing the ideological beliefs of various political parties. During the past weeks we have witnessed some published reports in the press, and other reports in the name of the board which I believe the board played no part, Paul stated. Recent letters issued on MSOS letterhead have not been approved as a formal board position and therefore are not representative of the

MSOS. As a result of these actions, Paul stated that the credibility of the MSOS is being eroded to the extent that will make the organization relatively ineffective in what it stands for, quote, I believe that some of that ineffectiveness has begun and some of that blame belongs to the president, therefore I hereby resign, Paul said. Mr. Paul will continue in his efforts of working towards creating a better Manitoba for Manitoba seniors and regrets having to step back from the MSOS. However, he feels that the reputation of the MSOS is too important to place in jeopardy by accepting any political affiliations.

Now, the honourable member was quite upset with me recently when I referred to the input of one David Orlikow into the deliberations of that, I think it is the executive committee or something like that, of the MSOS. If I was so out of line in that regard—

Mr. Chomiak: You were talking about the House of Commons.

Mr. McCrae: Well, Mr. Orlikow was an NDP member of Parliament for many years, and there is nothing wrong with Mr. Orlikow taking a part on MSOS. The only thing is that Mr. Paul has resigned, Mr. Paul, the president, one person who happens to be the president and who happens to say that these news releases by the MSOS do not have the approval of the MSOS board.

Maybe I should not say things that are not very nice about David Orlikow; he is a nice man; I respect him. It is just that I had a sense, I knew before, that the MSOS people were not necessarily speaking for the board. Now we know that they were not, the fact that they forced their president to resign because they are speaking without the formal approval of the board which is the appropriate way to do it.

The honourable member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) wants to keep talking as if there is some concern for the clients here when what it is is a straight ideological issue. That being the case and the proof that we have been able, through the use of nongovernment organizations to some extent, to provide good quality care to the extent that there are indications that is indeed room for improvement in our home care program, then we can proceed.

The honourable member suggests everything is hunky-dory, there are no problems. He has not been the minister

for the last two and a half years. He has not seen or heard of the thousands of complaints, some of them coming from him, and now everything is okay. You cannot say one thing one day and something else the other and expect to be believed.

Mr. Chomiak: The minister is wrong in a number of areas. Firstly, I believe Evelyn Shapiro at the public meeting indicated that the data that they had numbered the complaints in home care was very, very small, numbering in the tens, I believe she said, rather than the thousands. The complaints the minister refers to are appeals to advisory panel that was put in place as a result of the government cutting back the home care program and changing the rules and cutting people off, cutting thousands of Manitobans off aspects of home care. Of course there have been complaints, and well there should be. So the thousands of complaints are as a result of the minister and his government's policy generation of that. So the minister cannot go on pretending that.

Secondly, the minister can grasp at any straws that he can to try, to show that he has got some kind of support. He, in his answer, clearly indicated there were no recommendations in favour of privatization, none. He has yet to put them on the record, he could not put them on the record, and he danced his way around it by stating that, well, these things were not really part of recommendations and these reports just do not recommend it. He has got no recommendations, he does not have any.

The question still remains that has been outstanding, the question that has been outstanding ever since we leaked the minister's Treasury Board document, signed off by the minister, calling for a complete privatization of home care, ever since we leaked that document, Mr. Chairperson, the question has been outstanding by the citizens of Manitoba, why are they doing it, where is the empirical data, where are the studies.

Every time the minister has come forward—I think I have said this before, Mr. Chairperson—tabling data or information in this regard, we find there is no recommendation in favour. Indeed, the data for the most part invariably shows that the privatization scheme is not the effective way to do it.

And let me correct another error of the minister's. We have never said that changes cannot and should not be

made to the Home Care program. But taking one of the most effective and recognized programs in North America and completely privatizing it, changing it around, is not the way to effect change.

The minister loves to refer to the quote I made in the House during Question Period, go back to the way it was. Yes, go back to a nonprofit home care system. The minister does not understand the fundamental issue. The fundamental issue and one confronting all the jurisdictions in Canada today, the introduction of profit into the health care sector, the introduction of profit.

The minister is also incorrect when he deals with his Coopers and Lybrand report, the one that he has a steering committee studying. He has a steering committee that has made recommendations on his Coopers and Lybrand report—[interjection] Pardon me, the minister corrects me, Price Waterhouse. It was tabled by this government; it has got recommendations acted on by this government. It has an advisory committee working on it by this government, so why does the minister constantly refer to a 10-year-old report if he is not willing to bring his advisers here and the recommendations for it in that report to see how his government is going to act in this regard?

Again, with regard to user fees, it is the minister's own Treasury Board document, signed off by the minister, approved by cabinet, that says there will be—[interjection] Was he there at that meeting? It is his own document, in black and white, that the minister cannot refute because it is written. I think every home care worker in the province of Manitoba has seen this document where it talks about the introduction of user fees to basic core home care services.

* (1400)

I just wanted to take a little bit of time to just correct some of the errors that were made in the minister's statement. One of the other concerns is that individuals and groups and agencies involved in home care are almost exclusively opposed to this plan. We have had one president from one organization resign for whatever reasons, a disagreement over how he views policy versus the rest of his board and the rest of his association, and yet we have the Manitoba Association of Registered Nurses long cited by the minister as a body that he likes to refer to and they are opposed to his plan.

We have numerous groups, the Council of Women, First Nations with disability, informal caregivers network, Manitoba Action Committee on the Status of Women, Manitoba League for Persons with Disabilities, Manitoba oblate justice and peace committee, Social Planning Council of Winnipeg, social responsibility committee of the Unitarian Church, all of these organizations have come out in direct opposition to the government's privatization plan.

It does become fundamental, not just to these Estimates but to this whole debate that we are facing. For the government to put up some form of credible evidence or credible argument or credible justification as to why they have adopted a policy of divestiture of all service delivery, the question remains, why has the minister, why has the government done this without doing their homework? That becomes the fundamental question, and I do not know if in the course of these Estimates the minister is going to be able or willing to answer that question, but that becomes fundamental.

Now, the second fundamental question, Mr. Chairperson, is why the government is refusing to back off of this program and allow the public to have input and review. Of course, both of these questions are integral to the work stoppages in place right now because, if the government were able to do even one or both of these, then the strike would end today. It would be in the best interests of all Manitobans if it ended today, if the minister would only recognize the difficult situation he is in. He has no way to justify this privatization, and why would he not put it to moratorium and public hearings?

I go back to the fundamental question that I raised earlier, Mr. Chairperson. Where is the evidence in favour of this move adopted, signed off by the minister and clearly Health policy?

Mr. McCrae: I have so much material, Mr. Chairman, that supports change here that it should make the member's head spin, but the troubling thing is that it does not. The honourable member suggested I was having trouble of some kind or I have been trying to make my point or something like that. I tell you, I do not need to slash people's tires to make my point. I do not need to harass sick people trying to go into hospital to make my point. I do not need to withdraw services from people who need them to make my point. I do not need to refuse

to provide essential services to disabled people to make my point. I do not need to turn my back on people with Parkinson's disease, Alzheimer's disease, multiple sclerosis, arthritis to make my point. I do not need to turn my back on people who are functionally dependent on services to make my point.

The hue and cry is all about privatization. I remind you, Mr. Chairman, that the Victorian Order of Nurses is a nonprofit, private organization. Profit in health or profit anywhere else for that matter is a bad word for some people and, yet, it is that system that has built our country to be amongst the best countries in the world.

Yes, I have reports. I have got reports; I have tabled reports. They have tried to make their point. They have tried personal attacks on me and other people, Mr. Chairman. They have tried, the union has done that. The honourable member for Kildonan has been very respectful in that regard, I will put that on the record, but there are people who have made personal attacks on me and others. I cannot say the same for the member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett), who made personal attacks on the Minister of Labour (Mr. Toews). When you have a weak case—

Point of Order

Mr. Chomiak: A point of order, Mr. Chairperson, I believe in fact that there was a previous ruling in this regard with regard to comments by the minister vis-à-vis the member for Wellington, concerning the member for Wellington's question in the Legislature concerning the conflict or potential conflict of interest arising out of the former employment situation of the Minister of Labour which in no way was seen or is seen to be a personal attack.

Mr. Chairperson: Order, please. The honourable member for Kildonan does not have a point of order. I would advise all honourable members that we are dealing with a specific line at this time, and we should be relevant to the line and the questions being put forward.

* * *

Mr. McCrae: Mr. Chairman, I believe however you may want to consider—I say this as a point of order or as a point of whatever, in passing, that the honourable member has been very co-operative, and I think I have

too in the sense that we have allowed latitude. When the members thought I have stepped beyond that latitude, I have been reminded about that and I was keeping a tab. You brought in about four rulings there yesterday, and I won two of them and my colleagues won two of them, so we are about even I guess.

Mr. Chomiak: I thought I won four.

Mr. McCrae: That is fine if you do not listen to the ruling. The ruling had it slightly different.

Anyway, Mr. Chairman, I just make my point that people, they do not have much of a case, I suggest to you, when they have to resort to the kinds of things that I was talking about. Whoever is behind and responsible for the very, very profoundly unkind personal attacks that have been directed at me and at others shows me that they are not operating from a position of very much strength if they have to resort to that sort of thing. That is my point.

If they have to tell people that if they go to work, whatever income they earn beyond the level of strike pay will be confiscated from them, what kind of a case is being made here for the rightness of the position being taken by the union in this case when they have to make that kind of threat against people? People who want to provide service to very, very vulnerable Manitobans and are being threatened and intimidated, what kind of a case does that say that they are making? When people are being disrupted as they try to get in and out of the Legislature, well, that is just rudeness I suppose. If they are trying to get in and out of a hospital, it goes beyond rudeness to something that smacks of tactics that betray the validity of your cause.

If the cause is about looking after clients, then there is no validity I suggest in making hostages out of those clients in order to protect the clients. Somebody else's interest is really being protected here, and it is not the clients', Mr. Chairman.

You know already how I feel about those things. The honourable member, he did try to clarify his party's position when he did say in the House, go back to the system we had in the first place—and that is a quote from Hansard of this place. Today he is trying to get away from that comment that he has made only very recently by qualifying it and adding different things to it.

* (1410)

We know of the report. There are those people who are suggesting that the people of Manitoba had no idea that the government was interested in bringing about competition in the home care sector. Well, that case fails. We had front page news coverage in February of 1995, which was—the election came in April of 1995—front page coverage of the Seven Oaks project which included a private, for-profit agency. It ignores altogether that we had said that we would be engaging in more of that, so that case fails.

The case for the righteousness of the New Democrats in all of this has to be exposed. Now they are taking to calling the Price Waterhouse report the—what did you call it, Dave? [interjection] The Coopers and Lybrand. In order to confuse us all even more, the Price Waterhouse report was something that the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) told us today our government had to release, because they sat on it because of the secret agenda they had of bringing in user fees and cutting services.

Well, it is in the report that the NDP commissioned. Everything Connie Curran ever said or thought or was accused of having said is now being brought to us by the honourable member for Kildonan as if it was government policy. That is so they can detract attention from their own report which calls for cuts in services, long waits for service and calls for user fees in addition. You know, there are user fees in NDP B.C., there are user fees in formerly NDP Ontario, so I guess we can conclude that is exactly where the New Democrats would have taken us if they had had the chance.

There is a lot of rhetoric here on both sides here, Mr. Chairman, and I take responsibility for my own share of it, but I do say let us try, please, to put the clients first.

Ms. Cerilli: I want to ask some questions of the minister on an issue that I asked him about before. I know that I have sent him letters on behalf of members of my constituency, and now others who are suffering from chemical sensitivity syndrome, and I just yesterday, again, visited a woman who lives in East Kildonan who has this illness. She provided me with a large amount of information that I think the minister will be interested in, because it counters a number of the statements that he made in his letter to me sent April 3, 1996, of this year,

when I was once again appealing to the government to fund the treatment for Manitobans outside of the province who cannot receive treatment for this illness here in Manitoba.

We have talked before about how there is no specialist in Manitoba that will make the referral so that it can be treated, so Manitobans are forced to go out of the province. I want to draw to the minister's attention, first of all, that this is a recognized disease. It is recognized in a number of Canadian provinces, who either fund treatment out of their jurisdiction or are developing their own treatment in their jurisdiction. It is recognized by the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, who has written documents on housing materials that are appropriate for sufferers of this illness. I just recently in the latest issue of Canadian Housing noticed that there was a new publication produced by the Canada Mortgage and Housing commission entitled Building Materials for Environmental Hypersensitivity.

So there are a number of jurisdictions in government that recognize this illness. It is also recognized by the pension program—I believe it is—yes, the Canada Pension Plan recognizes multiple chemical sensitivity, and they have granted disability benefits. Again one of the other programs that the Canada Mortgage and Housing offers is a government grant program to provide for water filtration devices, air purification systems, electric furnaces that do not cause airborne contaminants to be more a problem for sufferers of this illness.

The woman I visited yesterday suffered a very cold winter, Mr. Chairperson, because she could not have her furnace on and her home was 58 degrees at its hottest all the winter long. Her home care attendant quit because it was too cold. She just felt that she was working in conditions that were unsafe for her. So imagine this woman that is forced to live there because she cannot live anywhere else.

These are all the issues that I just wanted to raise, first of all, to try and convince the minister that this is a recognized illness. Secondly, I want to draw to the minister's attention and ask him if he will not reconsider his decision not to provide funding for sufferers of this illness in Manitoba so they can get the treatment elsewhere, because there is another precedent-setting case in Ontario. The letter that the minister wrote to me at the

beginning of April says that Ontario does not provide this sort of funding, and just at the end of March, March 27, it was in our local paper here that the Ontario government has funded patients to go to Dallas, Texas, to the same treatment facility that the Manitobans are asking to go to.

So I want to ask the minister, just based on those two amounts of information, that this is a recognized illness and that there are precedents outside of the province of Manitoba to pay for the treatment of this illness outside of the province through their provincially covered public insurance systems.

Mr. McCrae: Mr. Chairman, I believe the honourable member is speaking about the same Manitoban with whom I am familiar, and I have visited this person along with my assistant. My deputy minister has visited, this is in this Manitoban's home, as well in the Legislative Building, and I believe other Manitoba Health staff have visited with this person as well.

We have tried very hard to be as responsive as we can under all of the circumstances of this case. I am glad that the honourable member has put on the record the matters she has put on the record. I am not sure if, through the insured services part of the health operations in Ontario or elsewhere, that is how coverage was provided. It may have been on some experimental basis rather than on an insured services basis. We simply do not have the capacity here under our regulation, under The Health Services Insurance Act, we simply do not have the authority to fund the services the honourable member is talking about.

* (1420)

I certainly am sympathetic. I think the fact that we have taken the steps that we have in order to inform ourselves about this situation I hope demonstrates that we are trying to be as responsive as we can be. It is difficult under all of the circumstances, for the reasons laid out. If we are wrong about any of our understandings of the situation, we would be glad to have that pointed out. I believe the honourable member refers to insured services in other provinces and I do not think these are insured services in other provinces. In any event, you have got to match the treatment appropriately with the hope of an expected outcome, and that is part of the process as well.

I will take into account again the words put on the record today by the honourable member.

Ms. Cerilli: It may be that it was one special case funded through the Ontario Department of Health where a 17-year-old young woman was sent for treatment of environment illness or multiple chemical sensitivity in Dallas. There may be something else that the minister could look into if there are limitations on the treatment of this illness because, as the minister has stated in his letter, Manitoba Health feels it is unscientific medical treatment. There may be the opportunity to override with an Order-in-Council. I think that may have been what was done in other jurisdictions but, needless to say, regardless of that, there are four provinces, Ontario, Alberta, Nova Scotia and Saskatchewan, who have funded patients to the Environmental Health Centre in Dallas.

Given that these matters should be governed by the Canada Health Act, which should see that there should be similar services available across Canada, I would think that those are precedents that should apply here in Manitoba. I would ask the minister if indeed an Order-in-Council could see Ms. Tatlock [phonetic]—I do not think she would object to my using her name.

I think that she is getting quite desperate, and my visit to her yesterday would indicate that she is starting to feel like she is running out of options of how she can get the treatment she needs, so I do not think she would mind if I used her name here. I know that the minister has had his staff and has spoken with her, but I would urge him to look at using that approach if, in fact, our health plan here would exclude this treatment because the department is going to maintain that it is not a scientifically proven treatment. I have with me some studies, double-blind scientific studies, that have been done on this treatment in the area of food sensitivity, and it has been proven to be effective.

I guess just before I let the minister answer the question regarding the Order-in-Council, I just also want to make some comments about these kind of illnesses. I am quite concerned if our health care system, either in treatment or in payment in insurance, is not going to keep up with the increase in these kind of illnesses. I think we would all acknowledge that we are living in a world that is overdosing on chemicals, and we are living in a world

that is increasingly polluted, and we are living in a world where there are, all the time, new illnesses, whether it is AIDS or a number of other illnesses affecting our immune system especially, like this one is related to.

I think that it is important that we not have political barriers and jurisdictional barriers that prevent us from ensuring our health care system keeps up with the need for care because of illnesses that are emerging. This is one area that I know is emerging and is being ignored here in Manitoba.

I am surprised at the number of phone calls I get just from constituents in my area, and I know that other members of the Legislature get similar phone calls. So I am wondering if the government is not concerned if our health care system is not keeping up in Manitoba. Why is it that other provinces are having so much more research done in this area, and in Manitoba it seems like there are a lot of barriers and hesitation and resistance to acknowledging that these illnesses are, in fact, legitimate illnesses and treatable illnesses? I am wondering if the minister can explain that, can explain why other jurisdictions are funding the treatment and Manitoba is not. Why is it different here? There seems to be a real lack of research or will or something in Manitoba, and I would like the minister to address that issue.

Mr. McCrae: I do not think there is any lack of will in Manitoba. If you look at the commitment of this government to health programming as a percentage of the spending of the government as a whole, you will see that in Manitoba we spend at 33.8 percent on health, far more money than the previous government in real terms and in percentage terms, and presently, I understand, the highest level of spending on health in the country. So I appreciate all the things the honourable member says, but then when she comes at the end to say there is not a will to look out for the health of our fellow Manitobans, I just cannot accept that.

If that is the kind of argument that is going to be used, Mr. Chairman, at 31 percent of spending at a time when spending was going through the roof here in Manitoba, the New Democrats had scarcely any interests whatever in health. I mean, that is the way you can make these arguments, so I do not accept that as a criticism, especially having visited this patient myself, having taken a good part of a day to join with my assistant and visit

this patient, or this Manitoban. To send the deputy minister and other medical assessment people to visit with this Manitoban, to try to arrange for assistance in every way that we reasonably could, does not show to me any lack of will on our part.

We are simply faced with a very difficult situation in that there is no agreement that I know of about outcome in this situation, for this type of treatment. We are always willing to review any new material, and the honourable member referred to material. I have been shown all this material by this Manitoban, much, much material respecting this, yet you know provincial governments across the country base their insurance coverage decisions on results of studies and tests that are carried out on a national and provincial basis. That is where the problem arises in terms of the insurability part.

Then there are differing opinions, medical and otherwise, respecting outcome in this situation. As I say, if the honourable member or the person involved would like to make further information available, or if there is anything else they can bring to our attention, we would be happy to review it. I want to help this person as much as the honourable member does. As I say, I have asked the department to look at it every which way to see if there are appropriate ways that we can help. I feel very badly for this Manitoban who is housebound, who is not able to do the ordinary routine things that you or I take for granted every day. We know this person once was a very actively contributing member of our society and is now not in a position to do that. To bring the argument around to one of one's will poisons the environment for the discussion, because I cannot accept that and I do not.

* (1430)

Ms. Cerilli: Well, the minister suggests that it is not a question of will yet does not give any explanation of why it is that other provincial governments would be funding this treatment outside of their jurisdiction, or they would be creating similar kinds of facilities within their own provincial boundaries.

I want to ask the minister, given that Nova Scotia is currently developing its own treatment facilities, would the provincial government fund treatment of multiple chemical sensitivity sufferers to Nova Scotia when that facility is available, and if that is the case, then what is

the rationale for not funding the similar kind of treatment where else it may be available in North America.

The other thing I just want to raise again because the minister has not yet addressed it is the question I raised earlier about the use of an Order-in-Council, if there are limitations in our insurance policy because it is still being considered by this government as experimental, if that could not be dealt with through an Order-in-Council, if that is not an option for the government.

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

Mr. McCrae: The honourable member has put a number of more points on the record which we can review as we attempt to try to wrestle with this issue.

Ms. Cerilli: Can I also ask if the minister would ensure that Dr. Collier from Manitoba Health would in fact have a discussion with the doctors at the College of Physicians and Surgeons and ensure that there is a group of qualified physicians in Manitoba that are going to undertake study in this area and are going to give this serious consideration? I think that there have been requests by the Ombudsman into this area, and I will put a number of these references in writing in a letter to the minister, but it seems that there has not been follow-through through the Ombudsman's office or follow-through from recommendations from the Ombudsman's office regarding requests that they have made.

I just want to draw that as well to the minister's attention and ask that he ensure that the staff in his department that are given the responsibility to look into this are going to work with the College of Physicians and Surgeons and see that Manitoba enters the next century, I guess, in the area of medicine, which is going to include a lot of these illnesses. I would suggest to the minister, as one young woman said to me, the germs are getting stronger and health care is getting weaker. I think that we do not want to see that happen and we have to keep up with the demand for health care made by illnesses that are new and, of course, we have to go through a process of ensuring that there is going to be research, but I do not think we want to fall behind other jurisdictions and have Manitobans suffer and go through the kind of additional stress and trauma that Ms. Tatlock [phonetic] has because she lives in Manitoba.

Mr. McCrae: If what the honourable member suggests has not already been done, I will certainly look into that and see if Dr. Collier, if his efforts with the college have been complete or if they have borne any fruit.

Mr. Chomiak: We have the government's Treasury Board submission outlining what health policy is with respect to privatization.

Now, the government position, at least in the first phase interim basis, seems to be that they are going to only privatize, at this point, 25 percent of the home support services in the city of Winnipeg. But is it not true that the government is also tendering 100 percent of the nursing services in Winnipeg?

Mr. McCrae: The honourable member does not accept that 90 percent of nursing care in Winnipeg under the Home Care program is now contracted out as it is, so we are adding 10 more percent to make it 100 percent. It is already 90 percent. At 90 percent contracted out, the member just wants us to go back to the system we had in the first place which was, in nursing at least, 90 percent contracted out.

Mr. Chomiak: So the minister is confirming that whereas 90 percent of the nursing service in Winnipeg was nonprofit VON, the government is now tendering out to the private sector 100 percent of the nursing services in the city of Winnipeg?

* (1440)

Mr. McCrae: Where in the past we have contracted out 90 percent of nursing, we will now be contracting out 100 percent of nursing, and the public, the union can get involved. Tomorrow the MARN is putting on a workshop to assist nurses who might be interested in—[interjection] Is it today? Oh, it is today, I am sorry. MARN is conducting a workshop to assist nurses who want to get involved in this process, so it is a combination of nonprofit, profit-making organizations, private, the union, I guess it would become a private, nonprofit organization.

The whole thing that bothers me as we are in the middle of this strike is the monopoly system that the member wants us to keep that is crippling or has the potential of crippling our Home Care program. When

you get a labour disruption, suppose they are upset the next time they are not getting enough money or they want certain benefits or they want their pension increased or a want a dental plan or whatever, and they decide to walk out on their clients over a thing like that, that is not something a responsible government should allow to happen, Mr. Chairman.

We do not intend to allow that kind of thing to happen. It does not serve the clients' interests that we go back to the system we had in the first place, as the New Democrats want us to do. It would be irresponsible for us to turn our backs on the clients in the same way that the union has done. It would be irresponsible on our part to abandon the clients and abandon the opportunity to protect the future of the program from the type of activity that we now see as all too easy for a union to bring about.

(Mr. Chairperson in the Chair)

First, all it does is it has to whip up a fight with the government, conduct a vote without any negotiations, have a vote and get your strike mandate and remove services without ever looking at anything the government is offering, just rejecting within an hour any reasonable good faith offer being made, turn your back on the responsibility to negotiate properly essential services components of home care service during a labour disruption. So those are things that responsible governments have to do. What would the honourable member do if all of a sudden the workforce in a hospital decided they were mad at the government for something and they would have a protest and a strike? This is more a protest than a strike, although services have been withdrawn. This is an opportunity, this is an effort on the part of the union to set government policy in this province. That is what it is, because they have not wanted to talk about the issues relating to the labour aspects here. They simply wanted the government to change its policy.

I would ask the member for Kildonan what would he do if he were in a position of responsibility and responsible for the care of clients? Let us say in a hospital or anywhere else for that matter, but let us say a hospital, and the whole staff of that hospital decides to withdraw services. You have people in ICU, you have people in the different medical and surgical wards of the hospital, emergency services to carry out, and it is the

only hospital in town, and the person in a position of responsibility is able to do something about it. What do you do? Do you decide to lie down and take it? Lie down and say yes to everything the union offers, yes to everything the union asks and demands?

What we have got here is a philosophical point being made here by the honourable member and the union which is at odds with what the government is doing and holding thousands of home care clients hostage in the process. I think I know the answer to what the member would do, the honourable member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak). He would say, okay, Peter, anything you say, anything you say, you support us, we support you, so we will just do what you tell us. Even sometimes when we might not agree with you, Peter, you are more powerful than we are so we will just lie down and do what you tell us.

That is not leadership, Mr. Chairman. Me, I do not like a fight. I will tell you one thing, that is not why I was brought into this world, to fight. That is not what I like, it is contrary to my nature. Why do you think I get so upset when I hear stories about union people slashing other people's tires. I mean, these are supposed to be decent, tax-paying, dues-paying citizens of our country, and they are slashing the tires of their colleagues? They are frightening people who are trying to go in and out of hospital?

This is wrong, and I plead with my honourable colleague the member for Kildonan and his colleagues in this House to speak with their friends in the union movement to bring an end to this foolishness. I believe today the Minister of Labour (Mr. Toews) put another offer to the union with the enjoiner that there be an essential services arrangement made immediately to show that there is some sense of responsibility in the union.

Even if they want to continue the fight against the philosophy that they are against here, I can accept that as a legitimate thing to do, to disagree. I accept that, to use whatever means at your disposal to make your point, but I do not believe in turning backs on people who have arthritis, people who have Parkinson's disease, people who have Alzheimer's disease, multiple sclerosis, people who are functionally dependent on these services. I implore my honourable colleagues to do the right things.

They can agree with the union about the philosophy here. I expect that. I do not expect them ever to agree that competition works. We know that, we know they believe that, they always have, they have always stood for that, they are unabashed about it, they make no bones about, and I respect them for it, even though I do not agree. I respect them but, for goodness sake, do not use that ideological disagreement as an excuse to hold people, like I just mentioned, as hostages.

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Chairperson: Before we proceed, may I direct the attention of the honourable members to the gallery, where we have with us today from Dalhousie Elementary the Grades 5 and 6 ESL students under the direction of Mrs. Maureen Lodge and also Shelley Kowalski, who is the member for The Maples' (Mr. Kowalski) niece, and they are from the St. Norbert riding; it is my riding.

On behalf of all honourable members, I welcome you here today, and Gary said Happy Birthday, Shelley.

* * *

Mr. Chomiak: You know, Mr. Chairperson, we are going back and forth again restating our positions, probably doing nothing more than reinforcing in our own mind the rightness of what we believe in, certainly not making an impact on each other, I would suggest, but that is the way the process works, and when you have strong opinions, that is what we are elected to do.

I will take up the minister's offer to talk about the analogy of the hospital. Let us suggest, as the minister has, let us say that we have a hospital, it is only one hospital that is offering care in an urban environment, and let us say that it has been functioning for 20 years and there are changes necessary. People understand that there are changes necessary to this hospital, and it is recognized and there are studies.

Then one day the hospital employees and the hospital patients get a government document that says, your hospital is going to be privatized, and the document says, no ifs, ands or buts; it is going to be privatized. Then, Mr. Chairperson, there is a portion of the document that says: In addition the services we offer in this hospital, there are going to be user fees attached to them. We are

going to start charging you user fees for use of service in this hospital, whether you are chronically care.

It is not defined what those core services are, but it says in this document, this government document, that we are going to charge you user fees for the hospital.

* (1450)

Then this document goes to every single worker that works in this hospital, and this document goes to many of the patients. They read this document and they say, my gosh, they are privatizing our hospital; they are going to give profit money to some companies instead of giving it to people in the hospital.

Then it is found out that there are no real studies to justify it, but by gosh, the biggest company in town that likes to buy hospitals happens to have made the same proposal three years earlier, identical proposal. Privatize that hospital, and this is how you go about doing it. Lo and behold, that government document that all the workers have and a lot of the patients in that hospital have says exactly what is inside that document. People are a little bit suspicious, so they ask the government, well, you know what, government, maybe you should hold off. The government says, no, we are going full ahead. They say, well, where are your studies to justify the privatization? The government says, oh, we have tons and tons of studies. Well, let us see them. So the government puts them out and lo and behold, what do those studies say? Not one says privatize the hospital. In fact, some of the government documents even say, you know, the present hospital is more cost-effective than privatizing.

So, Mr. Chairperson, the government is in a real quandary at this point. The government says, you know what we will do? We are going to call a meeting of all our workers. So they call a meeting of all the workers, and the government officials appear. But the government officials have no answers for the workers, and the workers say, well, are we going to be employed in the new hospital? They say, well, we cannot guarantee that, we are not sure, we will help you write resumes and things.

The workers say, holy mackerel, you mean we have been working here for 22 years and we are not going to

be guaranteed anything? At least could we be laid off and guaranteed UIC? Oh no, oh no, that is not going to be the case either, but maybe this new company that is buying over the hospital or will be in the bidding to buy the hospital, they will give you a job. The workers say, but geez, some of us worked for this company before and they pay 40 percent less. The workers say, you mean, if we get hired by this new company, and that is an if, because the government officials who attended the meeting could not guarantee anything for us; as sincere as those officials were and as helpful as those officials were, they could not give any guarantees of any sort to the workers. These workers say, geez, you mean we have been working 22 years in this hospital, and we have been providing the care, and we are not going to be guaranteed work.

Then the patients find out, Mr. Chairperson, and the patients say, geez, I like this person, I like this nurse, I like this orderly, I have been with this orderly for a long time, particularly chronic care patients who have been in this hospital for a long time. It takes a long time often for a relationship to develop between the chronic care patient and the caregiver, but they work out a very pleasant routine. In some cases they have bonded, they are almost family. These patients say, geez, we do not like this either, who are we going to get? The government says, well, you are going to get a whole new set of workers, but they will be just as good. They say, well, why do you want to take the people that have been working with us for all these years and replace them with someone else to do what?

Well, the Minister of Health says it is not to save money, it is to make it better. Then the Premier (Mr. Filmon) goes on TV and says we are going to save \$10 million doing this, and the patients start scratching their heads.

Not only are the workers alienated, but the patients say, wait a second, wait a second. You are going to take away my worker, you are going to pay my worker less, if my worker comes back. You are going to make money on this, and at the same time you are going to give profits to big company, private company in the city that is buying. The patients say, hold on here, this does not make a lot of sense. So the patients say, well, why will the government that has this proposal not do something like hold public hearings, so the public can see what the rationale and

justification is behind this plan to privatize our one and only hospital? But the government will not do that. Then some people say, why do you not just hold off for a while to allow for public discussion, but the government will not do that either.

Now, Mr. Chairperson, what do we have? There is no other means or vehicle to convince the government. The workers in that hospital all have a copy of the government plan. They know what the government wants to do, and they take a strike vote. The strike vote is overwhelmingly in favour of striking against the fact they are going to lose their jobs, that their patients are going to be hurt by this process, that profit is going to be introduced into the health care sector. So, in this hospital and in this analogous situation that the minister has drawn, is it any wonder that we would find ourselves in the same situation?

Now, the government then intends to retreat and says, we are not privatizing the whole hospital, we are only going to privatize a part of it. We are only going to go part private and, oh, the nonprofit part that was operating before, well, you know that has been contracted out before so those physiotherapists, we are really not privatizing that or something. You can take the analogy further. The government says, okay, union, accept the offer. Why are you doing this to the patients? Who is doing it to the patients, Mr. Chairperson? Who is doing it to the clients and the patients? The government and its policy.

Mr. Chairperson, the workers and the clients are not even being unreasonable. They are saying why not a moratorium, why not an opportunity to study it, or at least why not provide us with your studies to show how we are going to save that \$10 million or that money that is going to be there. The government is not forthcoming. In those kinds of environments, I suggest that a fair amount of cynicism could arise and a fair amount of skepticism could arise on the part of the population.

So, Mr. Chairperson, the government is left with no leg to stand on. So the government says it is the union's fault, it is the union's fault, it is the union's fault. Then all the organizations that deal with the health care system complain to the government and the government does not know what to do. Then the president of one of those associations quits and the government says, see, none of

those associations really support that position, but they all are in opposition.

Mr. Chairperson, that hospital has never had a strike in 22 years because the patients are put first by their workers. They know that the future, their future, and more importantly, the future of their patients are at stake if they allow the government to privatize their hospital, take money and give it to profit-making institutions and turn it into something that is not consistent with the way that hospitals have been developed in the public system in Manitoba. So that is why the minister's analogy is very, very good.

Mr. McCrae: And the analogy used by the honourable member fails on virtually every count, Mr. Chairman. He forgets altogether that in a legitimate labour dispute at this hospital we keep talking about, unions always make sure that people who need emergency services and intensive care services get those services. Unions always do that. The honourable member's argument fails totally, the analogy fails totally, because in the case that we are dealing with today we have got a union that will not even look after terminally ill people.

You have to have a little bit of bona fides to even take part in the discussion. The honourable member clearly has not got that when he lines up cheek to cheek and belly to belly and toe to toe and nose to nose with his friends in the union movement. There is absolutely no honour in the position being taken here and in the analogy being talked about. I mean, we have got contracts. I mean, I did not hear the honourable member get up on his hind legs and howl away when we resolved the difficulties with the emergency services doctors—these are the ones at Health Sciences Centre. We contracted with them. I mean, it is a contract. Oh, my god, a contract.

What do you think we have got with the unions everywhere? It is contracts. That is the way that the—

Mr. Chairperson: Order please. The hour being 3 p.m., committee rise. Call in the Speaker.

IN SESSION

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Marcel Laurendeau): The hour being 3 p.m., this House is now adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. Monday afternoon.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Friday, May 3, 1996

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