



First Session - Thirty-Seventh Legislature
of the
Legislative Assembly of Manitoba
DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS

**Official Report
(Hansard)**

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The Honourable George Hickes
Speaker*



MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Seventh Legislature

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ASPER, Linda	Riel	N.D.P.
BARRETT, Becky, Hon.	Inkster	N.D.P.
CALDWELL, Drew, Hon.	Brandon East	N.D.P.
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CHOMIAK, Dave, Hon.	Kildonan	N.D.P.
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DACQUAY, Louise	Seine River	P.C.
DERKACH, Leonard	Russell	P.C.
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DOER, Gary, Hon.	Concordia	N.D.P.
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ENNS, Harry	Lakeside	P.C.
FAURSCHOU, David	Portage la Prairie	P.C.
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GILLESHAMMER, Harold	Minnedosa	P.C.
HELWER, Edward	Gimli	P.C.
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MIHYCHUK, MaryAnn, Hon.	Minto	N.D.P.
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PENNER, Jim	Steinbach	P.C.
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TWEED, Mervin	Turtle Mountain	P.C.
WOWCHUK, Rosann, Hon.	Swan River	N.D.P.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, July 10, 2000

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Committee of Supply

Mr. Conrad Santos (Chairperson): Mr. Speaker, the Committee of Supply has adopted certain resolutions, directs me to report the same and asks leave to sit again.

I move, seconded by the Honourable Member for Selkirk (Mr. Dewar), that the report of the Committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Greg Selinger (Minister of Finance): I would like to table the 2000-2001 Revenue Estimates Supplementary Information for Legislative Review for the Department of Finance.

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I would like to table the Supplementary Information for Legislative Review of 2000-2001 for Community Support Programs; and in addition, I would like to table the Supplementary Information for Legislative Review 2000-2001 Departmental Expenditure Estimates for Sport.

Hon. Oscar Lathlin (Minister of Conservation): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table the 2000-2001 Department Expenditure Estimates for the Department of Conservation.

Hon. Diane McGifford (Minister responsible for the Status of Women): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table the 2000-2001 Departmental

Expenditure Estimates for the Manitoba Status of Women.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Government of Manitoba Respect for the Law

Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (Interim Leader of the Official Opposition): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the First Minister, and I am not sure where I begin.

Under the leadership or lack thereof, the First Minister, over the last nine months, has proven that Today's NDP is just like yesterday's NDP. We are seeing this Premier follow in the footsteps of his mentor, Howard Pawley, and we all know what happened to Howard Pawley. Specifically, under this Premier's leadership, we have seen staff break the law, and he has done nothing about it.

Mr. Speaker, we have seen under his leadership a fiasco created in the aboriginal casino issue, which has done a disservice not only to aboriginals but to all Manitobans. Under his leadership, he has embarrassed his own Minister responsible for Gaming (Mr. Lemieux), and he has had to resign. Under his leadership, we have seen a new minister appointed for gaming, who has public opinions, has stated time and time again that he is opposed to gambling. Under his leadership, he has allowed his Minister of Conservation (Mr. Lathlin) to break the law and then to break his commitments to Manitobans by not allowing for consultation regarding Bill 5.

Under his leadership, Mr. Speaker, we have seen very regressive labour legislation introduced that has said to small business owners in Manitoba that Manitoba is closed for business. Under this Premier's leadership, we have seen, in the first budget, that Manitobans now have the

distinction of being the highest taxed citizens across the country.

Mr. Speaker, under this Premier's leadership, he has allowed his Minister of Education (Mr. Caldwell) to create anxiety and apprehension in the education system by, without consultation, threatening forced amalgamation on school divisions. Under this Premier's leadership, we have seen his Minister of Health (Mr. Chomiak) break election promises that he made.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for calling members of the Government to order. These are very important and very serious issues, and I would hope that they would want to listen very carefully to the comments that are being made, because Manitobans are concerned.

* (13:35)

Under this Premier's leadership, we also—this will be my last point, Mr. Speaker—have seen no assistance whatsoever to Manitoba farm families that were devastated in 1999.

I would like to ask the Premier (Mr. Doer): When will he, his ministers and his staff begin to show some respect for the laws of this province and for the citizens of Manitoba?

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): Mr. Speaker, the people of Manitoba showed respect for the law and the outcome of the Monin inquiry when they changed the Government on September 21. The people of Manitoba are appalled to hear that members opposite, who promised us a new regime of ethics, are back in alleged glue again with what has happened again allegedly in the Interlake, and we await the final report of the Chief Electoral Officer.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Doer: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We came forward with five commitments. We are continuing to implement those five commitments for the people of Manitoba. The feedback we have is obviously from the public of Manitoba: "Stay the course," unlike the previous government, "keep your promises." We plan on keeping our promises. We are working on keeping our promises, and we are very delighted, in spite of the criticisms of the members opposite, to see, on Friday, a 4.4 percent unemployment rate. We think that is in the right direction.

Mrs. Mitchelson: The First Minister certainly has taken no responsibility with that answer.

Premier of Manitoba Apology Request

Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (Interim Leader of the Official Opposition): Quite frankly, the arrogance that is displayed by this Premier speaks to his government and his actions.

My question for the Premier is: Given that he is the First Minister of this province and has responsibility for managing the affairs of this province and showing some leadership, will he apologize to Manitobans for the arrogance that they have displayed and the lack of leadership that he has shown?

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): Mr. Speaker, this is a government that keeps in tune with the people of this province, works tirelessly on their behalf. We will ensure that the policies that we develop are consistent with the hopes, desires, dreams of Manitoba families around the community clubs of Manitoba, not around the Manitoba Club.

Government of Manitoba Respect for the Law

Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (Interim Leader of the Official Opposition): Well, Mr. Speaker, again, I am sure that Manitobans do not agree that this government is keeping in line with the wishes of Manitobans when they continually flout and break the law, when we have seen a minister of this Crown have to resign for the first time in over a decade, for the first time—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

**Agricultural Disaster Assistance
Cost-Sharing Program**

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. We all know that there has not been a minister in this province that has had to resign since this Premier sat around the Cabinet table with his mentor Howard Pawley.

I would ask this First Minister, this Premier, this leader of our province: Given that he has already flouted the laws and broken the laws in this province, will he guarantee to Manitobans today that into the future he will no longer continue to portray this arrogant attitude and continue to break the laws?

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): Mr. Speaker, telling the truth is very important, and one of the reasons members opposite found themselves in such difficulty is, when they came forward with their so-called 50-50 plan, over 50 percent of Manitobans did not believe them anymore. I want to correct a number of inaccuracies from the Member opposite. One is, when the previous Minister of Finance had some questions about family relationships with the Linnet file, the file was moved to another minister. We thought that that made sense. The Minister was still a member of cabinet.

* (13:40)

This minister is still a member of cabinet. That is a factual error that the Member opposite does not recognize. We also thought that when the Minister of Finance and a family member held the golden share and there was a huge, huge opportunity for pecuniary gain for individuals because of the stock option to board members that were appointed by the previous government, there should have been a separation of those responsibilities. We are very, very consistent in what we are saying, and we are very confident that we are not perfect but working tirelessly on behalf of the people of Manitoba. Our leadership candidates do not get fixed in the Manitoba Club and have no ballot to them, an undemocratic organization, as members opposite.

Mr. Jack Penner (Emerson): Mr. Speaker, first of all, I would like to welcome back the Minister of Agriculture from her trip to negotiate a new safety net program for farmers in western Canada. I understand that she and her colleagues met in the Maritimes, and they came up with a new agreement. I was wondering whether the Minister would be able to inform this House as to the specifics of the enhanced agreement that she has negotiated for farmers in this province.

Hon. Rosann Wowchuk (Minister of Agriculture and Food): Mr. Speaker, the Member is correct. I have just come back from signing a framework agreement with the other ministers of Agriculture across the country, but the details of the agreement and the funding formula for the agreement were made available to the public in March when we indicated at that time that we were changing to a new funding formula, not at the request of Manitobans but at the request of other provinces. Our level of funding will be maintained for the next three years, and we will be having a review of the program after the next three years.

Funding is the same as it used to be. Unfortunately, other provinces will have an increase in their funding and be able to offer more enhancements in their programs than we will be here in Manitoba because the previous government began the process of negotiating to have our funding formula changed to having our funding based on cash receipts rather than risk, Mr. Speaker. The federal government agreed with that formula.

Mr. Jack Penner: I would like to ask the Minister, Mr. Speaker, whether she could confirm that Québec received a 38% increase in their funding for their farm income, that Ontario received a 28% increase in their funding for their farm program, and that British Columbia received a 92% increase in their program. Could the Minister tell us what the increase in funding to Manitoba farmers will be?

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Speaker, we spent over 50 hours in discussion in Agriculture Estimates. This issue was raised many times, and we

discussed it with the Member. I indicated to him very clearly that was one of the very serious problems with the negotiations and moving towards funding based on cash receipts rather than on risk. As a result, other provinces will get a lot more money. Manitoba's funding was supposed to drop by \$10 million. We were able to maintain that level of funding. There is no increase for Manitoba.

He should talk to the previous Minister of Agriculture because he is the one who was also in those negotiations where the move started towards funding based on cash receipts rather than on risk.

Mr. Jack Penner: Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the Minister would be able to then concede that negotiations on behalf of Manitoba farmers have failed miserably. I wonder what kind of action she is now going to introduce in this province to bring us up to the same level of funding and support mechanisms that others are receiving in their provinces. I wonder whether she could tell us whether she and her government are now going to be willing to put their hands in their pockets, as other governments have done, as Québec has done and Ontario has done, to support the increased funding that she has lost in negotiations for farmers in Manitoba. What kind of program is she now going to initiate in this province to bring us up to par?

* (13:45)

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Speaker, the Member says that the negotiations were not successful. I have to tell him that he is wrong. The position that we went into those meetings on—Manitoba was supposed to lose \$10 million. We were able to maintain Manitoba's funding at the level that it is and ensure that we get a review after three years to look at the impacts of this change. The change moving towards cash receipts is wrong, but eight provinces were supporting it. The federal government supported it. *[interjection]* The Member questions whether I walked out of the meeting. We walked out of the meeting because we were going to lose \$10 million, and because we walked out of that meeting, because I walked out of that meeting, we were able to maintain that \$10-million level of funding for Manitobans.

We are not going to be able to offer the kinds of enhancements that other provinces will, and that part of it is not fair.

First Nations Casinos Moratorium

Mr. John Loewen (Fort Whyte): Mr. Speaker, a new medical report published in the Canadian Medical Association Journal calls for a nationwide moratorium on gambling expansion because of its addictive nature, especially for Aboriginals. The report, authored by Dr. David Korn, states that Aboriginals, women, young people and cultural minorities run the greatest risk of becoming addicted to gambling.

I would like to know if the new Minister of Gaming will follow the report's recommendations and put the entire new casino expansion process on hold until Doctor Korn has carried out more research.

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister charged with the administration of The Gaming Control Act): I think it is important to note that I actually have had the opportunity to read the report rather than the news report. In fact, what the report calls for is a balance. It does not call for a moratorium. In fact, much of what is in place in here in terms of moratorium has nothing to do with anything that is reported in the news story. I said to the Member opposite what we have done is we have learned from the experience of the 1990s, and our approach to First Nations casinos builds in a community role in terms of whether those casinos will proceed in those communities, builds in an addiction portion, recommendations, by the way, which are in the report. So we are in fact living up to many of the things that Doctor Korn calls for in this particular report.

Social Costs

Mr. John Loewen (Fort Whyte): I am pleased that the Minister has read the report. Maybe he can read the report from Alberta, the Alberta study that shows that, on average, youth are two and a half times as likely to get addicted to gambling as anybody.

I would ask the Minister, based on that report, based on the research that has been done

in Alberta where it states clearly in that report that more studies need to be done before gambling expansion is undertaken, will this minister conduct a study on how gambling is going to affect the quality of life on reserves and the social impact of those that are addicted to it.

* (13:50)

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister charged with the administration of The Gaming Control Act): Mr. Speaker, it is interesting that Doctor Korn actually, and this is in the news article, in addition to the report, points to the fact that there are many economic advantages and potential economic advantages for First Nations. What I want to say to the Member opposite is one of the key things we are doing here is we are bringing in, I believe, something that should have happened in the 1990s. By the way, they increased VLTs by 26-fold in the 1990s. I say to the Member opposite we are learning from the mistakes of the previous government, we are building in a community input mechanism, and we are building in, up front, an addictions foundation for Aboriginal people. That is something we learned from the mistakes of the previous government.

Moratorium

Mr. John Loewen (Fort Whyte): Mr. Speaker, I would ask that member to also read the Anglican Journal once in a while and study those reports.

I would ask him if he agrees with the statement made by the Archbishop that when you base your economic development plan on gambling, you are asking a community to make part of its living by persuading people to gamble more and to lose more. I would ask the Minister: Why will he not stop gambling and listen to the research?

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister charged with the administration of The Gaming Control Act): I sometimes wonder about the consistency of members opposite, and I particularly noted the comments from the Member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Praznik) who stated: We got the sense, in our latter days, we were reaching or had reached the saturation point.

I would like to point out for the record that that minister and that government in its dying months increased the numbers of VLTs on First Nations communities by 65 percent, so we do not need any lecture from members opposite. What we are trying to do in this government is get a balance, the same kind of balance we see in other areas such as liquor. We need regulation, we need community input, we need recognition of the social costs and the fact that First Nations people should have the same opportunities that that government had before in terms of some of the economic advantages.

First Nations Casinos Audits

Mr. Darren Praznik (Lac du Bonnet): I would start off firstly by congratulating the Minister of Highways and Transportation for his appointment to these additional responsibilities.

Mr. Speaker, the new minister speaks about a balanced approach in this particular area, and obviously an important part of the balance is the safeguards to ensure that the benefits he talks about actually make their way to those that he intends. Given that the previous minister, who resigned last week, would not commit to value-for-money audits of where the dollars were actually spent, I would like to ask the new minister if he is prepared to provide that very important safeguard to First Nations people in committing to value-for-money audits on how the proceeds of these casinos will be spent.

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister charged with the administration of The Gaming Control Act): Mr. Speaker, we see, again, they start off in Question Period by opposing the First Nations casinos. Now they move into the operation of them. I want to assure the Member opposite that what we have built in place with the RFP, with the process we put in place, which is a very rigorous process, and in particular the fact that we are having the Gaming Commission, which, by the way, was set up by the previous government in response to the recommendations of the Desjardins report, something we supported when we were in opposition—what we are setting up is a very rigorous process that will ensure, in fact, that the benefits do go to First Nations communities. I want to say one of the

lessons we learned from the mistakes of the previous government is that 70 percent of the benefit will go to the First Nations proponent and 30 percent will go to a trust fund that will include action on the social costs of gambling. We learned from the mistakes of the previous government.

Mr. Praznik: In the interests of helping the Minister (Mr. Ashton) make another mistake, he just told this House that 70 percent of the proceeds are going to go to the host community. Is he telling us now that none will go to the management companies? I want to ask him: What restriction will he put in place to ensure that the management companies are not taking the 30 percent or 40 percent that we understand they have been attempting to negotiate?

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Speaker, if the Member will do one thing, I think, and read the RFP and read the report that has come out, he will see, and I give the former minister a great deal of credit for this, we will have one of the most rigorous, if not the most rigorous, processes that has been put in place.

By the way, we are learning not only from the mistakes of the previous government but what has happened in other jurisdictions. One thing I want to assure the Member and all members of this House and the people of Manitoba is, by having this operated with the Gaming Control Commission, we are going to ensure the maximum amount of benefit goes to the host, the proponent communities and the remaining recipients of the trust funds. We are going to make sure that there is extensive scrutiny of all aspects of the gaming. Once again, I think that is learning from the mistakes of the previous government, from other jurisdictions.

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Speaker, the Minister will have the chance to put his actions where his words are. The Saskatchewan government did something very similar. Their auditor is now telling them that they should require value-for-money audits on how the proceeds are spent. Given what happened with the Saskatchewan Government Gaming Authority, some one-third of a million dollars going into expenses, I would ask the Minister again: Will he commit to learn

from the mistake of Saskatchewan and commit here today to ensure that there is value-for-money audits so that all First Nations people can have a clear and transparent understanding of where this money is being spent, and are they getting value for it?

*(13:55)

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Speaker, I look to my colleague the Minister responsible for Lotteries (Ms. McGifford). You want to talk about value for money here. Whatever happened under that previous government to the massive overruns in terms of the costs of the casino expansions? I mean, talk about saying one thing and doing another.

I want to assure the Member opposite that, through the process we have put in place, one of our main goals is to avoid the mistakes that they made with our own casinos as a provincial government and ensure, indeed, that the maximum amount of benefit goes to the First Nations proponents and the recipients of the trust fund which, by the way, will ensure the benefits of this go to every First Nations community in the province of Manitoba.

Labour Relations Act Amendments—Secret Ballots

Mr. Ron Schuler (Springfield): Mr. Speaker, last week the Minister of Labour (Ms. Barrett) shamefully introduced some of the most antidemocratic legislation that this House has ever seen. Intrinsic to any true democracy is the right to a vote, a secret ballot. Not only does this government have no respect for the business community in Manitoba, they have lost all respect for democracy. My question for the Minister is: What have Manitoba workers done to deserve your government taking away their right to a secret ballot?

Hon. Becky Barrett (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, last week we introduced what we believe is a very reasonable and balanced set of amendments to The Labour Relations Act. Over the last almost 30 years, either in practice or legislation, there has been some form of automatic certification for contracts—or for union certification. It is only since 1996 that there has

been a vote required in all circumstances over 40 percent. So we are following 30 years of practice and legislation.

Mr. Schuler: Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Labour and all the former union leaders seated on the Government benches, why are you turning your backs on the workers of Manitoba and revoking their right to a secret ballot? Which group is next? Whose rights are going to go next with this government?

Ms. Barrett: Mr. Speaker, when over 65 percent, two-thirds of the vote of the employees in a workplace, sign a card saying they wish to belong to a union, we believe that is a very, very clear sign of the workers' democratically chosen position. That is why we are putting back in place an automatic certification process that, in practice and legislation, has been in effect in this province for the last 29 years, with the exception of four years under the former government.

Mr. Schuler: Mr. Speaker, can the Minister inform this House exactly when during the provincial election or when during the economic summit was this discussed? Can she confirm that her actions have made the letters NDP stand for non-democratic party or no democracy, please?

Ms. Barrett: Mr. Speaker, as I answered the first two questions, this is a return to the practice and legislation that was in effect in Manitoba through the Ed Schreyer years, the Howard Pawley years, through all of the four years of the Sterling Lyon Progressive Conservative government and through eight years of the former government. So this is not an antidemocratic process. This is a return to what has been standard procedure, in practice and legislation, over the last 28 years.

Urban Planning Policy Adult Businesses

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, my question to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs: Many Winnipeggers and Manitobans with children are concerned about the Government's urban planning policies which permit the location of adult businesses,

adult bookstores, videos, museums like the museum of Manitoba where children frequent.

* (14:00)

As Trish Masniuk has pointed out, and she is here today, carefully performed studies in other jurisdictions show there is a higher incidence of crimes in such zones. When will the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs act to protect children in this province by creating an urban planning policy with green-light zones forbidding adult businesses within 1000 feet of day cares, museums and other sites where there is a high intensity of children.

Hon. Jean Friesen (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): I thank the Honourable Member for that question. It is clearly a matter of concern to people in many parts of Winnipeg, as indeed in other municipalities as well, and it is a matter of very serious concern, but I am sure, as the Member understands, this is primarily an issue for the planning by-laws of the City of Winnipeg and of other municipalities. I know the citizen that the Member has made reference to has certainly made those representations to the City of Winnipeg.

Mr. Gerrard: Ma question supplémentaire: Puisque c'est possible pour elle de faire des changements à la législation, dont la législation touchant la Ville de Winnipeg, quand est-ce que la ministre des Affaires Intergouvernementales mettra en place une politique de planification pour les régions urbaines du Manitoba pour protéger nos enfants?

[Translation]

My supplementary question: Since it is possible for her to make changes to legislation, including the legislation concerning the City of Winnipeg, when will the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs put into place a planning policy for the urban regions of Manitoba to protect our children?

Ms. Friesen: Je voudrais remercier le député pour cette question et je voudrais souligner pour le député que c'est une question très importante pour le gouvernement aussi.

Mais je voudrais dire au député que la responsabilité de mon ministère c'est d'assurer que la planification de la Ville de Winnipeg est en bonne forme. Nous avons l'occasion de faire des représentations à la Ville de Winnipeg et nous avons fait cela au sujet de la planification de la Ville de Winnipeg qui est en cours à présent. Merci.

[Translation]

I would like to thank the Member for that question, and I would like to emphasize for the Member that this is a very important matter for the Government as well.

But I would like to tell the Member that the responsibility of my department is to ensure that the City of Winnipeg's planning is appropriate. We have the opportunity to make representations to the City of Winnipeg, and we have done that on the subject of the City of Winnipeg's plan which is currently in process. Thank you.

Mr. Gerrard: My second supplementary is to the Minister of Family Services. I ask the Minister when he will act, since his colleague is so equivocal about doing anything, to protect children in Manitoba?

Hon. Tim Sale (Minister of Family Services and Housing): I think that there are all kinds of places in which we act together, both with our urban planning colleagues and with our Health colleagues, with our Justice colleagues, through the Healthy Child Initiative, through the interdepartmental committee on the sexual exploitation of children. All of the work that we do in this regard, we work together as a government. We work in a number of ways which I think are quite innovative with our Healthy Child Initiative.

I agree with the Member. We need to work very diligently to help protect our children and our families against unreasonable abuse and the kind that he is alluding to. But I think that our government has shown, through the initiative, that we are committed to working together with each other to protect our children and protect our families, and we are doing that.

Youth Unemployment Rate Provincial Statistics

Ms. Nancy Allan (St. Vital): My question is to the Minister of Labour. During the election campaign last September, the colleagues and members on this side of the House pledged new hope for young people.

Can the Minister of Labour inform the House how the recently announced unemployment statistics will affect Manitoba youth?

Hon. Becky Barrett (Minister of Labour): I thank the Honourable Member for St. Vital for that question because it provides me with the opportunity to share with all members of the House and all Manitobans some very, very encouraging news on the job front, on the unemployment statistics, especially for young people. We have just found out that in June the jobless rate for youths between the ages of 15 and 24 is the lowest in the country. It is 7.9 percent for the month of June, well below the national average of 11.8 percent.

I would just like to say that the unemployment rate of 4.4 percent overall in the province of Manitoba has not been this low since August of 1976 under the Schreyer government when it was 4.3. Thank you.

School Divisions Amalgamations

Mrs. Joy Smith (Fort Garry): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Education, after being caught saying one thing one day about school division amalgamations and then the very next day saying something completely opposite, got himself so wrapped up in speaking out of both sides of his mouth that he actually hid from the media and refused to be interviewed. Hopefully, his press secretary will not deny access to him today.

Will the Minister, for once, provide clear direction to school divisions on what he is looking for in regard to amalgamations so school boards have a plan to work with and an understanding of what government wants them to achieve?

Hon. Drew Caldwell (Minister of Education and Training): I suppose at the outset I should comment on the tremendous success that the Member had in having Stockwell Day elected to the Canadian alliance reform party last week. I know that the Member has worked diligently for Stockwell Day over the last number of months, and his success is noteworthy in the province.

As for the amalgamations of school divisions, of course this has been an issue that has been before the public and school trustees since 1994 and the release of the Norrie commission report. The position of the Government has not changed. We are seeking divisions to work very assiduously with their neighbours in realizing efficiencies and realizing resource management that will put more resources into the classrooms of the province of Manitoba, as opposed to the administration of those classrooms.

Mrs. Smith: Mr. Speaker, will the Minister tell Manitoba teachers if his government's plan includes compensating the teachers for mileage and moving expenses as a result of his forced amalgamation directive, when they are required to travel long distances or actually move residence so they have close proximity to their work?

Mr. Caldwell: Of course there is no forced amalgamation in process. The Member repeatedly puts that on the table as fact. What we are interested in is having some real movement on this issue, something that has not occurred in the last six years. The people of Manitoba expect their tax dollars to be spent as efficiently as possible. They expect their education tax dollars to be spent in the classrooms of the province of Manitoba and not in the administrative boardrooms of the province of Manitoba. We will proceed with that agenda, Mr. Speaker, in the best interests of the children of this province.

Mrs. Smith: Mr. Speaker, will this minister tell the House if he is concerned that, according to the Manitoba Association of School Trustees, divisions may forgo some teacher transfers that would have benefited children because they cannot afford to pay compensation?

Mr. Caldwell: Of course, Mr. Speaker, issues of collective bargaining that take place within school divisions are the purview of the local teachers' association and the school division in question.

* (14:10)

Hypotheticals of that nature are beyond the scope of this minister or anybody in the province to hypothesize about. I can tell you, though, Mr. Speaker, that the repeated year after year after year of cuts, steady, consistent cuts, minus, minus, minus over the last decade by the members opposite have put the property taxpayers on the hook for the single largest explosion of property taxes in this province's history, and we are determined that that will not occur under this watch.

Overland Flooding Disaster Assistance

Mr. Edward Helwer (Gimli): As a result of last Thursday evening's heavy rains and the previous rains during the past three weeks, hundreds of Manitobans are cleaning up flooded homes and businesses.

Overland flooding is a very real problem in communities such as Winnipeg, Headingley, St. Andrews, West St. Paul, Steinbach, La Broquerie, Portage and others. Flood victims and municipalities are trying to restore some order. For example, the Rural Municipality of Headingley is examining whether to pass a resolution declaring this event to be a disaster.

Mr. Speaker, as rural municipalities pass resolutions requesting disaster assistance, will the Minister responsible for Emergency Measures tell this House whether the disaster financial assistance arrangements program will be activated to deal with the problems created by these recent rains?

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister of Highways and Government Services): I appreciate the Member raising the concerns. In fact, EMO has been in place in a number of municipalities already. We are certainly aware of the difficulty people faced in those communities, and as is the normal process with Emergency Measures, we

will be working with the municipalities and determining whether indeed it will proceed to that step, but EMO has been there in place working with the affected municipalities. We certainly appreciate the difficulties people are faced with currently.

Mr. Helwer: Will the Minister responsible for Emergency Measures tell us whether this disaster financial assistance program will also be made available to the city of Winnipeg under similar disaster declarations?

Mr. Ashton: We are currently reviewing all the evidence we have, all the situations that are out there. As the Member will know, the first reaction in terms of EMO is to get in and work with the affected communities. It is, of course, triggered by the communities, the municipalities which play the lead role, I might add, in terms of Emergency Measures.

I will be dealing with my department later, in particular with EMO, to determine the exact impact and will report back to the Member as we get further information.

Mr. Speaker: Time for Oral Questions has expired.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Pipes and Drums of Manitoba

Ms. Bonnie Korzeniowski (St. James): Recently I had the opportunity to attend the Lundar fair. It was one of many events of summer that had to contend with the rain, but I am happy to report that the wet weather did not deter residents of Lundar from taking part in the well-planned activities.

I was particularly impressed with the performance of the Pipes and Drums of Manitoba whose members arrived early in Lundar to take part in the celebrations. Their flexibility and generosity with their time was evident as they patiently accommodated changes in time and venue necessitated by the rain.

The Pipes and Drums of Manitoba were established in the early 1950s by a dedicated group of musicians from across Winnipeg who

wished to preserve this part of Scottish culture. Members of the Pipes and Drums proudly wear the Manitoba Tartan and represent our province at events around the world, most notably at world curling championships in Switzerland, Sweden, Germany, and right here in Manitoba.

I would like to take a moment to salute the members of the Pipes and Drums of Manitoba and to congratulate their president, Don McIntyre, a resident of St. James constituency, on their dedication to Scottish heritage and their contribution to our province. I certainly enjoyed listening to the skirl of the pipes in Lundar and look forward to hearing them perform again. Thank you.

Strawberry Production

Mr. David Faurshou (Portage la Prairie): Mr. Speaker, it is a real pleasure for me to be able to rise today on a member's statement and to offer to each member of this Legislature a little taste of Portage la Prairie.

The strawberries in front of each honourable member are a freshly grown sample of Portage la Prairie's ever-increasing commitment to crop diversification. As has been the case, I understand, by a tradition established by our former member for Portage la Prairie, Mr. Ed Connery, the berries are courtesy of the Honourable Member for Portage la Prairie.

Over the last two decades, strawberries have become a prominent part of Portage la Prairie's agricultural scene. There are now dozens of strawberry farms in the region, with over 70 acres devoted to strawberry production. Nowhere else in the country is there an abundance and such a concentration of strawberries as there is in Portage la Prairie. As such, the city has earned the title Strawberry Capital of Canada. The label is well deserved, as evidenced in 1988 when Portage la Prairie entered into the *Guinness Book of World Records* with their giant bowl of strawberries weighing over 1500 kilograms.

This year strawberries are once again featured at the Strawberry Festival which is held in conjunction with the annual Portage Ex. I had the distinct pleasure of making a few remarks at

this event this weekend, as it just happens to be the 128th edition of the continuous Portage Ex.

The strawberries that you have here today, I wish you all the very best, and it is my pleasure to provide. Thank you.

Bill and Michael Bilous

Mr. Jim Rondeau (Assiniboia): I would like to rise today to recognize the efforts of Bill Bilous and his son, Michael, in Assiniboia.

These fine gentlemen have been spending a great deal of effort coaching and promoting the development of a soccer program in Assiniboia. These two have spent countless hours working with the youth, age 10 boys, in developing skills and, more importantly, a very, very positive attitude. This year they played out of Assiniboia West Community Club, and they coached a team called Impact, 10-year-old boys. They played indoor soccer. Sixteen boys played. In the previous year they had zero wins, this team. This year, with a lot of practice, a lot of dedication and a lot of commitment, they became B side winners. That was really important.

This past summer is the first time St. James ever entered the A league in soccer. The team combined Kirkfield, Woodhaven, Assiniboine West boys, 33 boys tried out, and 16 eventually joined the team. They had an excellent attitude. They had great parental support. They had a really good spirit. Michael and Bill told me that the kids go to practice, they try hard and they give it their all. Anyhow, they were undefeated in league play, and they had a great, excellent year.

I would like to thank and congratulate Mike and Bill Bilous for the thousands of hours they have donated to their community, their community-minded spirit, commitment and dedication to the future of our province. I would like to thank Michael who has played in the premier league for Winnipeg Dynamo, and has represented the province in soccer. He really leaves an excellent legacy. Thank you.

Vincent Massey Collegiate Graduation

Mrs. Joy Smith (Fort Garry): Mr. Speaker, on Wednesday, June 28, I had the opportunity to

attend Vincent Massey Collegiate's graduation ceremonies. Nearly 300 students received their diplomas, and many were honoured with awards for their outstanding efforts. It was a real joy to watch so many bright and talented young people being recognized for successfully completing this all-important stage of their lives.

I was particularly proud to personally present an award to one very special young woman, Miss Melanie Clark. She was awarded the first-ever Joy Smith, MLA Performing Arts Award which is presented to a graduating performing arts student who has shown leadership in the school and has made an outstanding contribution to the performing arts.

Melanie was a most deserving recipient for this award, being such a positive asset to the performing arts program at Vincent Massey Collegiate. Her participation in the school dance program spring musical and her work on the student council were important factors in her selection. I want to take this opportunity to say how proud Melanie and all of her fellow graduates can be of their accomplishments thus far and congratulations to the principal and to the staff and teachers at Vincent Massey. I want to wish them all the best in the years to come.

* (14:20)

Sustainable Development Strategy

Mr. Scott Smith (Brandon West): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to stand today to put on record this government's sustainable development strategy. Unlike the previous Conservative government, our government has taken the necessary first steps toward developing a policy that will ensure implementation of sustainable development principles and guidelines in everyday workings of government.

Mr. Speaker, our government believes that the principles of sustainable development need to be considered within the larger decision-making framework. With the recent acceptance of the COSDI recommendations our government will be better suited to make decisions in a more co-ordinated, comprehensive and integrated manner. This will prove to be a welcome change from the previous government who was eager to

preach the advantages implicit within the sound sustainable development policies but failed on several occasions to comply with their own sustainable development strategies.

It is important to ensure that our economy and our environment grow in a responsible and sustainable manner and that the needs of the present are met without sacrificing the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. As responsible stewards, we must ensure that the benefits of a healthy environment and a healthy economy continue to grow in a sustainable fashion. With the recent changes introduced by our government, Manitobans can be assured that future generations will have access to a healthy environment we enjoy today. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Committee Changes

Mr. Peter Dyck (Pembina): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Faurichou), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Public Utilities and Natural Resources be amended as follows: the Honourable Member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns) for the Honourable Member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Faurichou) and the Honourable Member for Arthur-Virden (Mr. Maguire) for the Honourable Member for Carman (Mr. Rocan).

Motion agreed to .

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I wish to obtain the unanimous consent of the House to vary the sequence for Estimates consideration, to consider in Room 254 the Estimates of the Department of Conservation to follow after consideration of the Healthy Child Initiative Estimates, and these changes are to apply until further notice.

Mr. Speaker: Is there unanimous consent for the House to vary the sequence for Estimates consideration set out in Sessional Paper No. 138, and subsequently amended, to consider in Room 254 the Estimates of the Department of Conservation to follow after the Healthy Child

Initiative Estimates until further notice?
[Agreed]

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

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY (Concurrent Sections)

FAMILY SERVICES AND HOUSING

Mr. Chairperson (Harry Schellenberg): Order, please. Will the Committee of Supply come to order. This afternoon, this section of the Committee of Supply meeting in Room 254 will resume consideration of the Estimates of the Department of Family Services and Housing.

When the Committee last sat, there had been agreement to have a global discussion with the understanding that the order in the main Estimates book would be followed, and all lines and resolutions would be passed following completion of questions and answers. Is that still the will of the Committee? *[Agreed]*

When the Committee last sat, discussion had been centred around 9.4. The floor is open for questions.

Hon. Tim Sale (Minister of Family Services and Housing): I believe it would be agreeable if we might start with the resolutions of 9.2, if that is acceptable, and pass a bunch of those until we get to whatever point the critic wishes to stop at. That would give your voice a bit of a break.

Mr. Glen Cummings (Ste. Rose): Any order that would be agreeable to the Committee. Line 9.1.(a) Minister's Salary, if we leave that open, and the Healthy Child Initiative; other than that, I am prepared to pass the rest.

Mr. Chairperson: I understand there is general agreement to pass some of these lines starting with Resolution 9.1, leaving out the Minister's Salary.

9.1. Administration and Finance (b) Executive Support (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$566,900–pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$80,700–pass.

9.1.(c) Social Services Advisory Committee (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$208,200–pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$158,900–pass.

9.1.(d) Human Resource Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$1,085,300–pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$125,600–pass.

9.1.(e) Policy and Planning (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$979,100–pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$178,500–pass.

9.1.(f) Financial and Administrative Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$1,422,000–pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$480,500–pass.

9.1.(g) Information Systems (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$2,451,600–pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$1,563,500–pass.

9.2. Employment and Income Assistance (a) Program Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$21,392,000–pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$7,896,600–pass.

9.2.(b) Income Assistance Programs (1) Employment and Income Assistance \$263,399,300–pass; (2) Health Services \$31,512,700–pass; (3) Municipal Assistance \$4,916,700–pass; (4) Income Assistance for Persons with a Disability \$12,173,400–pass.

9.2.(c) Building Independence \$3,175,000–pass.

9.2.(d) Income Supplement Programs (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$594,600–pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$327,900–pass; (3) Financial Assistance \$8,335,100–pass.

Resolution 9.2: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$353,723,300 for Family Services and Housing, Employment and Income Assistance, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2001.

Resolution agreed to.

9.3. Community Living (a) Regional Operations (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$15,828,000–pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$2,426,400–pass.

9.3.(b) Adult Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$1,723,800–pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$1,575,900–pass; (3) Financial Assistance and External Agencies \$94,179,900–pass.

9.3.(c) Manitoba Developmental Centre (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$23,490,700–pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$3,076,700–pass.

9.3.(d) Residential Care Licensing (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$245,500–pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$35,900–pass.

9.3.(e) Office of the Vulnerable Persons' Commissioner (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$296,000–pass; (2) Other expenditures \$252,600–pass.

Resolution 9.3: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$143,131,400 for Family Services and Housing, Community Living, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2001.

Resolution agreed to.

* (14:40)

9.4. Child and Family Services (a) Strategic Initiatives, Co-ordination and Support (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$1,002,600–pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$309,300–pass.

9.4.(b) Child, Family and Community Development (1) Children's Special Services (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$327,400–pass; (b) Other Expenditures \$292,900–pass; (c) Financial Assistance and External Agencies \$11,132,100–pass.

9.4.(b)(2) Child Day Care (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$2,245,600–pass; (b) Other Expenditures \$469,600–pass; (c) Financial Assistance and Grants \$60,161,200–pass.

9.4.(c) Protection and Support Services (1) Child Protection and Support Services (a)

Salaries and Employee Benefits \$2,474,600—pass; (b) Other Expenditures \$3,944,700—pass; (c) Maintenance of Children and External Agencies \$132,056,000—pass; (d) The Family Support Innovations Fund \$2,325,000—pass.

9.4.(c)(2) Family Conciliation (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$746,500—pass; (b) Other Expenditures \$279,000—pass.

9.4.(c)(3) Family Violence Prevention (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$530,800—pass; (b) Other Expenditures \$110,000—pass; (c) External Agencies \$7,937,200—pass.

Resolution 9.4: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$226,344,500 for Family Services and Housing, Child and Family Services, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2001.

Resolution agreed to.

9.5. Housing (a) Housing Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$1,488,900—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$376,900—pass; (3) Financial Assistance \$5,750,000—pass.

9.5.(b) Corporate Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$1,700,100—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$1,050,500—pass.

9.5.(c) Capital Planning Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$940,600—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$93,500—pass; (3) Less: Recoverable from other appropriations (\$500,000).

9.5.(d) The Manitoba Housing and Renewal Corporation \$31,280,700—pass.

Resolution 9.5: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$42,181,200 for Family Services and Housing, Housing, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2001.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 9.6: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$5,733,100 for Family Services and Housing,

Amortization of Capital Assets, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2001.

Resolution agreed to.

Mr. Sale: Mr. Chairperson, I wonder if the critic would agree to do the Healthy Child questions, given that staff will be here for those and will not be here for the Minister's Salary. Then we could revert back to complete that. Would that be acceptable?

Mr. Chairperson: Is there leave to do the Healthy Child Initiative first before we pass the Minister's Salary? [*Agreed*]

HEALTHY CHILD INITIATIVE

Mr. Chairperson (Harry Schellenberg): The floor is open.

Mr. Glen Cummings (Ste. Rose): Mr. Chairman, I have a few questions to help me understand better what the Government's intention is and certainly the general thrust of the Healthy Child Initiative. When part and parcel announcements were made, I think no one could disagree with the intentions, but I would like to understand, and perhaps it is the phraseology, but on page 4 under Reconciliation it talks about transfer of function from.

I would have been quite prepared to accept this as transfer of dollars for support, but when it talks about transfer of function from, I would be interested in knowing what some of those functions are and whether that, in fact, included staff going with it or whether it was accepting responsibility for what is normally a departmental function, if the Minister can enlighten me.

* (14:50)

Hon. Tim Sale (Minister of Family Services and Housing): Mr. Chairperson, I think that the Member is right, that it is probably a question of phraseology more than anything else. As the Member knows, the Children and Youth Secretariat was set up with seconded staff from other departments. These numbers represent seconded staff for the most part and the salaries associated with those secondments. In that sense

the functions associated with those staff people who have been there now for three years at this point are continuing in the new initiative.

So that is really what function means. It means the staff here and associated resources are coming from the various departments, in terms of the big item, the major item of \$3.6 million in Family Services and Housing. That largely reflects the Women and Infant Nutrition Program and the staff associated, but vastly more WIN, as the Member probably knows, is delivered through contractual arrangements with regional health authorities, volunteer, non-profit groups, and a few groups that might be called quasi for-profit groups.

For instance, an offshoot of We Care delivers the program in a site on Sherbrook Street through a non-profit offshoot of the for-profit company. So I would think in round terms about 80 percent or 85 percent of that 3.6 million is in contracts out to probably in the order of, what, 40? How many WIN sites are there? Thirty-five WIN sites, of varying sizes, of course, around the province. So most of that is money that flows out to purchase that service from particularly the RHAs and community groups that are hosts for WIN.

Mr. Cummings: This leaves some discretionary expenditures. While dollars may not be firmed up here, I wonder if the Minister is prepared to share yet where some of the discretionary dollars are likely to end up. If he has not made that decision yet, that is also an answer. If he has, I wonder if he is prepared to share that. Or is he waiting until he has a chance to make some announcements.

Mr. Sale: We will, of course, make some announcements. I think we indicated in the budget a concern about strengthening our work in the area of prenatal nutrition. That work is in a planning stage and will be announced probably later in the fall in terms of its full framework. We also indicated in the Healthy Child announcement when we made the announcement of the five departments working together expanded support for parent-child centres, which were begun actually in the 1970s.

Everywhere they have been evaluated, well-run parent-child centres are shown to be very

effective ways of reaching out to high-risk parents and families in a pre-school as well as school-age setting, so an expansion of work in that area. Manitoba, along with Saskatchewan and Alberta, are national leaders in fetal alcohol syndrome prevention and amelioration. We intend to expand our efforts in regard to both prevention and more effective intervention. So those are some of the areas that we will see expanded effort.

Mr. Cummings: I certainly am encouraged to hear of the Minister's interests. I am aware of some of the discussion he has been part of around fetal alcohol. It is becoming a huge issue in some parts of the community and certainly an area that I would encourage his continued involvement and support of.

I have a question about the staffing numbers, two FTEs added to the secretariat. Could he enlighten me on what their responsibilities might be?

Mr. Sale: Mr. Chairperson, just before I answer that question, staff also provided me with some additional information in regard to the previous question. Part of the \$2 million additional funds does relate to annualizations of programs begun partway through the fiscal year but which have to be annualized next year. Roughly half of the money is annualizations for BabyFirst, EarlyStart, Stop FAS, adolescent pregnancy, and some agency grants which were part-year and will be full-year in this fiscal year. The remainder refers to the issues that I have previously addressed.

In terms of the additional staff, these positions are created and funded but they have not been filled as yet. They are associated with the increased emphasis on prenatal nutrition. As that program gets defined, these positions are intended to allow that program to be fleshed out and implemented over this fiscal year and then it will be annualized into the next fiscal year.

Mr. Cummings: Thank you for that answer. That does underscore what I had said last week, which is the first year of the program was very often the cheap year. The annualization is what will come back to haunt governments, this one or any other.

I would be interested in the announcement itself, and the change of title somewhat, I would suggest, intended to demonstrate a continued and/or increased attention that the Government intends to spend in this area, but when the relevant ministries were announced, I guess there was always a question of whether or not the policy direction is going to be intimately directed by the committee of ministers or whether it becomes a delegated blind function. This area is important enough and has received enough publicity over the last number of years and under this administration that I would be interested to know how often this committee meets.

Mr. Sale: I honestly did not plant this question, as the critic knows, but we met today. We meet monthly. The committee of deputies meets monthly, or more often as required, and, of course, the staff are working all the time. At this point the ministers' committee is meeting monthly, and we see that being required for the first while. We are not sure whether it will always be required, but certainly we see it as where we have to start.

Mr. Cummings: I am encouraged to hear that. The Minister might well be aware that my colleagues had asked similar questions of some of his colleagues. I am not so sure that they were as forthcoming about how often the Committee was meeting, and I wanted to be assured that, in fact, the Committee meets regularly, not that I do not trust the Department.

But when you are starting off new initiatives under the direction of a committee, we will be watching closely to make sure that that committee is, in fact, providing direction and policy for policy development, because to some extent it appears that this minister and this government are prepared to make this a flagship initiative. If they are going to do that, then I want to make sure that there is some steak as well as sizzle, so from time to time I assure the Minister that we will be checking and inquiring of his colleagues on how regularly this committee is convened and the involvement.

I would ask another question along the same line. We discussed earlier that the support from various departments was mainly related to

secondment of staff, but where does the additional expenditure come from, or the additional dollars come from, over and above the actual cost of the seconded staff? Is this from general revenues? Is it from the appropriation of Family Services, or does each of these dollars from various departments to some extent represent also the transfer of dollars?

* (15:00)

Mr. Sale: I thank the Member, Mr. Chairperson, for what I think is a series of important points. Augmenting the ministerial committee, by the way, is the deputies' committee, and we had today all but one deputy, and that was because that deputy was out of town. I think that the Secretariat was a very useful structure to get started in this area, but a secretariat is not, by its nature, a service-delivery level.

What our government wanted to see was a very integrated approach to our Healthy Child Initiative as we framed it in response to the Postl report in 1996, and we thought that the best way to achieve that was to keep the cross-departmental focus through having five ministries and having a cabinet committee mandated by the Premier to give direction, but also recognizing that the way to get most impact on our overall service-delivery approach is to integrate it within the departments so that the delivery of service to children and families takes on the coloration of a focus on early childhood, on preventive services and so forth.

So it maintains, in some ways, the strengths of having a staff unit that the secretariat had, but it increases that strength significantly by having it report directly to cabinet with minutes on a regular basis and with ministerial accountability for that work, not just a departmental accountability.

So I think he makes a very good point, that if you are going to make something a flagship, which we certainly intend to do, in terms of a priority there for all the good reasons that the critic and I have talked about during these Estimates, then you have got to give it some steak, some sizzle, and we intend to continue that kind of support.

In regard to the question of where the incremental revenues come from, they come from general revenues. They are new dollars. They are not reallocated from other purposes. It is new revenue.

Mr. Cummings: I am prepared to pass the Healthy Child Initiative. Sorry, one last question. I understand, and perhaps you have mentioned it previously in Estimates, but to lead this initiative from a departmental or administrative point of view, is this an advertised position?

Mr. Sale: The answer is that, yes, it was advertised nationally in the *Globe and Mail* as well as locally in the *Free Press*. I do not know if it was advertised in the *Sun* as well, but it was certainly in the *Free Press*. We received 60-plus applications. Short-listing and interviewing have taken place, and we are in the process of finalizing an appointment, which we hope to announce in the relatively near future.

Mr. Chairperson, just before we close, I want to give the Member a copy for the record of his request for organizations receiving grant support from our department, as well as a list of organizations whose services are purchased on a per-diem basis.

As the Member will understand, the per-diem amounts vary up and down each year with the volume of service, whereas the grants tend to be more stable. Frankly, the best way to get a sense of the per-diem amounts on an annual basis is just to look at Volume 2 of Public Accounts, because you will see there the total amount going to that organization.

In a few cases they are mixed, where there may be a grant to the organization as well as a purchase of service, so the total in Volume 2 would represent the sum of the two.

Mr. Cummings: Mr. Chairman, before we proceed to pass, let me say that this information is useful and appreciated. We can now pass both this line and the Minister's Salary.

Mr. Chairperson: We will move on to the Healthy Child Initiative on page 95 of the main Estimates book.

Resolution 34.1. Healthy Child Initiative (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$916,000—pass; (b) Other Expenditures \$432,500—pass; (c) Financial Assistance and Grants \$11,443,400—pass.

Resolution 34.1: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$12,791,900 for Healthy Child Initiative, Healthy Child Initiative, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2001.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 34.2: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$74,000 for Healthy Child Initiative, Amortization of Capital Assets, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2001.

Resolution agreed to.

That concludes the Healthy Child Initiative.

FAMILY SERVICES AND HOUSING (Continued)

Mr. Chairperson (Harry Schellenberg): As agreed, we will now proceed to line 9.1.(a) Minister's Salary in the Estimates of Family Services and Housing.

The last item to be considered for the Estimates of the Department of Family Services and Housing is item 9.1.(a) Minister's Salary \$27,300—pass.

Resolution 9.1: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$9,328,100 for Family Services and Housing, Administration and Finance, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2001.

Resolution agreed to.

This concludes the Estimates of Family Services and Housing. We will now proceed to the Department of Conservation. Shall we recess for a few minutes? Agreed? [*Agreed*]

We will recess for five minutes. Thank you.

The Committee recessed at 3:10 p.m.

The Committee resumed at 3:25 p.m.

CONSERVATION

Mr. Chairperson (Harry Schellenberg): Will the Committee of Supply please come to order. This section of the Committee of Supply will be considering the Estimates of the Department of Conservation.

Does the Honourable Minister of Conservation have an opening statement?

Hon. Oscar Lathlin (Minister of Conservation): Yes, I do have an opening statement to make. First of all, I want to say that I am pleased to present the 2000-2001 and first Estimates of the new Department of Conservation. I trust that members have had the opportunity to review the Supplementary Information for Legislative Review document prepared for the Department.

Before proceeding with my Estimates remarks, Mr. Chairperson, I wish to acknowledge the dedication and commitment effort of all departmental staff in working to fulfil the mandate of the new Department of Conservation. I know it has been a pretty hectic period from October 6 to where we are now, and I thank the staff for persevering during that period.

It is important to note that, although our government has been in office for only a short period of time, there are many new initiatives that I will be touching on during this presentation. First of all, I want to talk about Manitoba Conservation. Some people inadvertently refer to us as conversation, but the real name, Mr. Chairperson, is Conservation. What is Conservation? Who are we in Conservation?

Through a comprehensive integration process, the former departments of Environment and Natural Resources and the Petroleum and Energy Branch are being consolidated into a cohesive unit responsible for environmental and resource stewardship. The vision of the Depart-

ment of Conservation is that present and future Manitobans will enjoy and prosper in an environment that is healthy with an abundance of diverse natural resources and sustained energy. The new organization will refocus its efforts on conserving energy and natural resources and on protecting environmental integrity and biodiversity, minimizing the effects of natural disasters while optimizing opportunities for economic benefits. Sustainable development will be pursued through effective planning and local decision making.

The Department has been provided with an unique opportunity to strengthen its commitment to responsible management of the province's natural heritage, including an enhanced recognition of the role of every citizen and the unique place of Aboriginal peoples in resource planning and sustainable harvest.

The Department of Conservation has been involved in what we refer to as the integration initiative, and I will talk about that a little bit here. On October 5, 1999, the Government announced the reorganization of the departments of Environment and Natural Resources, and the Petroleum and Energy program of the former department of Energy and Mines into the Department of Conservation.

An internal integration steering committee was established shortly thereafter to oversee the integration of these entities into a fully integrated department. To support the integration review process, seven internal issue teams were established to focus on various integration issues. A two-phase process was established with the first phase reviewing and identifying immediate integration opportunities and process service improvement suggestions. This phase was completed on schedule on February 15, 2000. Phase 2 of the integration is currently underway. The implementation of the recently announced Environmental Stewardship Division and the implementation of numerous service process improvements initiatives identified in phase I are proceeding.

In addition, phase 2 will encompass many other tasks, including the finalization and implementation of the remainder of the organizational structure of the new department,

confirmation of revised regional boundaries that will be more appropriate to the new organization, the range of services being delivered, the identification of other integration improvement and service decentralization opportunities, the exploration of alternate service delivery options respecting certain departmental services. It would also include the implementation of a customer support service infrastructure to better serve the service and information needs of Manitobans doing business with our department, the identification and resolution of legislative regulatory changes that may emerge as a consequence of integration.

Other areas of departmental focus during the fiscal year will include succession planning, improved business planning and performance measurement monitoring and instituting effective consultation mechanisms with stakeholders who may be impacted by departmental activities.

* (15:30)

I want to talk a little bit about the Environmental Stewardship Division now. As members are aware, a new Environmental Stewardship Division has been established within the Department of Conservation. This division consists of an Environmental Approvals branch, a Policy and Planning Co-ordination branch, and an Aboriginal Relations branch. The establishment of this division is occurring for a number of reasons. One of them is to provide a stronger vehicle through which to promote environmental stewardship, to express this government's commitment to strengthening environmental stewardship through a broad area in planning, and other initiatives recommended by the COSDI report. It is also to deal more effectively with a number of major initiatives that will require a broad area of planning expertise: the east side of Lake Winnipeg, the Livestock Stewardship Initiative, Capital Region planning, and so on, and to deal more effectively with issues that require interpretation of treaty rights in the context of provincial legislation.

This division will also assist the Department and the Government in navigating through resource management issues as they affect Aboriginal communities. It is also to facilitate the overall co-ordination of several separate

policy functions to ensure better communication and flow of information within and across the Department.

In summary, this division is responsible for a number of important functions, including legislation development, intergovernmental affairs co-ordination, broad area planning, policy development and co-ordination, consultation and support, economic analysis, standard setting, assessment and licensing of major developments, co-ordination and support with respect to Aboriginal issues and opportunities.

This leads me to talk a little bit about the Aboriginal Resource Council. Manitoba Conservation, as people around here will know, particularly those of the previous government, deals with numerous natural resource management issues that involve First Nations and Aboriginal communities. Given the rapidly evolving legal process regarding Aboriginal rights, there is a high probability of disputes arising in the day-to-day management of resources issues by the Department. Furthermore, the Government has made a commitment to implement the recommendations of the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry, some of which relate to co-management of resources and to reviewing the implementation of the COSDI report, which recommended establishing a protocol for consultation with First Nations and Aboriginal communities.

In order to positively address the recommendations of the Aboriginal organizations, and in order to avoid disputes and actions against the Province, the Government is establishing an Aboriginal Resource Council. The Council's mandate will be broad; it will service an arm's length advisory group, whose first assignment will be to development recommendations on co-management issues. It will provide recommendations for supporting First Nations in adopting their own environmental protection and resource management by-laws. It will make recommendations on priority issues, such as the east side of Lake Winnipeg.

The next part that I want to discuss a bit is the legislative regulatory changes. I will start off with the amendments to The Wildlife Act. In the upcoming year, the Department will be bringing

forward amendments to The Wildlife Act. These amendments will provide the Government with the ability to prohibit captive hunting of native and exotic wildlife. For example, under these amendments, the Government would be able to prohibit the captive hunting of such species as elk and wild boar. To be clear, it is not the Department's intention through these amendments to prohibit elk ranching for such purposes as velvet production. This will be allowed to continue.

The Water Resources Conservation and Protection Act. The Water Resources Conservation and Protection Act is expected to be enacted in the 2000-2001 fiscal year and will be a significant step in the fulfilment of our throne speech commitment to take immediate steps to protect our water resources and preserve our lakes, rivers and streams. New legislation will be introduced to ban the bulk removal of our water.

Manitoba has played a significant role in the development of the Canada-wide accord prohibiting bulk water removal from drainage basins, and this legislation is an important step in implementing this national approach in Manitoba. This legislation will essentially do two things. First, it prohibits the bulk removal of water from Manitoba's portion of the Hudson Bay drainage system. Secondly, it provides for a water resource management scheme whereby we can subdivide Manitoba into sub-basins and regulate removal from and between sub-basins. This legislation also allows for appropriate exemptions, including the export of bottled water under a maximum size of container, water used in the processing of food or beverages and water removed with ministerial approval for short-term humanitarian reasons.

This legislation is based on sound science and the precautionary principle. It is clearly an environmental and natural resource management bill rather than an anti-trade bill. We are assured by both federal trade experts and our own trade officials that this is the best approach from a trade perspective.

On a final note, this legislation is consistent with Manitoba's position on the interbasin transfer of water, particularly the position we have taken with respect to the proposed Devils

Lake outlet and the Garrison Diversion in North Dakota. We will now be able to point to our own legislation to show that in Manitoba such projects will not be allowed to occur.

The amendments to The Water Rights Act. In the coming months, amendments to The Water Rights Act will come into effect to reinstate provincial authority over all land drainage activities. These amendments are a response to a recent Court of Appeal decision which stripped the Province of its historic authority in land drainage matters. These amendments, which are strongly supported by the Association of Manitoba Municipalities, will restore the Province's responsibility over land drainage.

Since the 1930s Natural Resources Transfer Act, ownership and management of Manitoba's water resources, including the regulation of drainage works, has rested with the provincial government. These amendments will restore the Province's role in relation to drainage which is an important aspect of the overall management of Manitoba's water resources.

Furthermore, in the coming months, the Department will release a discussion paper and initiate broad-based consultations into a complete review of The Water Rights Act. The proposed new legislation will focus on providing a more harmonized approach to water management involving the Province and municipalities.

Amendments to The Environment Act. Numerous amendments to The Environment Act will be enacted and implemented by the Department. This is Manitoba's central environmental statute, and as such, the Government feels it is important that this act be regularly updated and improved.

* (15:40)

Among the expected amendments will be the following: Strengthening the Clean Environment Commission and providing it with the ability to be more creative in the methods by which it investigates issues and provides advice to the Minister; improving the licensing process by allowing for licences to be reviewed at a specific date rather than having licences continue

indefinitely with no updating; public notice of all proposed alterations to developments; allowing the Department to have a licence reviewed where significant adverse effects are feared if the existing licence is not updated.

Another proposed amendment will enhance the power of directors to issue emergency orders similar to the powers they presently have under The Dangerous Goods Handling and Transportation Act. An example of where such an order might be issued is against an intensive livestock operation where it is feared an eastern storage lagoon is in imminent danger, or a northern storage lagoon is in imminent danger of breaching and requires immediate pumping down and repair to protect local service and groundwater supplies.

I will talk a little bit about the lodge and outfitters act. At present, the Department is responsible for portions of The Tourism and Recreation Act pertaining to the licensing and operation of outfitters, hunting and fishing lodges and their outcamps. In the coming year the Department will be embarking on additional consultations with a view to updating and bringing many of these provisions under a separate act to be administered entirely by the Department.

In the year 2000-2001, the Department is planning to make amendments to The Oil and Gas Act, at least two of the regulations under The Oil and Gas Act. The drilling and production regulation requires amendment primarily to expand on the requirements regarding gas flaring at oil and gas facilities as well as several other subsidiary issues.

A number of amendments will also be considered for the Crown royalty and incentives regulations to improve the effectiveness of the Manitoba drilling incentive program. Through the ozone-depleting substances regulation, the Department effectively controls the usage and release of virtually all ozone depleting substances remaining in circulation in Manitoba.

The Manitoba Ozone Protection Industry Association assists in program delivery in this important area. Due to ever-changing technological advances involved in the world-wide

phase-out of ozone depleting substances, frequent amendments to this regulation are necessary. In the upcoming year the Department will be amending this regulation to control the usage of hydrofluorocarbons. Hydrofluorocarbons have become increasingly prevalent as replacement substances for CFCs, the latter of which are being phased out due to their damaging effects on the ozone layer. While HFCs are not ozone depleting substances, they are global warming substances and thus are harmful for different reasons. Our regulatory amendments will be made in conjunction with consultations conducted by MOPIA and will likely entail requirements for technicians to recover and otherwise handle HFCs in the same manner as CFCs are handled.

Cost of implementation. In the upcoming year, the Department will be considering and implementing many of the recommendations contained in the COSDI report. Released in 1999, the Consultation on Sustainable Development Implementation report contained numerous recommendations in such areas as large area planning; municipal planning; development, assessment and review; public participation; and partnerships with Aboriginal people.

These recommendations were developed through a comprehensive and extensive stakeholder consultation process. Our department will continue to take a lead role in this initiative and will continue to work with both private and public stakeholders as well as the general public in this implementation stage.

The harmonization of environmental assessment. The Canada and Manitoba agreement on environment assessment co-operation was signed in May 2000. Under the agreement, proposed projects will undergo a single co-operative assessment meeting the legal requirements of both governments while maintaining their respective powers and responsibilities. The agreement upholds the principle of an open process and will ensure a more efficient and effective process is in place for those projects requiring environmental assessment by both governments. The signing of this agreement marks another important step in the implementation of the Canadian Council of Ministers of Environment harmonization accord.

The decommissioning of AECL's Whiteshell laboratories in Pinawa. As we all know, the AECL has announced plans to decommission its facility in Pinawa known as the Whiteshell laboratories. While the provincial government alone may not be able to cause AECL to reverse its position, the government is working hard to ensure that AECL and the federal government will not just walk away from this facility without addressing the serious economic and environmental issues that will remain. While recognizing that the economic and environmental issues associated with this decommissioning cannot be completely delinked, the Department will in the upcoming year be focussing on the difficult environmental issues associated with the radioactive waste at the site. AECL's decommissioning proposal is presently undergoing a federal assessment under the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act. Our department is fully involved in this process and is presently leading a technical advisory committee which is co-ordinating provincial input into this process.

Our department is also working closely with other provincial departments: Industry, Trade and Mines; Intergovernmental Affairs; as well as other local and municipal officials and other local leaders to ensure that all views are taken into account in the decommissioning process.

While AECL's decommissioning proposal has several negative ramifications, the Department is encouraged by some positive conservation and environmental opportunities which may be developing. First, much of the AECL property is undeveloped and forested former Crown land which may be returned to the province at a very small cost. This parcel of land is one of the largest remaining undeveloped parcels of this particular landscape type remaining in the province. For this reason, the Department will in the coming months be investigating the possibility of reacquiring this portion of the site and setting it aside under Manitoba's protected areas initiative.

Second, a feasibility study is planned to determine whether the Whiteshell laboratory site could be developed into a centre for alternative energy research. This idea is still in the conceptual stage. However, there appears to be

significant potential to develop a world-class energy research facility at this site in partnership with other levels of government, utility companies, universities, and so on.

The need for such research facilities will only expand as the issue of climate change becomes increasingly urgent, both in Canada and worldwide. There are numerous reasons why Manitoba and Pinawa in particular would be an ideal location for the establishment of such a research facility.

Going into the Fire Program, to supplement the Department's aircraft resources for forest fire suppression, the Department has implemented a new single-engine air tanker program. These privately owned crop-spraying aircraft have been converted to air tankers, and are equipped with a drop-door assembly, similar to the water bombers. The aircraft is capable of carrying up to 3000 litres of fire retardant and can be serviced and filled at almost any airstrip. The Department will utilize this aircraft in areas where water for the water bombers is limited or during the early spring when most lakes are still frozen.

Assessment of oil field emissions. There is a growing concern across western Canada regarding the short- and long-term effects of emissions related to the production and processing of oil and gas. Manitoba has a small but active oil patch in the southwestern part of the province, but most of the oil produced in Manitoba contains hydrogen sulphide, a gas that can have serious health and safety consequences at higher concentrations.

* (15:50)

Over the past two years, the Department has been engaged in intensive air quality monitoring in the Tilston area in response to complaints from local residents. This monitoring indicates that air quality in the Tilston area meets all standards. The concerns regarding air quality in this region led to a decision to initiate air quality monitoring at other more intensively developed locations within the oil patch. Monitoring air quality will focus on the presence of low concentrations of sulphide, sulphur dioxide and hydrogen sulphide. More comprehensive air

quality monitoring in the oil patch will improve the Department's data respecting air quality in this area, and will provide a basis on which to develop amendments to regulations governing the design and operation of oil and gas facilities in Manitoba.

Manitoba has developed a royalty and production tax regime that is targeted at attracting investment in Manitoba's oil and gas resources, while maximizing the benefits to the province. Manitoba competes with other jurisdictions, and internationally for this investment. Even with the modest level of Manitoba's petroleum resources, the Province must continually assess its fiscal regime to ensure that it is reasonable and competitive. The recent increase in crude oil prices led to an increased royalty and production tax revenue in Manitoba, but it has not, to date, resulted in a significant increase in exploration and development. Through consultation with industry stakeholders, the Department has prepared a package of enhancements to the oil and gas fiscal regime designed to stimulate investment in the province. In most cases, these are seen to be revenue neutral, given that increased investment will expand the revenue base. It is our intention to introduce a regulatory amendment in this regard in the near future.

Ethanol industry expansion. Since the early 1980s, a small fuel ethanol industry has existed in Manitoba. The use of ethanol by Manitobans as an alternative renewable fuel blended with gasoline to form gasohol has grown slowly over the years. However, technological improvements, rising prices of gasoline, and the environmental and economic benefits associated with the production of ethanol have created increased demand for this fuel to the point where expansion of the fuel ethanol industry within Canada is on the horizon. During this fiscal year Manitoba Conservation will work with the industry, and with the departments of Finance, Industry, Trade and Mines, and Agriculture to facilitate the growth of this renewable energy industry for the benefit of all Manitobans.

Emergency response. The Department continues to respond to numerous environmental emergencies during the 1999-2000 fiscal year. The Department received 401 calls to the

emergency reporting system involving 229 environmental accidents. The Department will continue to dedicate required resources to this area to ensure that incidents of environmental concerns continue to receive priority attention.

East side of Lake Winnipeg development. Manitoba Conservation will be undertaking a new major planning initiative for the east side of Lake Winnipeg. The new initiative will involve local communities and other interest groups that will make recommendations on wide area planning. The stakeholders involved in the new planning initiative will include First Nations, industry, the provincial government and many others.

For the process to work effectively, the input of First Nations, Pine Falls Paper Company and other agencies and groups which have a keen interest in the future development on the east side of Lake Winnipeg is needed. A consultation on the Sustainable Development Implementation report indicated a need for wide area planning. With all of the activity on the east side, it was recommended that planning start in this region. The process will see the participants make recommendations to the Government regarding the plan. Information and materials and the support of government staff will be available to the stakeholders to help in the planning process.

The Land Information Division of the Department of Conservation is undertaking a number of important activities in the current year. These include the ongoing development and operation of the Canada Map Sales initiative, which is the first e-mail commerce site of the Manitoba Government. It has the potential to make Manitoba the premier map distributor in Canada.

The division will also be publishing a comprehensive volume of Manitoba place names as a millennium project. This will provide a narrative of approximately 10 000 names, including the geographic descriptions of their location and, where possible, the historical background on the origin of the names. Particular importance will be placed on mapping in the North to support the land claims process for treaty land entitlement in the Northern Flood Agreement, mining exploration, forestry operations and

information gathering for biodiversity and environmental impact assessment before any major development occurs.

This is particularly true with regard to potential development on the east side of Lake Winnipeg and developments being considered in connection with Nunavut. Mapping products and programs that are important for these initiatives are the digital ortho-photo program satellite data, including Landsat 7, and a digital GPS correction program. This base information is being distributed throughout government by its Manitoba land initiative program.

Finally, the division is also active in the Rails to Trails program. It is providing support for this initiative as part of the development of recreational trails in the province and is particularly supportive of the Trans Canada Trail program.

I want to now go into the Livestock Stewardship Initiative. On March 3, 2000, this government announced its Livestock Stewardship Initiative, outlining a commitment aimed at protecting the environment and ensuring the future of the province's livestock industry. The announcement indicated a commitment to increased environmental inspections of all livestock operations over 400 animal units; an increase in the number of field audits for manure management plans starting in 2000; increased inspections on all operations in designated sensitive areas of agri-Manitoba; increased monitoring of surface and groundwater; updating groundwater sensitivity maps; an inspection program for all constructed manure storage facilities to ensure that surface and groundwater are not being impacted.

There was also a commitment made to conduct an independent review to examine the present state of soils and the sustainability of long-term manure application to land in agri-Manitoba. The government has recently initiated a comprehensive public consultation process regarding Manitoba's livestock industry.

The Department continues to carry out activities to achieve the province's commitment of reducing solid waste going to waste disposal grounds. Significant progress continues to be

made in building sustainable alternatives to waste disposal. These include the stewardship program for used oil, filters and containers which has completed its second year of operation with good results; continued expansion of municipal recycling programs; renewed business plans for the Manitoba Product Stewardship Corporation; a Tire Stewardship Board. A stakeholder process for developing a sustainable program for the management of household hazardous waste in Manitoba resulted in recommendations to the Minister.

A national survey undertaken to monitor progress in the waste minimization effort indicates that in 1998 Manitobans disposed of 850 kilograms of waste per capita. This represents a decrease of 20 percent from 1988 levels. The Used Oil, Filters and Containers Stewardship Regulation makes it illegal for a company to sell lubricating oil products unless it is registered and belongs to the province-wide stewardship program operated by the Manitoba Association for Resource Recovery Corporation, MARRC.

* (16:00)

In 1999, Manitobans purchased 26.5 million litres of oil and 1.5 million oil filters and generated 1 million kilograms of oil container waste. Of these amounts, MARRC recovered 11.5 million litres of used oil, 1.25 million oil filters and 90 000 kilograms of oil container waste.

MARRC's activities have been significant, substantially increasing the recovery of lubricants in Manitoba. MARRC currently has 107 companies with membership in the Association. Compliance audits undertaken on MARRC's behalf indicate the association has achieved a level playing field. As part of their membership agreement, lubricant stewards must pay MARRC environmental handling charges based on product sales in Manitoba. There were 28 ecocentres established in partnership with municipal governments and four privately operated depots in Manitoba as at the end of 1999.

The Manitoba Product Stewardship Corporation, established in 1995, is a non-profit

statutory corporation funded by a distributor-paid, 2-cent-per-beverage-container levy established by the multimaterial stewardship regulation. The Corporation has ensured that over 95 percent of Manitoba's population, 160 municipalities, have access to comprehensive material recycling services. In '98-99, the Corporation collected \$6.5 million through the beverage-container levy, paid out \$4.6 million in municipal recycling support payments and recovered 35 000 metric tonnes or 40 percent of a possible 87 000 metric tonnes of eligible material.

The Tire Stewardship Board's Scrap: Tire Recycling Program was established by the tire stewardship regulation in April of '95 to establish and maintain a scrap tire recycling program in Manitoba. The Tire Stewardship Board is funded by a \$3 levy on all new tires sold for use on licensed vehicles in Manitoba. As of December 31, 1999, the Board has paid processors over \$9 million and municipalities over \$600,000 to collect and recycle over 5 million passenger tires equivalent. There are virtually no stockpiles of tires left in Manitoba. The program is now recycling one tire for every tire sold in the province, and it is considered one of the most successful programs of its kind in North America.

The development of regional waste management systems continues to be pursued. Ten regional management systems for solid waste involving three or more partners were operating in 1999-2000. Over 50 waste transfer stations have been established replacing local waste disposal grounds, while an additional eight regional waste management partnerships are in the planning stages. To further encourage the establishment of regional integrated waste management systems, the Department coordinated the activities of the Regional Waste Management Task Force. The Task Force submitted its report, a Regional Solid Waste Management Action Plan and recommendations to the Minister in January 2000. The report proposes a vision for a province-wide solid waste management system to minimize risk to human health and the environment, and support for continued growth of the Manitoba economy.

The diversion of organic waste through composting improved construction and demolition waste management practices and the development of a waste management facility. Operating guidelines have been identified as areas in need of further development.

Since 1995, the Crop Protection Institute, representing major pesticide suppliers in Canada, has funded a program to drain, shred, crush and dispose of used pesticide container material. Records show that return rates on pesticide containers sold in Manitoba have increased from 35 percent in 1995-96 to 90 percent in 1999-2000. A total of 5.2 million empty pesticide containers have been removed from Manitoba's environment. Over a million and a half pounds of metal have been recycled into rebar. Shredded plastic has been sent to energy recovery facilities in the United States and to Aylmer, Ontario, for recycling into fence posts and curb stops.

The Department's Pollution Prevention program promotes pollution prevention as the environmental management strategy of choice in partnership with the Alliance of Manufacturers & Exporters Canada and Environment Canada. In 1999-2000, the program supported the Manitoba Green printing project comprised of 19 member companies who participated in a variety of pollution-prevention activities such as the Manitoba Green Procurement Networks print shop audits. A Manitoba pollution prevention guide for printers was developed. The Manitoba Green Metal-Finishing Project, which promotes the goals of the national toxic reduction initiative, contacted 38 firms and conducted 10 planned visits.

The wood finishers in Manitoba initiated a sector-wide approach to pollution prevention opportunities and agreed to hire a project coordinator to provide technical support to member companies. The autobody/auto-repair sector also initiated a sector-wide approach to pollution prevention opportunities and has a project coordinator to provide technical support to member companies.

The Manitoba Golf superintendents association distributed an environmental self-assessment checklist in 1999 to ensure sound

environmental practices are followed at Manitoba golf courses.

The program is also engaged in voluntary pollution prevention partnerships with the Manitoba Heavy Construction Association, the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce and the prairie Grain Elevator Association. Program staff continue to provide on-site pollution prevention technical assistance to businesses and industry associations.

The Ozone Depleting Substances Act was established in 1990 to restrict the use of ozone-depleting substances and protect the stratospheric ozone layer. In partnership with the Manitoba Ozone Protection Industry Association, MOPIA, established in 1994, the Province's goal is to reduce and eventually eliminate the release of ozone-depleting substances into the atmosphere.

In 1999-2000, Manitoba amended The Ozone Depleting Substances Act to prevent, reduce and eliminate the release of ozone-depleting substances into the atmosphere and any harm or injury that could be caused by the substances or products that are made to be used, or are used, in place of ozone depleting substances.

Through partnerships with other governments, organizations, institutions and provincial agencies, the pollution prevention program is participating in several effective projects that include energy, water and equipment monitoring, audits, retrofits, re-use, education and public awareness.

Household hazardous waste is any material in a home that may endanger human health or the environment if disposal is not managed properly. This includes old paint, ammunition, batteries, pesticides, poisons, used oil and products containing mercury. The Department will continue to fund the household hazardous waste collection in Manitoba at the same level as it did last year. This program recovered 313 tonnes of household hazardous waste last year at a total cost of \$420,000.

The Department is continuing to work with a group of stakeholders to develop recommendations on how these materials should be managed in the future. The Department expects to release a discussion document and a draft regulation based on the committee's recommendations for a public review and comment in the fall, with implementation planned for 2001.

The purpose of the Sustainable Development Innovations Fund is to provide funding for the development, implementation and promotion of environmental innovation and sustainable development projects delivered by government, industry and community groups. A total of \$3.4 million generated by the environmental protection taxes on disposable diapers and non-deposit alcohol beverage containers as well as retail sales tax revenues generated on waste reduction and prevention levies has been allocated to the Sustainable Development Innovations Fund for the fiscal year 2000-2001.

While details on the use of this fund will be announced, some of these funds will be used to promote programs such as the Environment Youth Corps, a new initiative to improve our ability to manage solid waste and to support developments to address climate change. The majority of the monies in the fund will be used to provide strategic grants for projects put forward by government, industry and community groups, Aboriginal organizations and First Nations communities. These projects will demonstrate benefit to the environment and support the further development of sustainable communities.

Our government is very committed about the risk we face from climate change. Our best scientists are telling us that we face fundamental changes to our landscape in the coming decades and everything possible needs to be done today to study these potential impacts and develop adaptation strategies to adjust accordingly. Our department is leading this effort for Manitoba. We are engaged with our federal, provincial and territorial partners from across Canada in a national process to work with stakeholders and the public in order to develop a better scientific understanding of climate change and to better

protect its impacts upon our environment, health and economy, to raise awareness and to develop prudent but effective strategies to reduce emissions of harmful pollutants into our air which intensifies these problems.

The Government of Canada signed the Kyoto Protocol in 1997, and in doing so, signalled its intention to ratify and implement the related requirements to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases. Manitoba will ensure that when Canada decides to ratify and implement this protocol, we will do our part and play a constructive role in current national discussions relating to this matter.

In addition to the very grave consequences we in our future generations face with impacts that may arise from climate change, I recognize the need for us to take careful and well-informed actions right now to ensure we do not disadvantage Manitoba industries in the agriculture, energy, and transportation sectors which could be impacted by greenhouse gas mitigative policies.

Despite the potential economic risks of curbing our emissions of greenhouse gases, I believe the cost of doing nothing will be far worse both in the environmental and in health and economic ways.

Our largest trading partner, the United States, is busying itself to reduce its reliance upon carbon-intensive forms of energy. While many predict they will not ratify the Kyoto accord, we are informed by business people that there is a high probability of non-tariff trade barriers being put in place on our southern border related to climate change mitigation.

Canada must be doing more to prepare for these scenarios. Manitoba will continue to work to ensure our industries are not disadvantaged and further that we are poised to take advantage of the many opportunities which will arise to increase our exports of knowledge, technology, and manufactured goods to assist others to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions.

More specifically, our department is preparing a climate change action plan for Manitoba which will set out aggressive greenhouse gas

emission reduction targets for our own government operations to ensure we are leading by example. We will also set out an action plan to achieve these reductions across government operations. We will also undertake public and stakeholder consultations to raise awareness and help inform and direct our government actions on broader mitigation activities and ensure funding is in place to stimulate both public and private sector innovation and excellence in this area.

This course of action will ensure that Manitoba shows leadership on important matters of developing adaptation strategies for our prairie, boreal forests, and northern coastal regions and further that our mitigation actions are effective while taking maximum advantage of our natural endowment of hydroelectric electricity which will be in increasing demand as Canada and the U.S. lessen their reliance upon thermally generated electricity.

On the international water issues, as you probably know, approximately 70 percent of Manitoba's surface water flows to us from other jurisdictions including Saskatchewan, Alberta, North Dakota, Minnesota and Ontario. Our department continues to work closely with our upstream neighbours to ensure that sufficient volumes of good quality water are provided to us. We have developed a close working relationship with Environment Canada on interprovincial water issues and with both Environment Canada and Foreign Affairs on international trade and on international water issues.

Ongoing trans-boundary activities to protect water in Manitoba include participating actively with Saskatchewan, Alberta, and Canada through the Prairie Provinces Water Board to protect water flows and water quality in the eastward flowing Prairie streams and participating with Saskatchewan, North Dakota, the United States federal government and Canada to implement the Souris River bilateral water quality agreement.

The water quality objectives and the nutrient management strategy. In mid-April of this year our department released two documents for widespread public review. These documents

identified measures that will lead to a greater protection of water quality in Manitoba. The first document entitled "Manitoba Water Quality Standards, Objectives and Guidelines" proposes a large number of changes to our existing water quality objectives.

These water quality standards, objectives and guidelines as proposed are the most comprehensive in Canada. They incorporate our extensive work with other Canadian jurisdictions through the Canadian Council of Ministers of Environment. They build on our own considerable experience in applying water quality objectives in Manitoba since the mid-1970s. They provide some unique approaches to water quality protection in Manitoba.

Mr. Chairperson, that concludes my opening remarks with respect to the Department's 2000-2001 Estimates. I look forward to the much detailed discussions on the Estimates as we go forth.

Mr. Chairperson: We thank the Minister of Conservation for those comments. Do the Official Opposition critics, the Honourable Member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns) and the Honourable Member for Arthur-Virden (Mr. Maguire), have any opening comments?

* (16:20)

Mr. Harry Enns (Lakeside): Yes, Mr. Chairman. They will be brief. I want to thank the Honourable Minister for the very extensive comments about the very extensive and large department that he now has responsibility for.

I note just for the record that you are not the first Minister of Conservation in the service of government. For many years, up until 1969, it was the Department of Agriculture and Conservation that recognized the importance of conservation then and today. Agriculture, of course, many people will acknowledge is very often the activity that impacts very directly on the natural landscape, natural habitat for wildlife, water supplies, our use and dedication of land and so forth. It was my privilege to be the last Minister of Agriculture and Conservation in the year 68-69, when last that title was used by government department.

Mr. Chairman, I will repeat what we repeated and what we said at the time of the announcement of the combined department of our continued reservations about the potential conflicts that, in my judgment, has been brought about by the merging of these two departments whether, in fact, they occur or not. But its perception in the general public will, I think, in time cause this Minister and this government considerable problems. That is an observation, it is a massive challenge that this Minister and this government has in trying to prevent that, and I wish them well.

Let me also acknowledge, certainly as the Minister did, that it is my belief that he has an excellent staff throughout the Department. They work tirelessly on behalf of the many responsibilities that they have, particularly the field staff often working in isolated circumstances facing situations as they try to carry out the policies of the Department and of the Government.

Mr. Chairman, I repeat the concern that we have in the Official Opposition about the potential conflict of interest. I know for instance, and I would just like this as a little example that some members of the Committee, the Member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway), the Member for Radisson (Ms. Cerilli), certainly will recall it was not that many years ago that the minister of Natural Resources, back in '91, had an enthusiastic interest in a particular project and partnered with an organization known as Ducks Unlimited at Oak Hammock Marsh. We were as a department involved.

As I say, I was an enthusiastic supporter of the project. Can you imagine the furor that the Member for Radisson (Ms. Cerilli) would have raised if I were also the watchman on the dog that had to grant the environmental licensing? At least there was a separation of those two functions. As it was, she did a pretty good job along with many others at that time. Since then, of course, that project has grown to national acclaim. The birds, the children, the people of Manitoba, and, indeed, people of all of Canada are enjoying that project. It is that conflict that would have been expressed in a very clear and demonstrable way to me.

You, Mr. Minister, in your department, are going to be facing developmental decisions in forestry, in mining. You are facing them every day in agriculture with the expanded livestock facilities. On the one hand, you are going to have to provide the opportunity to allow responsible, sustainable development to proceed and, at the same time, also be responsible for the licensing and the concern of the environmental issues involved. I wish you well, Mr. Minister, in that task. I will be watching.

What I am fearful of, of course, is that the policing role of your department will predominate, and development will simply shut down in the province of Manitoba. Yes, I agree that if it becomes simply that difficult, it becomes that difficult for the people at Pine Falls to get the additional substantial cutting rates that they need and that the forestry people within the department of Natural Resources say are available in a sustainable way, but if the pressure from the environmental side is such, or if it perceived to be such, it simply will not proceed.

Of course, that is true in many other instances. We have some very specific issues that involve the mining industry where the opportunity of exploiting that particular resource coupled against other policies of this government, and not just this government but of previous governments, involving endangered spaces, involving parkland, involving other natural habitat. The question is what is the role of the Department. Is it not partly developmental? If somebody wants to come and invest three, four, five hundred million dollars, and create two, three hundred, five hundred jobs, particularly in the area that the Minister is well familiar with, the North, is that not a worthwhile activity of the department? Or does the proponent think, well, in Manitoba, gosh, you know, the Minister that we are looking for to ally us with, to support this project, he is also the Minister that is going to send environmental watchdogs on us, we are going to have to get past them on that. Those are some very immediate concerns that I express.

I can remember, from my own experience, you have taken back the mines and energy part in this merger. Back in '68-69 the Department of Mines and Natural Resources, as it at that time

was known, also housed the mines safety inspectors in the Department. The then-opposition, the New Democrats, howled that that was terrible conflict of interest and that the safety inspectors ought not to be in the division of Mines in the department of Natural Resources. They should be housed in the Department of Labour, under the Workplace Safety and Health, and quite frankly, I concurred with that, and within a few years that, in fact, took place. Having the very people, the inspectors who check on the mining operations on a weekly or a monthly basis or on a daily basis being housed within the Department that on the other hand works hopefully aggressively and progressively with the mining community to develop mines was seen as a possible conflict of interest in terms of their being able to carry out without prejudice their very responsible jobs of inspecting mine safety.

Mr. Chairman, I cite these few cases. We are going to go through the Estimates, time permitting. I want to conclude with one further comment, because I say this very sincerely. Departments like Natural Resources, Agriculture, Highways, these are the departments that contributed in a very substantial way, in a dollar and personnel and resources way, that made it possible for the former government to bring about a state of fiscal security to the problem, that enabled us to bring in balanced budgets, which this government now embraces. But there was a price to pay for it. Departments like Natural Resources, the Department that we are dealing with, and the Honourable Member for Radisson (Ms. Cerilli) knows whereof I speak, there are many people in Water Resources, many people in Parks, the resources that were curtailed, they made a very significant contribution.

I do not see in these Estimates anywhere near the kind of resources that this minister and this department need to carry out the responsibilities that you currently have, leave alone the ones that you are reaching out to have. You are going to have 3000 permits from farmers on your desk every week, Mr. Minister, because of the legislation that you are proposing. You know what 25 000 litres of water is? You want to transfer that from one corner of your farm to another corner of your farm. We are passing

legislation that says we now have to have somebody in the department of Water Resources send a person out there, get a permit from this department to do that.

* (16:30)

That is a massive undertaking, and I do not see, Mr. Minister, the kind of support you have in doing that. What it means: intolerable delays. You are reaching out more and more intrusively, and that is your right. You people have elected this government, people in the ministry. The First Minister has made you minister responsible, I am not challenging that, but I will tell you the inevitable result will be that there will be more and more frustration, more and more delays, and the very same municipalities that are currently supporting that bill in three or four years will be looking for its repeal, simply because of the inability of the Department to respond in an appropriate time frame to the requests that you will have.

I make the argument and I support that. I think the former department of Environment did not have the staff, did not have the resources to carry out the regulations that were being passed in '96, '97, '98 and '99, and I do not see that they are being particularly augmented here, Mr. Minister, and this is just the start. I mean, if I believe and if I believe what I hear, what is coming out of your office and what is coming out of the Minister of Agriculture's office, you are going to have a far more extensive review of the whole question of intensive livestock.

That portends more regulations, more things to police. Mr. Minister, you are going to need a lot more help is what I am saying, and quite frankly I am here to help you try and get it. Through those difficult years of tight budgets it was the darlings of government, Health, Education, Family Services and Justice that were allowed to continue to get additional monies. You have one of the hard-working departments of government and one that impacts most directly on very, very many citizens of Manitoba. Quite frankly, it needs greater support than I am seeing in these Estimates, particularly with the moves that you have already publicly announced. Thank you.

Mr. Larry Maguire (Arthur-Virden): Mr. Chairman, I, too, would like to put a few comments on the record in regard to the Minister's opening comments and congratulate him on being appointed Minister of Conservation, which, as my fellow Member for Lakeside has just indicated, will be a tremendously large job.

I, too, want to put on the record the concerns that I have about the combination of the department of Natural Resources as well as Environment, and as the Environment critic in our caucus, feel that there are a number of issues that need to be undertaken in the province of Manitoba and have some concerns about some of the ones in regard to a few of the bills that we have seen coming forward from the ministers so far in regard to how they are going to be handled and how they are going to be implemented. My cohort has mentioned one of them, and that is in the area of financing these departments. It is a large undertaking to be the developer and the regulator in regard to trying to promote more job creation and do it in a sustainable manner.

The Member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns) has indicated that he was the last Agriculture and Conservation minister in the Province of Manitoba, and I would like to say that as a graduate of university, I remember that particular period of time and the work that he was doing in that area. He has also been the minister of Natural Resources and the minister just preceding the present Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk) from Swan River. He has had the opportunity of bringing forth many sound policies and developmental activities in the Province of Manitoba and has probably more experience, obviously, than anyone in this Legislature in regard to how that could proceed and the positive benefits that it has had for the Province of Manitoba.

I would like to say that, while I certainly have not had that kind of political experience in government, having just been elected this past September, I have had a large amount of practical experience, having farmed for the past nearly thirty years. I guess, if you count the days when my father first put me on a tractor, well over thirty years experience in that area, as well

as being a farm leader in Manitoba and Western Canada. That has given me a good base to provide some comments, I think, in regard to, not only the activities that take place or have taken place here in Manitoba, but my dealings with ministers in other provinces on these issues as well.

So as we look at the changes that the Minister is making in areas like The Sustainable Development Act, the Sustainable Development Initiatives Fund, a number of the environmental areas that he has spoken about today, I would also like to just put on the record that I think that there may be—and I was pleased to hear him mention it today—some real concern about the levels that the Canadian government has set for us to attain in the Kyoto Conference that was held in, I believe, '96 that the then Minister of Agriculture, Mr. Goodale, and Ms. Stewart, at that time Environment Minister for Canada, laid out for us to try to attain in Canada. I was glad to see that the Minister today has indicated that he will be coming forth with a number of the levels that he feels responsible for Manitoba to attain in that area as well.

The Minister has outlined that the oil and gas industry is an integral part of Manitoba's economic development and that there are a number of issues that he has pointed out that need to be dealt with in that area. I am proud to say that most of that activity takes place in my home constituency of Arthur-Virden. We want to make sure that everything is done in that district to make sure that things are done in an environmentally friendly manner, but that we continue to see the development that will help place Manitoba's needs in energy more in a self-sustaining role than perhaps being dependent on energy from other jurisdictions.

The ethanol issue, from a farmer's point of view, is a very serious one that we need to take into consideration, and perhaps, as fuel prices increase, there will be much more ability to look forward to opportunities in that area. I would be glad to share the experiences that I have had with some of the plants that have been developed in Ontario in regard to more sustainable development through the ethanol industry, as well as the ongoing ones we have here in our own province, but these should be

done on a more self-sustaining kind of basis rather than dealing with a lot of, if I would say, government funding in regard to the development of those projects. They have always been developed, and many have fallen back. It is great to push from the production side, but the marketing side is where the key is in that whole area. There has to be some major agreements, and I do not know whether this minister is prepared or the Government is prepared to go ahead on a more do-it-alone basis in those areas than the Canadian government has been willing to do at this point or not. So I look forward in Estimates to hearing the Minister's views on some of those areas as well.

There are a number of areas where the Minister has indicated, and I have to thank him as well for his comments that he made to us in briefing us on four of the bills that he brought forward last week. We still have a few to go, but appreciate his comments on those and look forward to further developments and further definition on some of those bills from the Minister in regard to the process that we had before us here in regard to Bill 5, The Wildlife Act, Bill 6 and the bulk exports of water, 15 and provincial takeover of municipal jurisdiction and drainage again from the individual farmers, and Bill 21 and the levels of the flood plain in the valley here as well and other areas that that might be appropriate.

So, with that, Mr. Chairman, I think I will close my remarks. I would just like to say that, as a new member, I certainly look forward to the procedure of the process here of Estimates with the Minister and hope that we can move along quickly, but I do have a number of fellow members who do want to, from time to time, join us, if that is fine with proceedings, and ask questions on particular issues that might be important to our side of the House, but probably, more importantly, to individual situations that may arise in their constituencies.

Mr. Chairperson: We thank both critics from the Official Opposition for those remarks. Under Manitoba practice, debate of the Minister's Salary is traditionally the last item considered for the Estimates of a department. Accordingly, we shall defer consideration of this item and now proceed with consideration of the next line.

Before we do that, we invite the Minister's staff to join us at the table, and we would ask that the Minister introduce his staff present. I will ask the Minister to introduce his staff.

Mr. Lathlin: Our Deputy Minister Norm Brandon; our ADM Harvey Boyle; Mr. Podolsky from Administration and Finance.

* (16:40)

Mr. Chairperson: We thank the Minister for introducing his staff. We will now proceed to line 1.(b)(1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$434,200, on page 37 of the main Estimates book. Shall the item pass?

We will ask the Member for Arthur-Virden (Mr. Maguire) or the Member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns). The floor is open for questions.

Mr. Maguire: No, Mr. Chairman, not at this time. We are not prepared to pass the Minister's Salary. There are a number of questions that we would like to ask in the process before we get to that point.

Mr. Chairperson: I did not ask for the Minister's Salary. We are starting on 1.(b) Executive Support. We are leaving out the Minister's Salary to the end.

Mr. Maguire: There is a great deal of difference in this area. I guess, as we start into this whole process, we have a lot of issues that we would like to bring forth and ask questions on. But, as we, the Member for Lakeside and I, indicated in our opening comments, the reply to the Minister's opening comments, we have a good deal of concern about the whole process of amalgamation, and we have many questions around that whole area.

I think that this line exactly, Executive Support, starts in by leading into that whole process of clarification in the Department, if we could get some information from the Minister in regard to that. One of them is, of course, Salaries and Employee Benefits, as we start into that whole area. With over \$350,000 change in that particular line, I wonder if perhaps the Minister could give us some background in regard to that

whole amalgamation process, and in particular where the changes might be in this kind of line.

Mr. Lathlin: In answer to the Member's question, I believe he is aware that two departments were amalgamated: the former department of Environment as well as the department of Natural Resources. As of today, we have one minister. In other words, one minister's position has been eliminated. We have eliminated one deputy minister's position and then secretary to the Deputy Minister; also two assistants, one executive assistant and one special assistant to the Minister; a total of three secretarial clerk support positions, for a total of eight positions. So that would comprise the reduction.

Mr. Maguire: I would assume that that is along the same line as in Other Expenditures, in that whole area as well.

Mr. Lathlin: The answer is yes to that question. It has to do with the cost of operations for those areas that have been eliminated.

Mr. Maguire: Okay, Mr. Chairman, I will pass that.

Mr. Chairperson: I will read, Resolution 12.1.(b) Executive Support (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$434,200--pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$123,800--pass.

We will move on to section (c) Administrative Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$969,300. Shall the line pass?

Mr. Maguire: Can the Minister just explain the differences that might take place in that area as well?

Mr. Lathlin: The numbers that the Member is referring to has to do with an ADM position. A position that was seconded to the Habitat Heritage Corporation and has since been eliminated, thereby causing that reduction as well.

Mr. Maguire: Mr. Chairman, yes, I note that there was one full-time senior staff Member there dropped from that area. So that was the

ADM position then in Habitat and Heritage? I am prepared to pass that.

Mr. Chairperson: Line 12.1.(c) Administrative Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$969,300—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$450,900—pass.

We will go on to (d) Financial Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$1,657,700—pass. (b) (2) Other Expenditures \$415,900. Shall the line pass?

Mr. Maguire: I note with interest that there is a slight increase in those Other Expenditures. Can that be outlined? Financial Services, Salaries and Employee Benefits are virtually identical. This is close enough, but can there perhaps be some detail there?

Mr. Lathlin: The slight increase that the Member refers to apparently has to do with the purchase of a computerized cash register at the Saulteaux avenue offices. Apparently it has to do with licences, where you go and purchase your licences. So there is a computerized cash register.

Mr. Maguire: Just licensing for—

Mr. Lathlin: For fishing, hunting.

* (16:50)

Mr. Maguire: That is what I would have presumed but just for the record, Mr. Chair.

I note with regard to the whole process here that the Administration and Finance is down. We just passed Administrative Services, and we are looking at the Financial Services in this department which is up just slightly, while we have about a \$450,000 saving in Administration and Finance, the top line on the whole department, with a good deal of that in the removal of a minister, perhaps, if you will, and that kind of staff saving.

Would the Minister be able to give us any detail as to whether, in fact, that really makes up the full difference, that the saving here was about \$450,000 in regard to Administration and Finance?

Mr. Lathlin: The reductions that we have been able to realize thus far in our integration and amalgamation processes, the Member correctly pointed out in the administrative support, come to roughly \$450,000. Now, that figure constitutes reductions that have been, for the most part, up front. As soon as you amalgamate the two departments, you no longer need two ministers, so therefore a saving is realized. A reduction is realized right off the bat without doing too much other reorganization.

But as we delve much further into the reorganization integration, we are going to be realizing some more savings and reductions. Exactly how much we will be able to realize in terms of further amalgamation or as we complete amalgamation, I could not say at this point, but we are expecting to realize some more cost savings.

Mr. Maguire: Mr. Minister, those then would not be reflected in these Estimates at this time.

Mr. Lathlin: Mr. Chair, the savings that have been identified so far have been in the administrative support area. The other savings to be realized have not been included in the Budget.

Mr. Maguire: So, Mr. Chair, they are obviously, just for clarification to make sure that we know that we are looking at the 1999-2000 numbers in those columns on the right-hand side as opposed to the 2000-2001 on the left-hand side, the numbers that the Department has used for the 1999-2000 Estimates are the numbers of going back and looking at the combination of Natural Resources and Environment to come up with those for 1999-2000 comparison numbers?

Mr. Lathlin: Mr. Chair, yes, the answer is in the administrative support area, but there are other savings in other areas other than administrative support.

Mr. Maguire: Again, for clarification, the determination of the 1999-2000 Estimates are purely a compilation of the numbers that were in Natural Resources last year and Environment combined, or was there some other means of determining how those numbers were achieved?

Mr. Lathlin: The answer is yes. The numbers that you see there have not been amalgamated, as what has been happening in the executive office. The numbers that would have been in Environment and Natural Resources, those are the numbers that you see there. Those have not been really, truly combined yet. Those are separate from the administrative support and the executive.

* (17:00)

Mr. Maguire: Mr. Chairman, I am still not clear there. I thought I was a minute ago. The right-hand line in 1999-2000, if I was to go and take the Natural Resources Estimates as well as the Environment and Natural Resources Estimates from last year and add them together, they would come up with the numbers on the right-hand side, from the '99-2000 numbers that are being used for comparison now.

Mr. Lathlin: Yes.

Mr. Maguire: Okay. Thank you very much. That gives us a good base to compare to if that is where we are at. We are prepared to pass the line on Financial Services.

Mr. Chairperson: Item 12.1.(d)(2) Other Expenditures \$415,900—pass.

12.1.(e) Human Resource Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$764,000—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$105,400—pass.

12.1.(f) Resource Information Systems (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$1,046,000. Shall the line pass?

Mr. Maguire: There is a \$21,000 difference there, by the looks of it, Mr. Chair. I just wondered if they could outline—it is one line that seems to be a little bit higher than the previous two areas combined. I am wondering what extra resource for information systems was put in place there.

Mr. Lathlin: Yes. That increase constitutes the general salary increases that occurred.

Mr. Maguire: Does that mean that there were more staff hired in those areas or increased

salaries for the ones that were there? Where does the increase come from?

Mr. Lathlin: I think the Member will know that, if you look at the staff numbers, they have not changed. The increase is reflected. I believe, in the staff positions that had to be reclassified in order to maintain a complement of people with that kind of expertise. There was reclassification done, salaries increased to maintain the staff level.

Mr. Maguire: So there was an increase then in the qualifications required for the number of people, the number of people being the same, but an increase in their qualifications to do the job in that department?

Mr. Lathlin: The increase in that line did not necessarily mean that qualifications were put higher. We needed to get more qualified people. I think the Member will also know that people in the computer area, it is very, very competitive. You have to compete with other industries and other government departments where they are looking for people with those kinds of computer skills. So that is why the increases in the salary were made, in order to keep and attract people with the qualifications that we are looking for.

Mr. Maguire: I am very well aware of the competitiveness of that industry right now. I have a sibling that exports computer information and technology into Japan and Asian countries where they are built. There is quite a bit of obviously competition in that whole area for those kinds of people with expertise at this time.

I am just going by what the Minister said when he mentioned in his first answer that a reclassification of some of the people in that department was the reason for the increase in salaries. Can you just confirm that?

Mr. Lathlin: Obviously, there are two rookies working here, a rookie minister and a rookie MLA. So we will, I guess, kind of lead each other along here, as it were, but, yes, the first response really was there was no actual reclassification being done. It was a case of increasing the pay level in order to maintain the staff people and also to attract other good people to come and work there.

Mr. Maguire: No, that is fine.

Mr. Chairperson: Line 12.1. Administration and Finance (f) Resource Information Systems (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$1,046,000—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$385,600—pass.

We will move on to Resolution 12.2. Regional Operations (a) Headquarters and Operations (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$1,415,700. Shall the line pass?

Mr. Enns: Mr. Chairman, did the Minister muse about, generally speaking, the regional services, the regional districts—any changes in the structure within the Department? Are they being contemplated? You have the five regions: Northwest, Northeast, Central, Eastern, Western, along with headquarters. Did I understand from the Minister's initial comments that there were some structural changes being planned with boundaries being reorganized in this structure?

Mr. Lathlin: Mr. Chair, the answer to that question is yes. We are, in fact, looking at integrating two regional offices, as we sit here. So, yes, there will be further restructuring at the regional level, because we are looking at natural resources, environment. So we are doing that right now.

Mr. Enns: That was going to be my second question. My question is: Generally, how are the environmental people being absorbed or merged in the new department? Are the appropriate officers, field people, for instance, being located in the various regions? Are there environmental, I do not know what you call them, inspectors or something like that, located in the Westman region, in the Eastern Region, and in the different regions of the Department? How is the merger of staff coming together?

* (17:10)

Mr. Lathlin: We already have environmental staff people in regional offices. They will continue to be there, but we are also looking at enhancing their responsibilities so that they can maybe take on responsibilities that might have been done by other functions within those regional offices.

So we are not really eliminating any environmental functions. They are still there. Our goal is to try to enhance those functions so that they will carry out a more balanced responsibility.

Mr. Enns: Well, Mr. Chairman, I just take this opportunity, once again, to reiterate what I said in my brief opening statement. I appreciate that you have the different divisions in the Department, but this is the heart and guts of the Department in many extents, in the sense that it provides the horses out there in the field to respond to the citizens' concerns.

Mr. Minister, you are going into this year with a few less dollars than last year. You are asking the Department, you are asking the Government to take on considerable additional responsibilities in water permitting alone. I could site other issues. I am saying this as supportive as I can, as gently as I can. I am well aware that you can come back at me and tell me: What the hell did you do, Enns, when you were around?

I will tell you what we did. We took 20 percent away from this department. We took 20 percent away from the department of Environment. And that was tough for your managers to cope with. I acknowledge that. That is what has happened. You are adding with every new legislative initiative, and that is your prerogative, Mr. Minister, but you are adding additional responsibilities on the Department, and I do not see that being reflected in any way in the bottom line figures.

I support you like when we had the Minister of Justice (Mr. Mackintosh) here a little while ago. He has a fancy \$5-million to \$6-million empty, used courthouse for sale. Be the first one in line to grab the money before it gets into some other department. We had the Minister of Finance here a little while ago. I wish they were here. Before your other colleagues in cabinet muscle you away from the Treasury Board, and I understand you sit on Treasury Board, sir, catch yourself some dollars from them.

Mr. Lathlin: Mr. Chair, I gladly accept the Member's advice. In the Chamber I call him elder. Every once in a while he acts up, and I

have to remind him that he is my elder and I look up to him and I seek his advice. After all, he has been here ever since I can remember. When I was a little boy on the reserve in The Pas, I already remembered people talking about Mr. Enns. So he is a person that people should go to for advice, because he has a whole life of experience behind him. In a way I am being facetious, but in another way I am being very serious when I tell him that I will seek his advice. Thank you.

Mr. Maguire: Mr. Chair, you are dealing with the line on Headquarters?

Mr. Chairperson: We are dealing with line 2. Regional Operations (a) Headquarters Operations (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits.

Mr. Maguire: I still have some questions I guess then myself. I appreciate the fact that the Minister would take guidance from my colleague for his experience that we outlined earlier today. I certainly will from time to time here as well, Mr. Chairman. I guess I would like to have some further clarification in regard to staff positions and that sort of thing and headquarters operations. We have looked at it a little bit there under the Executive Support, but that was Administration and Finance. There is a whole different region here. The Member for Lakeside mentioned the boundaries, the regional support and staff that is necessary there.

Has there been any guidance, given the continued responsibilities or the increased responsibilities of these headquarter operations? Can he clarify what those might be from headquarters? And we can ask the other departments later.

Mr. Lathlin: Mr. Chair, since we have been in government and since we have really taken on the task of integration and amalgamation, I think we have given our people considerable direction through meetings. I met with senior people, regional office staff directors here, and it was not that long ago where I gave the direction that staff are to work together.

For example, if you are in The Pas, and an example of this is this coming Friday I will be going up to Pukatawagan to look at an environ-

mental issue while a member from the environmental division from our regional office in The Pas will be along with me. While we are there, we are also going to be discussing natural resources issues and vice versa, but I think the bulk of the crossover will go from the natural resources officers to Environment. In other words, the former natural resources staff have a lot of environmental experience, so those people will be working together with the environmental staff to fulfil the obligations that we have.

Yes, we have given considerable advice and direction to our staff in terms of how we want to achieve the integration of the two departments. We are not one year into the program yet, but so far it seems to be working out pretty well. We are getting positive comments from our staff down throughout to the district, from the regional office to the district office. So far, I have been quite encouraged by what has been happening.

Mr. Maguire: Just in that vein then, Mr. Chairman, can the Minister indicate to us what some of the difficulties he has encountered so far in the amalgamation process?

* (17:20)

Mr. Lathlin: Right off the bat, probably when you are dealing with people and when you propose changes to an organization—I have gone through this myself in my work life at least three times in the places that I have worked, and I have been on the receiving end of reorganizational activities. I have also been on the other side, directing reorganization in quite a large organization, quite diverse organization with various goals and objectives. If you look in the Canadian indices that list the occupations, organizations, our organization did not fit in there. So I am talking about OCN where we did a large-scale organizational work.

So I have gone through that myself, and whenever you go through that kind of exercise, it is only natural that people are going to ask questions. They do not know what is going to happen. You know, you meet with them some more, but even after you meet with them several times, there are still questions. That is just human nature. So people are apprehensive every

time you are proposing major changes. Well, even minor changes, people will be apprehensive. What is going to happen to me? Will I still be here, or where will I be working then? Whom will I be working with? Those are the kinds of questions. Probably for me, because I do not want anybody to run into any difficulties, that is a difficult situation. But I cannot say it is the most difficult situation, because I know there are other major pieces of work that we have to go through yet.

Whenever you are initiating a change like that such as the one in Environment and Natural Resources, as the member said earlier, it is a big responsibility. I agree with him wholeheartedly. It is a big responsibility. It is an awesome responsibility, especially when you are in government. Things happen slow in government, slowly, and the slow pace has also been difficult for me. If we can achieve integration much faster, if we can get on a faster pace, I would be really happy. But, whenever you are dealing with people's lives, whenever you are dealing with a well-ingrained way of doing things in the past and you are coming along to try and make some changes, well, yes, there is some convincing to do. There are some changes to make, and it takes a long time.

So, really, I guess the fact that it is taking slow, it is frustrating. But, at the same time, I think I would sooner go through that kind of a frustration and go through it slow and do it right rather than rushing through it and making all kinds of mistakes as we are trying to rush through because we are trying to satisfy a time line somewhere or some people.

Mr. Maguire: Then maybe the Minister can quickly give me an answer in regard to whether or not the roles and responsibility—because as I look through the section here on Regional Operations for each area of the province, there is very little cut. The Central Region, perhaps, has had some staffing cutbacks in that area through the combination of these departments, but it looks like virtually everyone has been maintained in their former jobs at least.

Can the Minister confirm that those players, that the people who are working in the field in his regional offices are still there with the same

jobs that they had? If that is the case, what role does he see them playing? Will it be the same responsibilities as they had before?

Mr. Lathlin: Mr. Chair, the answer to the Member's question is, no, we really have not reduced any front-line workers in the regional offices. It was always our intention that we maintain the front-line workers. Maybe next year when we go through the same process, we will start to see some regional office activities being amalgamated, particularly those on the side of the NROs.

My attitude is that is where all the work gets done at the worksite and that is where we need people. If we are going to, as the Member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns) has alluded earlier, aim to do additional work, it would not make sense for us to really cut back, I call them, the real workers at the front line. So, that has been that attitude right from day one.

Mr. Maguire: So the roles and responsibilities of those people as well will be the same?

Mr. Lathlin: The answer is yes.

Mr. Maguire: Mr. Chairman, I wonder if the Minister can indicate to us whether those players are the field staff, the people in the front lines—and I would agree with him on that—are still in their offices. Are there any plans to amalgamate offices in those areas if they are presently in their same offices, or have any of them combined to date or will they be in the future?

Mr. Lathlin: Currently, in some places like The Pas, for example, the Environment and the NROs occupy the same building, the first and second floors, but there has been really no big movement to try and put everybody together. We do not have to do that in Thompson and The Pas; they are already together. So, those are for places like Thompson and The Pas where they already occupy one building.

In cases where the two divisions occupy separate buildings, there is already a plan, if we can do it, to put everybody in one building so that we can have the two divisions working together rather than housing the one division in one building and then housing the other in

another building and thereby still working like us-you or they-them. The bottom line is we want to have everybody in the end working together trying to achieve the same goals and objectives.

* (17:30)

Mr. Maguire: I guess through my line of questioning here, Mr. Minister, I am just trying to find out what your priority is, as the Minister or your government, in regard to whether the amalgamation was done from the point of view of saving money or whether it was done from trying to bring the regulatory body and the developmental agency of natural resources more closely together. Can you clarify that? This might be more of a political question, I guess, obviously than an administrative one, because obviously you have given us an indication from a government that you want to combine these departments. I do not see much saving in Administration and Finance, although 7 percent is significant with reducing one minister.

In regard to regional operations, obviously, whether it is increased or decreased depends on the scope of the Government and what you propose to bring forward in bills and legislation and the direction that feels comfortable with in this process. So can you give us some detail and clarification of that?

Mr. Lathlin: Well, let me give the Member, Mr. Chairman, a response. I do not know if it is a political response, but I will give it to him anyway.

During the campaign we had made commitments that we were going to put a priority on environmental protection. Indeed, during the campaign, we made mention of the east side of Lake Winnipeg. We made some commitments there as to what we would do if we were in government. So some of the things that you are starting to see start unfolding, starting to roll out, are some of those commitments we made, such as the comprehensive land use study on the east side of Lake Winnipeg, one of the commitments we made.

In conjunction with that, the other general commitment we made was that we were going to place more emphasis on the environment but not

necessarily to exclude development, as the Member was trying to suggest earlier. We believe that we can achieve both. I think if we listen to the people, all the stakeholders, I really believe that in the end everybody's needs can be addressed to some degree, maybe not always to the degree that each stakeholder would like to have their needs and concerns met. But I truly believe, I honestly believe that we can do it, because it has been done in other places.

So the answer to your question is this did not start out as purely to save money. That has become part of the equation, but really what we wanted to do was to place emphasis on the environment. We also wanted to, yes, save a little bit of money I guess, but I think the other thing we wanted to do was we wanted to make better use of our resources.

We have all kinds of expert people working in various departments—Environment and Natural Resources. Some are biologists, some are engineers. So our goal is to see if we can make better use of those experts from both organizations, and maybe their getting together and working closely together, we can achieve the results that we want to maybe sooner than later. But, generally, that was our direction that right from Day One we had set out to try to create the balance.

When we came in, you know, I am not adverse to saying it, but, of course, it is going to look like you are favouring environmental protection and so on. But if you were there on October 6 or whenever I got into the position, obviously, it is going to look like there is going to be a very, very emphasis on environment because there is a balancing act to be done there. I think economic development, business development was way up here and environment was down here. So I am not saying we are going to bring down development, but what we are saying is we are going to try to balance the two and see if we can achieve sustainability.

Everyone likes to talk about sustainable development. I was asked by the media people the other day, like, what do you mean by sustainable development. Can you describe sustainable development? So my response to him was, well, I do not want to give you a

dictionary definition of sustainable development, but let me say this. I remember as a young person I was out on the trapline with my dad, and I learned all kinds of neat things about being on the trapline in the spring, as well as in the fall and winter. I recall in the fall we were hunting moose, and lo and behold my dad wanted me to get my first moose. I was scared, because I was still a young person, but that was part of my training.

* (17:40)

I also remember catching my first mink at the trapline with my dad. I was going to grab the mink, and my dad grabbed me and threw me to the side and said, look, it is going to bite you. You know, as a kid learning how to trap, I came across this animal, and my first inclination was to grab a hold of it. If I did, he would have made probably good work of my hand. Subsequently, I learned that you do not pick up mink like that; they can chew you up pretty good. So that was my education in the trapline, in the bush.

I remember getting my first moose, and it was a big deal for my dad. I did not understand half of it at the time, but later on I did. That was after we got the moose. To me it was like a ritual. You know, he got a piece of meat, and he hung it up in a tree. Then he got another piece of meat, and he dug a hole in the snow and put some meat there. Then he took another piece of meat and wrapped it up in a pouch, and that was for us to bring home. For us, I thought, but later on I found out that, when we got home, the whole community had come out. Somehow they found out that we had got a moose, my dad and I, and I had killed it, so everybody came there. I was so disappointed when they all took our moose away. You know, I thought we had gone into the bush to kill our own moose, and when we got home, the whole community, elders, came out with their pails and sleighs. They got big chunks of our moosemeat, and they took it home, until there was nothing left.

So those were the lessons that I learned, but the point of my story that I was going to make to you was, after he did all that, he said, well, you have to share with the Creator, you know, like this is good. We got a moose, and we are going to have food for quite a while here, but we have

to share. We have to share with Mother Earth; that is the piece of meat he dug in a hole, and he put it there. Then he said we have to leave some behind for the hunter that is going to come here tomorrow.

I think that was my first lesson of sustainable development. You go and harvest a natural resource, but you have to make sure that you leave something there for a future generation. At least, I did not learn it that way the day that we were there, but later on, as I got older, I started to understand what he meant. So I gave that kind of a definition to the media person. I do not know if he understood it or not, but I gave it to him anyway.

So anyway getting back to this question here, hopefully that is what we want to achieve, sustainability in everything that we do. In the old days, I think a government department would develop goals and objectives, a work plan, a business plan, a budget, and out they would go without considering what the results of this project would do to the other department. So from now on what we want to do is we want to make sure the government departments will not be allowed to move forward with any planning, with any budgeting, if there is no consideration being given to in their planning processes sustainability.

In other words, every government department will have to abide by the principles of sustainable development. So that is kind of a short answer to the Member's question, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Maguire: If that was a short answer, Mr. Minister, I look forward to a long one sometime.

You know, I would concur with the Minister, as I too hunted at about the same age that he did, with my father, and I will tell you a little story there as well. This was a duck incident, though, with our shotgun rather than rifle.

An Honourable Member: Let us get back to the Estimates here, eh.

Mr. Maguire: I think you will see where I am going with this. My father took me out to hunt

ducks when I was five. We were hiding in a blind, and you know the ducks were flying pretty low over. He was taking shots at them, but—I will speed it up—none of them were falling, and this little voice from behind him said, Dad, when are we going to get the ducks? He was a pretty good shot, but that particular day he did not bag anything and take it home.

My point, Mr. Minister, is that, and I think you have really just outlined it, in regard to having sustainable development, you have to have an industry around that, and you need to have something to sustain. You need to have people who depend on that area, as you depended on hunting, as I depended on farming. I think we need to make sure that, not just the farming industry, but the other industries that we have developed, we allow Manitoba to prosper as well as make sure we do it right.

As a farm leader in western Canada, my greatest responsibility was to make sure that we provided opportunities for farmers to develop their industry, but made sure that we did it right. We have a wonderful opportunity here in Manitoba that maybe some of the other regions in North America that we continue to refer to, and in Europe as well, because I have had some experience with the Holland situation, the Netherlands, in regard to hog development there, if you want to specify that one, be specific on it.

We have a great opportunity to expand an industry and provide sustainability for our people and at the same time do it right by learning from the mistakes that others have made. I would say that I have had that opportunity to do that in transportation legislation across western Canada, indeed Canada, by learning from what the Surface Transportation board did in the United States. They made some pretty horrendous mistakes in regard to the cut-and-slash programs that they brought in in their jurisdiction. Many American industries, not just farmers, have indicated that they perhaps could have done it a lot less painfully and with more due diligence.

I have always said here in Canada that we have to do these things, we have to do them right. We have to develop them. I have the opportunity to do that. My partner here, the

Member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns), who has been the Minister in charge of some of those, having been Natural Resources and Agriculture minister, not at the same time, in regard to the last recent, the last 30 years, let us put it that way, knows full well those responsibilities.

I would say that you have probably one of the most responsible positions of cabinet in this government in regard to the future viability of the economy of Manitoba. I hope that you continue to look at it from the point of view of making sure that the rules and regulations that you put in place are well talked out with the community that is involved, with all Manitobans indeed, but with a clearer balance of opportunity to provide industry and bring the industry in. Sometimes you have to give incentives. Maybe you need to talk to some of your other fellow cabinet ministers and Treasury Board personnel to make sure that that industry continues to be attractive to Manitoba so that we maintain the 4.4.

The biggest problem we may have in the future with changes in other provincial jurisdictions is maintaining that workforce at a 4.4% unemployment rate, as was outlined today in the House. I think that while we all have to make sure that we look at sustainability in the future, we have to do it with an eye to, will that continue to employ people and give our young people the opportunity to stay in Manitoba, the opportunity to be here for the future development of those resources?

* (17:50)

As I look at the Estimates books and see that in regard to Regional Operations, just before we proceed with questions on maybe some of the individual lines that might be there under this area, I see with interest that you know your outline here is that these regional offices, operations will develop, operate, maintain provincial parks, provincial waterways, and the water control facilities and structures, which obviously includes drainage, which we will deal with in the Committee tomorrow in regard to the Province taking back control of water rights.

Can you define what your view is here in this area on the definition of provincial

waterways? Obviously I think I have a pretty good understanding of what provincial parks are. I might have a question on that, but can you outline what you feel entails a provincial waterway?

Mr. Lathlin: Mr. Chair, this morning I was trying to get all these definitions clear in my mind, because I have my own understanding of what a provincial waterway is, my own definition, my own understanding of what it is. Plus there are other phrases and sayings that I guess in government you have to get used to them, and sometimes for me they have a different meaning.

I was arguing with people this morning that a provincial waterway is like the Saskatchewan River, on the shores where I live. To me, that is a provincial waterway, because it is a waterway that has all kinds of tributaries, all kinds of little creeks flowing into the Saskatchewan River.

But, for our purposes, a provincial waterway, our definition is, first of all, designated by the provincial government by regulation. It is a drainage system, large-scale, and collects a whole bunch of other ditches, I guess, if I can call them waterways, collects a whole bunch of other systems. They come from farming areas; they come from municipal areas. It is also maintained by the provincial government. Now, that is my understanding, on the provincial side, of what a provincial waterway is.

Mr. Maguire: Then, Mr. Minister, that includes just ditches along provincial roads that are provincially run as opposed to municipal roads. Can you be more specific in regard to the application of ditches and their terminology?

Mr. Lathlin: No. The answer is no for the Member. A highway ditch is not included. It has to be a designated waterway before it can qualify to be deemed as being a provincial waterway. So ditches along the highways, no.

Mr. Maguire: Mr. Chairman, again I was just referring to the wording that you had had in the answer, Mr. Minister. You had mentioned the word "ditch" in your answer on a provincial waterway, and I wondered—

Mr. Lathlin: I will use the word "drainage" then.

Mr. Maguire: So, for clarity, as I would understand, of course, it is the rivers. You used the Saskatchewan as an example and the tributaries that run into it and some of the small creeks and waterways in the province. I have many of them that run into the Souris River that runs through Arthur-Virden. One of them runs behind my house, so these are small creeks that are natural drainways through the province of Manitoba. Are those, then, described as provincial waterways as well?

Mr. Lathlin: No, they have to be designated by regulation. I was asking that question earlier today. The Saskatchewan River is a provincial waterway, but, apparently, such waterways have to be designated by the government before becoming officially a provincial waterway.

Mr. Maguire: Could you give me some example then of a provincial waterway under the definition that he used, that we have in the province?

Mr. Lathlin: One example that I can give the Member, Mr. Chairman, is the Grassmere Drain that is just north of the city. That would be an example of a provincial waterway.

Mr. Maguire: Can the Minister clarify for me just exactly who determines what a provincial waterway is?

Mr. Lathlin: I understand that whenever the municipalities are at a point where there is a whole network of drainage systems, it gets to the point where there are too many of them or it gets too big, they come to the government to outline problems that they are having in their area. They will request the government to designate such an area as a provincial waterway. I understand it is usually done by Order-in-Council. Also, apparently there has not been such a designation for quite a long time now, or changes.

Mr. Maguire: There have not been changes in regard to which, Mr. Minister?

Mr. Lathlin: What I meant to say, Mr. Chair, was for a while now there have not been any

new designations given to the provincial waterways.

Mr. Maguire: Just to close, wrapping up there for today, but I guess the final question would be, it says provincial waterways and water control facilities and structures. The Province would then as well determine, is this the Department or the Minister's responsibility to have the final say in regard to which facilities and structures are deemed provincial as well?

Mr. Chairperson: Order, please. The hour being 6 p.m., the Committee rises.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

* (14:30)

Madam Chairperson (Bonnie Korzeniowski): Good afternoon. Will the Committee of Supply please come to order. This afternoon this section of the Committee of Supply meeting in Room 255 will now resume the consideration of the Estimates for the Department of Education and Training.

Consideration of these Estimates left off on page 57 of the Estimates book, Resolution 16.1, Administration and Finance. The floor is now open for questions.

Mrs. Joy Smith (Fort Garry): I welcome back the Minister of Education (Mr. Caldwell) and enjoyed sparring with you a bit in the House today, so we are all set.

Madam Chair, as I told the Committee, my objective is to cover the pertinent points and not to belabour the Estimates process. The Minister has answered questions when I read over that I had prepared in former questions. I am going to try to be as prudent as I can in terms of getting through everything.

First of all, could I ask the Minister if he does have the boards and the committees prepared to submit to this committee?

Hon. Drew Caldwell (Minister of Education and Training): I was just wondering if that meant that everything was a pass. Yes, I do. Close. I do have the Education and Training

active and inactive boards. I will table that for the record.

I just want to briefly go over a couple of the items and also mention that Claude Fortier and Ben Levin are with me again today. I thank Claude for providing the material on the boards. There are a number of boards, as the Member pointed out. I am just going to go briefly through the active and inactive just for the record.

The Board of Teacher Education and Certification is an active, non-statutory board composed of 20 members, and I will not go through them all because I know the Member, also, in consideration of time—but there are representatives from MTS, MASS, Education and Training, MAST, Brandon University, U of M, U of W, St. Boniface College, the colleges generally, and MFIS on the Teacher Education and Certification Board.

The next board in terms of the general K-S4 Board of Reference is a statutory active board. The Collective Agreement Board is a statutory active board composed of members of the Department of Education and Training, Manitoba Teachers' Society and the Manitoba Association of School Trustees. In fact, Ms. Linda Ross, a MAST representative, is a former colleague of mine from Brandon.

The Teachers' Retirement Allowances Fund Board, TRAF, is a statutory and active board. Again, membership is composed of citizen members as well as Manitoba Teachers' Society and the Manitoba Association of School Trustees. The Public Schools Finance Board, a statutory active board composition primarily of Orders-in-Council under the Lieutenant-Governor. We have in this particular board right now composed of Barbara McFarlane, Richard Heapy, Russ Hood, my old friend from Souris, Jack Denbow, Jocelyn Van Koughnet and Paul Birston. That comprises the primary statutory boards under the K-S4.

The Apprenticeship Trades and Qualifications Board, under post-secondary boards, a number of appointments: Ms. Joyce Sobering, who I had the pleasure to meet with this morning for an hour, is the Chair, a ministerial appointment fulfilling a three-year term. I will

not go through the various individuals on that board.

Council on Post-Secondary Education Board. It is a statutory board. Current members are Bill Regehr, Ann Robins, Martin Mayer, Ian Scott, Beverley Bachalo, Edward Martens, Dan Falcetta, Betty Green, Ron Bailey, Bev Watson, Virginia Snyder and Annemarie Wiebe. I know that the Member will recognize many of those names, because they are primarily appointments from the previous government.

University of Manitoba Board of Governors is a statutory board comprised of 23 members. University of Winnipeg Board of Regents is a statutory board composed of 36 members. I will not go through all the individuals on those boards.

Brandon University Board is a statutory board composed of 17 members. Assiniboine Community College Board, a statutory board, composed of 12 members. Keewatin Community College Board, a statutory board, composed of 12 members.

The Council on Post-Secondary Education is a statutory board composed of 11 members, and I will read their names into the record, Madam Chairperson. Don Robertson, Muriel Smith, chair and vice-chair respectively, Germain Peron, Bonnie Coombs, Milton Gobel, Christopher MacDonald, Johanne Ross, Herman Green, Leslie Ziegalski, and there are currently two positions vacant on that board.

* (14:40)

Red River Community College, a statutory board, composed of 12 members—we have already gone through some of these, I am sorry. Doubling up on some of the—*[interjection]* Those are the previous boards.

Inactive boards. The Minister's Advisory Board is an inactive statutory board. The function of the mandate of the Board is to make regulations with respect to religious exercises and patriotic observances—I remember the jackpot that a former minister got in that regard with "God Save the Queen"—to consider and make recommendations to the Minister regard-

ing reports of committees appointed by the Minister, to study and revise course and subject outlines, to engage in research and study of matters of educational policy, to study any other matter referred to it by the Minister.

That board has not met since 1989, and I am pleased to table that for the Member and for the public. I just wanted to review those very quickly, though, to put some of them on the record, because when you table them they do not appear in Hansard. Thank you.

Mrs. Smith: Madam Chair, just to clarify, the collective agreement then would be under the Collective Agreement Board. Am I correct in assuming that? Could the Minister please clarify? The collective bargaining, rather. Collective bargaining would be under which board?

Mr. Caldwell: The Collective Agreement Board has certain limited functions. Its authority is established under section 150 of The Public Schools Act. Its mandate is to deal with matters referred to it concerning collective agreements between school division boards and division teacher associations. The board establishes an appropriate procedure for consideration and settlement of disputes concerning the interpretation, application or violation of a collective agreement between school boards and other associations.

Current membership is composed of: Dr. Ben Levin is chair, Mr. Brian Hanson is vice-chair and secretary. Representatives from the Manitoba Teachers' Society are Art Reimer and Lorraine Frost, and members from the Manitoba Association of School Trustees are Ms. Linda Ross and Mr. Craig Wallis, if that answers the Member's question.

Mrs. Smith: Madam Chair, just to review, we went over some things—I am sorry. I need my sticky.

Madam Chair, we had agreed, there are some issues, some questions we wanted to go through last time, and we had talked about what we were going to cover today. The boards was one of them. We had talked about schools of choice; I believe that was 16.5. We talked about Red River Community College and some other

issues. So we will be progressing, hopefully, quite rapidly today through the Estimates.

Starting with 16.2.(f) Student Services, Madam Chair, I see that one of the objectives under Student Services is to provide program and specialized support through the services of consultants for the deaf and hard of hearing. Now, last time, the Minister outlined the programs for the specialized support just at the end of the day.

I would be interested in knowing if there has been any aggressive effort to provide deaf or hard-of-hearing students and their parents with the option of the services of the Central Speech and Hearing centre located in Victoria Hospital.

Mr. Caldwell: Madam Chairperson, I thank the Member for the question, because it is a very appropriate question in terms of programming for deaf or hard-of-hearing students, young Manitobans. The Deputy has had a number of meetings with the centre, and there is current work going on to have programs available through the centre made available to Manitobans.

It is at a preliminary stage right now, but it is I think a worthwhile discussion to have with the centre to provide another opportunity for young Manitobans who are deaf or hard of hearing, to have another option available to them. In fact, the Deputy just advises me that he last wrote to them as recently as last week, so it is a very timely question.

Mrs. Smith: Madam Chair, could the Minister advise this committee: How is the Department going about identifying ways and means to increase interdepartmental networking and service co-ordination?

Mr. Caldwell: Madam Chair, just two points with regard to that question. There is a staff working group under Bert Cenerini that is working on service co-ordination between different departments in government. As well, we have the Healthy Child Initiative which is five departments involved in achieving intersectoral programs and intersectoral co-operation on childhood issues, prenatal to 18 years old.

In terms of enhanced linkages between schools and agencies, staff participated in a number of interagency committees. Emphasis is placed on an intersectoral approach with regard to early behaviour intervention, school therapy, child abuse prevention, drug and alcohol abuse prevention, nursing support for students with special health care needs in school, and the treatment of students who are emotionally or behaviourally disordered. So there are a number of initiatives under way at the staff and interdepartmental level as well as the ministerial level vis-à-vis the Healthy Child Initiative.

Mrs. Smith: I thank the Minister for that clarification. Could the Minister please advise this committee: What sort of liaisons does the Department have with organizations and service agencies that provides services to students with special needs, particularly that occur both outside the city in rural and northern Manitoba areas as well as Winnipeg, but I am interested in both of those?

Mr. Caldwell: There is a fairly extensive network of consultations that take place between agencies in speaking to the rural areas in particular. The school divisions themselves have a great deal of contact with agencies at the divisional level, at the regional level. In turn, the Department interfaces with the school divisions, and those contacts that take place at the regional or divisional level form a basis of the department's contact with agencies involved in activities at the divisional level. The primary way that such an interface takes place is at the divisional level, local agencies, network and co-ordinate activities with the school division. Then the Department in turn has ongoing consultative dialogue with school divisions, and in turn all partners in terms of interagency and school programs work together.

Mrs. Smith: Madam Chair, could the Minister advise the Committee what sort of educational service agreements does the Department have with other institutions? By whom, and how are they being monitored?

* (14:50)

Mr. Caldwell: There are a great many programs that the Department is involved with through

outside agencies separate from school divisions that we work with in conjunction with school divisions in providing services and opportunities for young Manitobans.

I can give three just off the top. In terms of the Knowles Centre—and primarily these activities take place in relationship with agreements through particular school divisions as opposed to through the outside agency proper, but with the River East School Division, we help support the Knowles Centre and programs that the Knowles Centre operates. With the Seven Oaks School Division, we support activities with Marymount. In St. Vital, the St. Vital School Division, we support programs with the St. Amant Centre.

There are number of such partnerships that occur across the system. If the Member would like a more comprehensive list, we could provide a more comprehensive list, but it is the same sort of programs that have been typically offered by the Department of Education in terms of supporting school divisions and partnerships with outside agencies. So these have not changed. There has not been any particular initiative in this regard; it is more a continuation of past practice.

Mrs. Smith: If it would please the Minister, I would appreciate having a list. There are times when those queries do come to me, and I would like to be accurate in that.

Madam Chair, I notice that on page 69, the subappropriation in 16.2.(f), there are the same FTEs in the subappropriation, but I know you are spending less on salaries, particularly in the Administrative Support.

Could the Minister explain to the Committee why that is? Is that because of the downsizing that has happened?

Mr. Caldwell: The full-time equivalencies have remained the same at 37. There is a small decrease of about \$7,000—I guess it is \$8,000, from \$675,700 in 1999-2000 to \$667,700 in 2000-2001. I am advised that that is primarily related to staff turnover, somebody leaving and then the position not being filled for a number of months and, therefore, a small saving being

achieved. It has not to do with any programmatic changes there. It just has to do with the normal turnover of staff.

Mrs. Smith: Madam Chair, I notice the Repairs and Maintenance/Rentals have increased. I would assume that is as a result of the normal repair to the building. Perhaps the Minister could just clarify that for me in case there is anything new that might be on the horizon.

Mr. Caldwell: I am advised that there is a small increase in Desktop in that regard, but it is primarily related to the maintenance of older equipment and, also, some standard rental increases and so forth. But it is primarily to do, I am advised, with increased maintenance costs of older equipment. I think that is something that maybe we need to attend to in future years.

Mrs. Smith: Madam Chair, in 16.3.(a) under Division Administration, once again I noticed the number of FTEs in this division has not changed. However, funding for total salaries and benefits has been reduced.

Could the Minister please clarify why this would be? Thank you. I would like to know specifically what benefits employees may have lost.

Mr. Caldwell: The amount is just over a thousand dollars. It is a change in the salary accrual. I am advised that there is no change of substance there. It is just an accrual differential.

Mrs. Smith: Madam Chair, I know, because I am familiar with the departments, you know, there are some things that are very self-explanatory, so there is no use, to my way of thinking anyway, going through that. I would like to go to 16.3.(b) Curriculum Development and Implementation.

I see the number of FTEs in the area of the Department has been reduced from 20 to 18.50, particularly in the Professional/Technical area. Would the Minister explain the rationale for the reduction in staff? That would be on page 77.

Mr. Caldwell: The decrease is primarily the result of a slowdown in the development of programs and support materials in the areas of

Français langue première, basic French and social studies.

Mrs. Smith: Madam Chair, under Other Expenditures, there is an increase in funding for transportation, repairs, maintenance, rentals, professional services, and other operating expenditures. In light of the number of staff cut in the professional/technical area, has the Department contracted out some of these services? Is that the explanation for the increase in projected expenditures? If the Minister could clarify that, I would appreciate it.

Mr. Caldwell: Madam Chairperson, the increasing support in the neighbourhood of \$200,000 relate to the Interchange on Canadian Studies Initiative, which is somewhat offset by a slowdown in the development of programs and support materials for the areas of Français langue première, basic French, and social studies. The cost differential, as the Member accurately points out, is about \$140,000 in that regard.

There is also the Bureau de l'Éducation Française, does not always, has contracted some curriculum support in that it cannot maintain all the specialized staff required for curriculum support. So the increased support again is related to the increased support for the Interchange on Canadian Studies Initiative, somewhat offset by a slowdown in the development programs and support materials in the areas that I mentioned previously.

Mrs. Smith: Madam Chair, would the Minister just clarify whether or not those support services at some later date might be increased as application comes from the field for more help in that area, or is this a closed book?

Mr. Caldwell: Madam Chairperson, yes, if there was a request from the field, we would entertain such requests. When the request was analyzed, we would place it, or not, according to the analysis, into future budget years, but it is certainly something that we would entertain.

Mrs. Smith: Madam Chair, in 16.3.(c), under Educational Support Services, one activity identified is to ensure educational, administrative and cultural liaison between the Division

and various sectors of the Department, schools, school boards and local, provincial, national and international organizations regarding French-language education.

* (15:00)

Could the Minister provide us with an explanation to describe how this activity is implemented throughout the province?

Mr. Caldwell: Madam Chairperson, the Department, and the Branch particularly, but the Department is very involved with all sorts of activities regarding liaising between the Division and various sectors of the Department, schools, school boards, local, provincial, national and international organizations regarding French-language education.

I know on one front it was likely only 60 days ago that myself, Sheila Copps, the Minister responsible from the federal level, and Ron Duhamel signed an agreement for the Division scolaire franco-manitobaine for a new five-year agreement, an extended five-year agreement.

We have a number of programs involved with cultural exchange programs. For example, the Manitoba-Québec exchange program, which is a six-month program that allows fifteen students who are enrolled in Senior 2 or 3 in Franco-manitobaine schools to spend three months studying in Québec during the spring term. In turn, Québec students come to Manitoba for a similar three-month period during the fall term.

Living expenses for this program are the responsibility of the host families. However, Manitoba's contribution in 2000-2001 of \$7,000 will serve to defray part of the airfare costs. Each student will contribute a small amount towards the airfare costs.

There is also the Manitoba-France agreement, which has been under way since '93-94, an initiative by the previous administration which has proved to be very popular.

The French Consulate, located in Vancouver, is involved in a number of projects within the Department of Education of each

province. Such projects are conducted within the framework of the existing Canada-France agreement and do not require the preparation or the signature of a formal agreement between individual provinces and France.

However, in Manitoba, this agreement allows for three teachers from France to follow a summer-training course in Canada, and three teachers from Manitoba to do the same in France. The Winnipeg-Paris return airfare is borne by the teacher. France pays the tuition fees and accommodation for three teachers, and, reciprocally, Manitoba pays for three teachers from France at an estimated cost of approximately \$6,000.

As well, the Department delivers some 30 extracurricular and cultural programs to schools throughout the province, publishes and distributes approximately six support materials for special cultural activities, delivers some 25 educational exchanges, cultural projects, professional development opportunities, et cetera, to students, teachers and administrators under the Manitoba-Québec and the Manitoba-France agreements.

So there are a number of activities that the Department undertakes vis-à-vis cultural programs, particularly for French-language advancement and French-language education in the province of Manitoba.

In many of these programs, as I mentioned earlier, the federal government is the main supporting player. As I mentioned, a couple of months ago, I had the honour of signing with Ms. Sheila Copps, Minister of Canadian Heritage, a renewed five-year program for support to the Division scolaire franco-manitobaine. So there are a number of projects locally, nationally and internationally.

Mrs. Smith: I am going to go to one of my favourite topics with the Minister in 16.3.(c) Educational Support Services. I am very interested, Madam Chair, in the delivery of the formative evaluation instruments at the Grade 3 level for students in the Français program.

Madam Chair, could the Minister please clarify, is this similar to the assessment which is

being developed for the Grade 3 students in the English stream?

Mr. Caldwell: It is similar to the Anglophone Grade 3 skills assessment. The major difference, of course, is that there are fewer assessment devices available because of just the fact of English being a language of greater usage, I guess, in the North American context and in the national context, as well, but it is a similar program.

Mrs. Smith: So basically the instruments will be selected as previously outlined by the Minister, and the teachers will have that selection based on some meetings they have and some collaboration. Just to clarify, is that the procedure, Madam Chair?

Mr. Caldwell: Yes, that is accurate.

Mrs. Smith: Madam Chair, why is the Department waiting until the Grade 4 level to administer an evaluation of students in the French immersion program? My understanding is it will be done at the Grade 4 level, but from what the Minister just said, it is going to be done very similarly to the Grade 3. Could the Minister clarify just so we understand what is actually happening there?

Mr. Caldwell: Can I clarify, does the Member mean the Senior 4 level? There is nothing happening at the Grade 4 level. Grade 3 level is where it is occurring, but perhaps the Member has got the Senior 4 on her mind. *[interjection]* Oh, I see where—here it is.

I am advised that in terms of Grade 3, because the students are in immersion, Grade 3 is recognized as being at a level too early to do such an assessment. They would want an extra year of classroom contact because of the fact that they are learning a second language.

Mrs. Smith: So to clarify, it will be done with the same pattern as the Grade 3, but it will be done a year later because of the language differential.

Madam Chair, does that mean that for the French immersion program, could the Minister please clarify, it will be a year later getting

started on that initiative, or will that be through this year as well?

Mr. Caldwell: No, it will begin to take place in the 2000-2001 school year. The only differential, as I indicated, is the fact that because the students are immersion students and they are being immersed in a second language, that pedagogically it is felt that one more year of classroom contact is appropriate before having the assessment.

Mrs. Smith: Madam Chair, once again, I do notice that two staff members have been cut in educational services yet again, I notice it is in the Professional/Technical line and again it is a reduction in employee benefits, so could the Minister clarify, is this the same reason as had happened previously?

Mr. Caldwell: Madam Chair, this decrease is primarily the result of the elimination of central marking for all Senior 4 standards test and the implementation of local marking with the central audit, those two positions.

* (15:10)

Mrs. Smith: Going to 16.3.(d) under the Officials Languages Programs and Administrative Services, Madam Chair, would the Minister please outline the funding agreements for special projects administered by non-governmental organizations?

Mr. Caldwell: Madam Chairperson, I just acknowledge that Dr. Gerald Farthing, the ADM of School Services, has just joined us and is not writing furiously right now. However, the Deputy Minister is perusing furiously our booklet to give some detail to the programs with which the question is concerned.

There are, as the Member indicates, a number of programs. Camplus is a program offered during the spring of the year 2000 and the summer of the year 1999, the previous program, for children ages 6 to 11 that will enable them to appreciate French culture in a playful environment, to offer programs for secondary school students that will introduce them to various disciplines and develop their

interests and encourage them to pursue a post-secondary education in French.

Le centre d'études franco-canadiennes de l'Ouest - Au service de l'enseignement (universitaire et secondaire) et de la recherche sur la francophonie de l'ouest canadien is a program to provide support services to students and academic staff through the use of volunteers and the hiring of one part-time professional staff member to publish two issues of the publication "Cahiers franco-manitobains de l'Ouest" to organize an annual conference.

Centre informatique is a program to provide support services, including training; technical problem resolution; hardware and software installation; programming; network administration; maintenance of client account systems; equipment maintenance; equipment and laboratory reservations; file management purchasing; and questionnaire and exam processing.

Cours et programmes pour la clientèle adulte francophone is a program to develop and offer courses, workshops, and in particular, programs in the areas of language training, client services and professional development, for example, tourism and computers, tailored to meet the specific need of certain target groups.

Clientèle adulte anglophone - cours et programmes de français langue seconde, a program to develop and deliver both on campus and in rural areas an intensive French as a Second Language program tailored to meet the needs of employees in the health field as well as of basic French for teachers and, I dare say, Ministers of Education, to develop and deliver programs and workshops tailored to specific work situations.

Développement institutionnel du CUSB is a program to maintain and administer a fund for the awarding of bursaries and for the funding of various pedagogic projects to maintain and administer a database on graduates, supporters, students, and donors; to provide administrative support to the graduates association; to coordinate the work of volunteers; to prepare a recruitment campaign; to create within the university community a feeling of belonging by

bringing together elements promoting the identity of that community.

Another program is *Intégration du français aux diverses disciplines* to evaluate language proficiency upon admission; to provide laboratories and language workshops tailored to specific programs as well as to the needs of the student population in general; to provide tutorial services in writing and editing services; to notify students of the CUSB's linguistic requirements through notices and bulletins, brochures in the college calendar; as a program for promotion and marketing; to develop marketing improvement strategies; to prepare frameworks for the creation and production of all promotional materials, advertisements and sponsorships; and to develop and maintain a Web page, as well as produce and distribute an information bulletin called "Sous la coupole" to co-ordinate newspaper advertising.

Réorganisation des réseaux internes informatiques du Collège, to document the operations of each of the college's networks, select one or two network platforms as standard and convert existing information systems based on that choice.

Service d'animation culturelle, to offer two theatre productions by "Chiens du Soleil," sundogs, four art gallery exhibits, workshops on theatre, song, guitar playing and photography, an in-house orchestra program, "Boîte à chansons" evening and classical concerts, and to co-ordinate an open house day.

An additional program is *Administration des projets spéciaux*, to provide administrative assistance related to special projects.

Appui au secrétariat, to provide additional secretarial support to projects related to the French language curriculum.

Médiabus, to provide library services to schools in more remote areas of the province, with the use of two travelling vans, one for français and the other for French immersion schools.

The final program in the Collège universitaire de Saint-Boniface program package

is the *Formation en soins de santé*, to develop a recruitment program for the Centre national de formation en soins de santé en français. The objective of the program is to increase the enrolment of Manitoba students in the medicine and health sciences programs at the University of Ottawa, with the view of alleviating the shortage of bilingual health care professionals in Manitoba. The program includes measures that will encourage their return to Manitoba at the completion of their studies. The subtotal for that section for the CUSB is \$868,000.

For non-government organizations, a number of programs are also offered. *Alliance chorale Manitoba Inc.:* *Programmation scolaire du chant choral*, to promote French choral music in Manitoba by implementing choral groups in *Division scolaire franco-manitobaine* schools, and by providing workshops for teachers in the teaching of choral music.

The Brandon University: Process-Based Education - Year 1 program is to offer four two-day workshops on the communicative-experiential approach, assign and supervise between 10 to 15 projects to two different teams of participants, with the view of developing the skills required to successfully adopt the communicative-experiential approach.

An additional program under the non-governmental organizations, the third program, *The Brandon University: Maintenance Language Program for French as Second Language Teachers*. This program provides workshops scheduled during the summer and on weekends during the course of the school year for the purpose of maintaining and improving the quality of French language skills in teachers of basic French who use the communicative-experiential approach and its principles in the teaching of French as a second language.

A fourth program for non-governmental organizations is the *Canadian Parents for French: School Program* which offers cultural tours comprised of a total of 12 performances featuring singers, dancers, actors and comedians; to hold a weekend of workshops and activities with the support monitors and facilitators; to hold a week-long daytime French language camp in seven communities in the province; and

to hold a French public speaking provincial contest comprised of 16 different categories.

A fifth program to non-governmental organizations is the Canadian Parents for French: Theatre Project, to conduct a two-day theatre workshop to expose basic French high school students to French as a living language.

The sixth program, Centre culturel franco-manitobain: Programmation éducative, to offer a basic program comprised of three workshops which explore creativity and expression in children; to offer specialized workshops on various artistic techniques such as painting, sculpture and pastels; to provide an itinerant exhibit accompanied by the exhibiting artist and a pedagogic kit.

Seventh program, Cinémental Inc.: Programme scolaire, to present a French language film in rural and urban schools followed by a guided discussion of the film to prepare related information kits and a teaching manual.

The eighth program that is offered to non-government organizations, the Conseil jeunesse provincial inc.: Projet de développement de leadership des élèves du secondaire, to develop a course in the area of community development having both technical and practical components; to develop partnerships with non-profit organizations based upon their needs and interests; and to promote the project in the target schools.

The ninth program is the Conseil jeunesse provincial: Appui aux conseils étudiants des écoles franco-manitobaines, to organize leadership seminars for Franco-Manitoban high school students to assist them in running student councils and other school groups.

* (15:20)

The tenth program offered is the Conseil jeunesse provincial: Journal des jeunes, to develop and implement a structure where Français and French Immersion high school students can produce two editions of a youth newspaper.

The eleventh program offered, the Conseil jeunesse provincial: Projet étudiants-animateurs, to provide three workshops on leadership techniques including communication, planning, leadership and personal development followed by the completion of at least 40 hours of work in a community setting where the skills learned during the workshops are applied.

The twelfth program offered to non-governmental organizations is the Conseil jeunesse provincial: L'Affaire Farouche 1999, to hold a one-day gathering of young Franco-Manitobans with the view of promoting a sense of belonging to the Franco-Manitoban community through their involvement in a variety of games and workshops and their exposure to French music.

The thirteenth such program offered to this sector is the CKSB Radio-Canada: Explique-moi ça, to produce a series of 20 science-oriented radio programs involving research, script writing and presentation in partnership with teachers and students and also to create a related Internet site.

The fourteenth program is La Division scolaire franco-manitobaine no 49: Pédagogie différenciée, to organize two or three days of meetings in each division's schools with the view of determining an appropriate intervention model followed by a critical analysis of the model to develop a three-step intervention process, a pre-workshop day session, a workshop day session, and a post-workshop day session to develop activities that promote the implementation of differentiated learning, to impart through the use of modelling at the workshop strategies that teachers will find useful in transferring the model to their respective classrooms, to develop sessions on differentiated learning for the summer institute, to undertake research projects and strategies related to differentiated learning, to write divisional documents in printed form and in electronic form, and to share the knowledge acquired through experience by publishing articles and attending conferences at the provincial as well as the national level.

The fifteenth program offered to this sector is the DSFM: Fau's'connaître 2000, to organize a

full day of workshops related to sports, the arts and improvisation as well as co-operative games which seek to challenge students' abilities in the areas of co-ordination, problem resolution, strength, speed, memory, leadership, et cetera.

The sixteenth program is the DSFM: Harmonie en fête, to organize a cultural and artistic gathering of Français students from Grade 6 to 8 with the objective of providing students with an opportunity to acquire an appreciation for music by actively participating in musical performance.

The seventeenth program in this area is the DSFM: Dansons Ensemble, to provide teacher training in the French language in the areas of corporal expression and creative movement, to organize a gathering for the purpose of having students perform the various dance styles learned throughout the school year.

The eighteenth program, DSFM: Festival des arts, is to provide workshops comprised of five different areas of interest, that is, visual arts, corporal expression, theatre, music and writing.

The nineteenth program offered for non-governmental is the DSFM: Radio scolaire, to provide radio training to students and teachers composed of three stages, one day of studio training, tour of schools by a resource person providing training tailored to the skill level of the students and the type of equipment being used and one day of training involving a group limited to six students. As well, this program will replace worn-out radio equipment.

The twentieth such program in this sector is DSFM: Réseau d'éducation multimédia d'enseignement à distance to provide distance education programs in mathematics, languages and science; to develop an administrative guide through a working committee; to maintain the technical equipment needed; to provide technical support and training to teachers; to prepare multimedia material and kits for the teaching of the courses; to undertake activities and research and development in the area of new technology and pedagogy related to distance education; and, to supervise students in the distance education program.

The twenty-first project in this sector is L'Ensemble folklorique de la Rivière Rouge: Swing la bottine. To develop two music manuals including lyrics for use by teachers for dance instruction.

The twenty-second program under this area is Le festival des vidéastes: Les adolescents et la justice. To provide training in audiovisual techniques, that is, filming and editing techniques and in the preparation of a scenario to produce a video on the theme Adolescents and Justice.

The twenty-third program in this sector is Festival du voyageur: Le programme scolaire du Festival du voyageur 2000, to organize and implement a school program within the context of the Festival du voyageur, including the co-ordination of a tour of artists within schools, performances, handicrafts and sport; and, also to organize a one-day information session for program leaders from français and immersion schools.

The twenty-fourth program offered in this area is Fort Whyte Foundation Inc.: L'apprentissage de l'environnement to provide interactive programs in environmental education, including writing and revising support materials, the preparation of school brochure outlining the French programs offered and the delivery of this program.

The twenty-fifth program in this sector is the St. Boniface School Division No. 4: Summer School which offers courses in the French language and mathematics, français, geography, science and social sciences at the Senior 1 and Senior 2 levels to Manitoba students who wish to obtain a credit for courses which they have previously failed.

The twenty-sixth program under this sector is Fédération provinciale des comités de parents du Manitoba: Préparation à l'école française 1999-2000, a program to develop and organize educational gains to be played in a group setting that improve language skills; also to provide workshops designed for parents and other interveners involved with children of the ages zero to three that encourage cultural and

linguistic development. This program also provides training for those involved in the operation of private and home day cares, as well as, provide financial support for pre-kindergarten facilities to cover the additional costs associated with French language upgrading.

The twenty-seventh program in this non-governmental area is Fédération provinciale des comités de parents du Manitoba: Guide pédagogique et feuillets d'activités du journal des jeunes. To create a pedagogic guide for the Journal des jeunes composed of three parts: a presentation of the Journal des jeunes, a listing of various pedagogic activities, and advice on how to start up a class newspaper. This program also creates an activity bulletin for each issue of the Journal des jeunes, which is about 10 issues per year suggesting pedagogic activities relating to the current issue, that is, vocabulary, grammar, text comprehension and so forth.

The twenty-eighth program under this sector is Les productions Rivard Inc.: Unique au monde. To produce a series of 13 30-minute documentaries which examine animal, aquatic and land indigenous species that are unique to western Canada and the Northwest Territories.

The twenty-ninth program is Manitoba Children's Museum: Manitoba Children's Museum French Language Services. To develop, implement and provide Grade 3 school programs in the French language in each of the Grades K to 6, and to promote and provide services in French.

The thirtieth program is the Manitoba Children's Museum: Wonderworks the Infrastructure: Educational Signs and Props. The purpose of this program is to provide signage in both official languages in the new exhibition hall Wonderworks the Infrastructure Gallery, designed to teach children about the importance of infrastructure systems.

The thirty-first program, La Radio communautaire du Manitoba Inc.: Radio scolaire et formation des bénévoles: immersion et francophones. To offer training session to students from French and French Immersion schools on various aspects of radio program-

ming, such as the technical use of equipment, the preparation and the hosting of a radio program and the administration of a music library.

The thirty-second program under this sector is the River East Collegiate: Core French Language Instruction and Business Partnership which is designed to create partnerships with business, government corporations and non-profit organizations that enable high school students studying core French to learn how to function in a French-speaking work environment.

The thirty-third program is the River East Collegiate: Éducation sans frontières. To develop an electronic link with a school in Haiti; to produce learning materials in both oral and written format on Canadian culture and geography.

* (15:30)

The thirty-fourth program in this sector is Université du Manitoba: L'apprentissage interactif autonome du français langue seconde oral par l'intermédiaire du multimédia. This program identifies and analyzes the need for oral French students at the beginner's level: to develop and adapt the pedagogic material required.

The thirty-fifth program is Winnipeg Art Gallery: French Language Education Program which helps develop in the French language a series of exhibit tours and activities consistent with the art curriculum of the Province of Manitoba to offer six art kits for use by teachers on the following themes: Inuit art, Native art, art and sports, Canadian art, portraits and drawing.

The thirty-sixth program offered in this sector is Manitoba Association of Teachers of French: La promotion du français langue seconde au Manitoba. To develop and maintain a Web site; to develop three pamphlets—an administration pamphlet, a parent's pamphlet and a student's pamphlet—as well as to develop a teacher's booklet to help in the preparation of a promotional kit for distribution.

The thirty-seventh program is the Manitoba Museum of Man and Nature: Vision 2002:

L'avenir nous appartient à tous. To offer 13 school programs in French in the Museum, 3 programs at the Science Centre and 5 in the Planetarium. To offer special programs, including "Un jour dans la vie du voyageur," a day in the life of the voyageur, presented during the course of the Festival du voyageur, temporary exhibitions and planetarium night for teachers.

The thirty-eighth program—there are only two more—but the thirty-eighth program, Plurielles (Manitoba) Inc.: La francisation et re francisation des adultes au Manitoba français. To develop the cultural program that promotes the linguistic and cultural development of parents by means of interesting and meaningful experiences, including theatre, community activities and training workshops and group discussions on various topics involving Francophone issues.

The thirty-ninth program is the Winnipeg International Children's Festival, which helps assist in offering performance and workshops in the French language during the festival.

The fortieth is the Apprentissage Illimité: Paul et Suzanne. To develop teaching materials for young students in French language schools.

The subtotal in this area is \$901,000 for the total for both parts A and B of \$1,769,550. I thank very much the forbearance of the Member and anybody else listening to my French. Je suis un Anglo-manitobain, obviously. I am very thankful that the text was in English after the titles.

That is the program. There is quite an extensive series of programs offered for French Language Services and they are all very well taken up. I know we get a lot of comments in the office. Most of these programs, as the Member will know, were established by the previous government. We are very pleased to have a very good track record in the province of Manitoba in terms of promoting the French culture and language in the province of Manitoba.

Mrs. Smith: Madam Chair, and I do appreciate the Minister's attempt at French. Mine is not that great either, not that I am saying yours is not

great, but, I will leave that judgment up to you. However, in the future, when I ask about special programs, when there is a listing of forty, I do not expect the Minister to attempt to read all three pages. It would be sufficient to table those just so I could be abreast of them. But I thank the Minister for his supreme effort.

Madam Chair, how do school divisions access the monitors to assist classroom teachers in teaching French language programs? What is the process and how many monitors are available to schools throughout the province? Could the Minister please advise this committee regarding this?

Mr. Caldwell: Full- and part-time second language monitors are provided to educational bodies to help second language teachers convey to students the real life aspect of the language that they are studying and awareness of the culture associated with that language. Additional full- and part-time monitors are provided to Francophone minority regions where French is the principal language of instruction. The full-time monitors, French must be the first language of those monitors. They must be Canadian citizens or permanent residents, must be enrolled as a full-time student in a post-secondary institution, usually in the province or territory. They must have also completed at least CEGEP stays in Québec or one-year post-secondary studies in other provinces and territories. Additional qualifications may occur and vary throughout the country. Applications are sent into the Department by schools. Monitors are assigned according to orders of importance.

Mr. Tom Nevakshonoff, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair

I am just trying to get the total number of monitors offered this year. In the 2000-2001 school year, Manitoba's quota will be 14 full-time monitors and 23 part-time monitors. This program, as the Member may know, is funded by the Department of Canadian Heritage. It is administered by the councils of the Minister of Education in conjunction with each province and territory. The protocol for agreements between the Government of Canada and the provincial government for minority language education and second language instruction makes provision for

the provincial or territorial governments to transfer to the monitored program a portion of the financial assistance made available to the province and territory or the Government of Canada in accordance with the terms of its individual bilateral agreement. A transfer in Manitoba of \$16,000 was required for each additional full-time monitor and \$5,400 for each part-time monitor. In 1999-2000, the past academic year, Manitoba transferred \$54,000 from the OLE for 17 full-time and 24 part-time monitors. In 2000-2001, Manitoba transferred \$53,700, resulting in the same number, 17 full-time monitors and 24 part-time positions.

Mrs. Smith: I thank you for that clarification, Minister. Under 16.3.(e) Library and Materials Production, I noticed the funding for administrative support and employee benefits has been cut. Could the Minister please clarify? Is that the same reasoning, Mr. Chair, that the Minister has outlined previously in the other cuts?

Mr. Caldwell: Yes, that is accurate; that figure of just under \$1,000 is the same as in accruals.

Mrs. Smith: In 16.4.(b) Pensioners' School Tax Assistance, Mr. Chair, how does the Minister account for the reduction in funding from \$4,140,000 to \$4,040,000 allocated for assistance to those 55 years of age or over? Could the Minister please clarify for me, for this committee?

Mr. Caldwell: This is a needs-based assistance program. Primarily the differential there of some \$25,000—sorry, larger than that—but that differential is, the Member will be pleased to note, because it speaks to the economic record of the Province over the last number of years; it is due to less volumes related to higher incomes. So it is a needs-based program. There is less volume in this particular program primarily related to higher incomes in the province. So you can take that to the bank.

Mrs. Smith: Could we go now to 16.5. Support to Schools and 16.5.(a) Schools Finance, please? As you know, the funding that goes to school divisions is collected through the municipalities throughout the province. Many municipalities issue their tax bills with the taxes raised on behalf of the school divisions itemized

separately from the municipal taxes. I would like to proceed through each of the province's 52 public school divisions, 2 special revenue school districts, and 56 independent schools to ascertain their funding increases or decreases and their surpluses or deficits.

We could begin with the urban school divisions to see what changes have occurred since last year. It would be informative to know what grants—for example, grants for ESL, English as a Second Language—each of the divisions receives for special programs as well. My question to the Minister: Would the Minister agree to provide that information during the Estimates progress and open committee so that all MLAs on both sides of the House will know what funding has been provided to the school divisions in their particular ridings?

Mr. Caldwell: I would be pleased to table the numbers. Historically, this has not occurred. It is difficult to table anything by constituency because, of course, school divisions do not line up to constituencies. Often many constituencies have more than one school division. We would be pleased to table them.

* (15:40)

The difficulty is, and it is not really a difficulty, but it is something that has to be stated as a caveat. In mid-year these numbers are fairly soft. We do not know the total figures or the total numbers or accurate numbers, as it were, until the publication at the end of the year with the FRAME document publication, but the numbers that we have right now are fairly soft because figures such as enrolment are not known until the end of the year, and so forth. So all that we have available, and all traditionally the departments have available ever in mid-year, is soft numbers. The hard numbers are not known. They are estimates, not anything hard. The hard numbers are not known until all the enrolment numbers are known, which would be some months from now, September 30 for the next year.

I do not have any particular problem tabling the soft numbers per division if the Member wants. I think it would be more useful to table the hard numbers, but that would be one year

hence that those numbers would be available. Everything at this stage is soft, and, as I stated earlier, I do not think that these numbers have ever been tabled within Estimates. The ADM does not think that they have been, historically. I do not have any problem tabling—they are soft numbers, though, so they do not have a lot of meaning. Maybe the Member would like to have the numbers tabled that were part of the FRAME document. They would be the hard numbers, the ones that are accurate. Is that sufficient?

Mrs. Smith: I certainly do agree with the understanding these are soft numbers, and I can agree with that. It would be useful, Mr. Chair, to have the numbers now. I will use discretion with which I use those numbers, but it would be nice to have them now and also understanding the hard numbers as well. It is a very useful way of tracking the progress.

Mr. Caldwell: I will get the numbers for the 2000–2001 school year, and also, I think I should bring in likely the hard numbers from the previous year just to have some. Okay, that is good.

Mrs. Smith: I thank the Minister for that information, and we will make sure that those are known as soft numbers and hard numbers.

Mr. Chair, could the Minister please clarify to the Committee, how is the Minister monitoring the funding provided to school divisions for special education?

Mr. Caldwell: The financial aspect is documented through the FRAME document in terms of global reporting. In terms of Levels 2 and 3, the department has people in the field working with special needs teachers with individual education plans, so that is monitored through the IAPs provided for Levels 2 and 3.

Mrs. Smith: I thank the Minister for that clarification. Could the Minister please clarify which of the 200 to 250 major capital projects approved by the Public Schools Finance Board are being undertaken this year? If this committee could have a clarification of which projects are new, which ones are ongoing, and which ones will be acted upon this year. I understand this

might take some time to get together, and that is perfectly understandable. I do not know if staff has it at their fingertips at this time, but if we could have a listing of those, I would appreciate it.

Mr. Caldwell: Staff is scrambling to my left here. I think we have it available now. I would like to welcome the Member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Fauschou) to the Committee. It is good to see you.

There are a number of capital programs, as the members are aware, that the Public Schools Finance Board undertakes every year. I know in my home constituency of Brandon East, although there are no programs specifically in Brandon East this year, there are programs in Brandon West for a couple of schools related to expansions of those schools. I will put on the record the projects currently under way in Winnipeg No. 1 School Division on the Greenway site. There is a project under way that involves land acquisition to the amount of \$350,000, allocation in the 2000-2001 school year. In St. Boniface, the Island Lakes school is a new school. There is a funding instalment this year of \$3,200,000.

In Transcona-Springfield, there is in the Anola area a major project being developed, planning phase of \$100,000. In Agassiz School Division, the Garson-Tyndall new school, there is a funding instalment of \$1 million allocated in 2000-2001. In the Hanover School Division, the Kleefeld school replacement, there is a funding instalment of \$1,350,000. In the Evergreen School Division, the Gimli Early Middle Years new school funding instalment of \$1 million.

In the Frontier School Division, in Shemanawan, there is a new school projected funding instalment of a provincial share for approximately 6 percent of \$100,000 in the 2000-2001 allocation. Also, the Frontier School Division in Thicket Portage, there is a new school with a funding instalment for the playing stage of approximately \$100,000.

In the DSFM, École Lavallée is a new school with a funding instalment of \$1,150,000, for a total of \$8,350,000 this particular year. There are a number of renovations and additions

that the PSFB is currently supporting. In Winnipeg 1, Winnipeg Adult Ed Centre of \$325,000, Argyle School at \$50,000. Children of the Earth School at \$50,000, Calvin high school at \$50,000. In Tech-Voc at \$500,000.

In St. James School Division, St. James Collegiate is a recipient of \$50,000 for renovation-addition. Fort Garry School Division, Henry G. Izatt Middle Years School, \$625,000 allocated. In River East School Division, Prince Edward School, \$50,000 allocated. River East School Division, Salisbury Morris Place School, \$600,000 allocated. Seven Oaks School Division, the A. C. Avery School, \$750,000 allocated.

Transcona-Springfield, the Springfield Junior High School is getting an allocation this year from PSFB for renovations-additions at \$50,000. In Seine River, the Ste. Anne Complex is a recipient of \$50,000. In Hanover, the Landmark School is receiving \$400,000. Also in Hanover, the South Oaks School is getting an allocation of \$200,000. In Rhineland, the Gretna school is recipient of \$200,000. In Morris-Macdonald, the J. A. Cuddy School is receiving \$1,550,000. Evergreen School Division, the Gimli Middle School is recipient of a \$50,000 allotment. In Lakeshore School Division, the Inwood School is receiving \$200,000.

* (15:50)

Rolling River School Division, close by my own home constituency, Elmwood Collegiate and Forrest is receiving \$50,000. In Brandon, I mentioned earlier, J. R. Reid is receiving \$200,000, and Linden Lanes School is receiving \$200,000, both for expansions to facilities there. In the Souris Valley School Division, Hartney School is receiving \$750,000, and Souris School is receiving \$50,000. Wawanesa School is receiving \$200,000, which should make the Member for that region very happy actually. It is about a million dollars in renovations and allocations in the Souris Valley School Division.

In Western School Division, Minnewasta School is receiving \$370,000. In the DSFM, Rhéal Bérard School is receiving \$2.1 million. Gabriel Roy school is receiving \$100,000. In Prairie Spirits School Division, Treherne School

Division is receiving transfer from the Aging Buildings Program, \$1.3 million. In Churchill School Division, the Duke of Marlborough School is receiving \$200,000. In the Frontier School Division, various school divisions are receiving \$500,000, for a total renovation-addition amount of \$11,770,000.

The total estimated costs of approved major capital projects by the PSFB in 2000-2001 is \$20,120,000. That would conclude the list for this year. It is quite a range of projects.

There are a few more projects under aging buildings. I will just go over them very quickly. In Winnipeg, Sisler School is receiving \$1.45 million; in St. Vital, Mountbatten School is receiving \$150,000; in Agassiz, Beausejour Elementary, phase 2 is receiving \$100,000; Fort La Bosse School Division is receiving \$600,000, for a total of \$2.3 million on that score.

In terms of roofing, Winnipeg School Division, Winnipeg No. 1, George V School is receiving \$479,000 for a roofing project; King Edward School is receiving \$121,000; Principal Sparling School in Winnipeg No. 1 is receiving \$650,000; Sargent Park School is receiving \$120,000; St. John's High is receiving \$200,000 for Winnipeg No. 1, which is a tidy sum there for Winnipeg No. 1 roofing projects.

St. James School Division, St. James Collegiate is recipient for a roofing program under the roofing program of \$90,000. In Fort Garry School Division, General Byng is receiving \$55,000; in Brandon, New Era School is receiving \$175,000 for roofing program.

In the Western School Division, Maple Leaf Elementary is receiving \$100,000 for a total roofing expenditure of \$200,000 this year.

It is quite a sum, in the range of \$25 million this year.

I would like to welcome the Member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Tweed) to our Committee here. Welcome.

Mrs. Smith: I thank the Minister for those clarifications. Mr. Chair, I would like to go to 16.5.(b) Education Administration Services at

this time. I understand at one time the Manitoba Teachers' Society was interested in establishing a teachers college that would, among other things, be responsible for certifying professional personnel in the school system. Could the Minister please clarify what the status is of the discussions around a teachers college in Manitoba?

Mr. Caldwell: We have been in consultation with pretty much every major stakeholder in the field of public education over the last nine months. I know the previous government also had dialogue with the major organizations involved with public education, the Province of Manitoba, during the course of their mandate. The question of having a teachers college, teacher certification under the MTS and a government structure has been raised a couple of times in our discussions, but it has not been a feature of any work on behalf of the Department. It is currently not something that is on the Department's agenda.

Mrs. Smith: I thank the Minister for that answer. I see this division co-ordinates appointments for boards and committees which are convened by legislation under the acts and statutes for which the Minister has responsibility. Does the Minister have a listing to table today of those boards and committees? Is that incorporated in that document that was just given to me, the most recent appointments?

Madam Chairperson in the Chair

Mr. Caldwell: Welcome back, Madam Chairperson.

That is included in that document I have tabled earlier today.

Mrs. Smith: Madam Chair, I just wanted to clarify that. Thank you, I have not had a chance to look at it.

I would like to go to 16.5.(c) and 16.5.(d). In 16.5.(c), Schools Information System, I notice an increase in funding for Professional/Technical; however, the number of FTEs has not risen. Could the Minister clarify why this jump has occurred in this particular area?

Mr. Caldwell: Madam Chair, if I might, while senior staff are huddled to my left here, there were a number of questions asked with regard to the old Program Implementation branch that I committed to answer this week from last Thursday. If I could put into the record now, while the staff is huddling, some of the Program Implementation issues that I said I would bring back to this committee this week.

In terms of Program Implementation, there were questions on the Early Behaviour Intervention submissions. This initiative has been in place for two years. The reports outlining progress in relation to the divisions identify goals that have been submitted and will be reviewed by a team of divisional and departmental representatives. From the review areas, where school divisions may require support, will be identified. These are expected results of the Program Implementation area.

The transition to a supportive role—over the past year, consultants from the branch began to work with school division staff in the provision of professional learning opportunities. Activities in the field are provided, utilizing partnerships and focusing on the building of local capacities wherever possible.

Professional learning opportunities is another expected result of the Program Implementation. With the reduction in the number of curricular documents released, services of transition from province-wide overview sessions to divisional or regional sessions are provided at the request of educators.

The Special Education Review is another Program Implementation area. Special education consultants have met with the Special Education Review Initiative staff to discuss projects, and staff will be participating with the Special Education Review Initiative on their identified goals for the 2000-2001 school year. Expected results of Program Implementation regarding enhanced linkages between schools and agencies—staff will participate in a number of interagency committees. Emphasis will be placed on the intersectoral approach and the Early Behaviour intervention, school therapy, child abuse prevention, drug and alcohol abuse

prevention, nursing support for students with special health care needs in schools and the treatment of students who are emotionally or behaviourally disordered. Expected results also include in the Program Implementation: aboriginal education and English Language Enrichment for Native Students. A number of initiatives have been undertaken to identify ways in which schools can increase the engagement of Aboriginal students in their education. Three consultants have been identified as having major responsibility in this area. Staff and the departments have met with school division officials to review the pilot of the free-structured English Language Enrichment for Native Students grant program.

* (16:00)

Expected results in Program Implementation also include special education. Special education consultants and the unit co-ordinator have been involved in discussions divisionally and regionally to identify needs and action plans to enhance programming for students with special needs. As well, Madam Chairperson, the Program Implementation results expected the facilitation of school level curriculum implementation via teacher access to Pan Canadian, Manitoba Calls and other resource-based learning resources. The IRU acquires and purchases two to three copies of each of the learning resources from the Pan Canadian and Manitoba Calls and allows teachers to preview before purchase. IRU is acquiring additional copies of recently recommended ELAK to Senior 1. Purchases were made in a wide range of other curriculum-matching learning resources to support resource-based learning in K to S4 classrooms. IRU's Internet-based on-line catalogue, which is used by teachers to identify and acquire on-loan materials at a hit rate of 1 320 059 during this period, which is last year's period, which is 40 percent higher than compared to the year before, which is tremendously increased usage of on-line catalogue services.

Also, in terms of program implementation, we expect an efficient and effective delivery of new SPD documents and other educational literature. In 1999-2000, IRU distributed more than 709 000 items to schools and board offices

through its centralized bulk mailing system. During the period April through June 2000, there were four separate mailings of some 87 000 items. For each of the mailings, a packing slip is enclosed in the parcel identifying to whom the educational material should be directed. The packing slip is posted on the Department's Web site.

As well, the expected results for program implementation include improved classroom practices and research-based decision making. IRU has catalogued and made accessible over 858 learning resources to date and has circulated 21 272 items to teachers. Questions from teachers relate to exceptions in the Copyright Act and the copying rates acquired through the new five-year CMEC Pan-Canadian Schools Can Copy Copyright Agreement are being addressed. CMEC is currently developing, along with other national partners, a position paper on the requirements of the educational community as it relates to the use of digital information and the upcoming changes in the Copyright Act. The IRU Virtual Education Information Services increased 33 percent compared to the same period last year.

Finally, in terms of Expected Results of the Program Implementation is improved teacher and student access to learning. The Manitoba Library Consortium Incorporated, a non-profit, multiple-library, co-operative effort is developing a provincial plan for a single library system which would link all publicly funded schools, universities, colleges, government and health libraries in the province.

That is material I committed to bringing in last week, Madam Chairperson. The major differences in the salaries and employee benefits relate to merit increments and reclassification. There are quite a number of I-IT reclassifications in the last two years to keep salaries somewhat competitive. So the main results of that are merit increments and reclassifications.

Mrs. Smith: I thank the Minister for that information, and indeed it was useful to have.

Madam Chair, I would like to ask some questions now on the supplementary support for schools of choice under 16.5. I know there is a

concern about the schools of choice program because of the funding formula that has been changed. Could the Minister please explain that change and how this change would impact on students who are currently enrolled in schools across the province, in divisions other than where they live?

Mr. Caldwell: The funding formula does not affect the schools of choice. The funding formula does affect any student in any division, whether they are residing there or coming in or leaving. So there is no specific change related to the schools of choice with regard to the funding formula.

I should also say that we are joined here by Steve Power, the Director of Schools Finance. Welcome, Steve, and thank you.

Mrs. Smith: Could the Minister please clarify the supplementary support initiative that has impacted on the Schools of Choice and explain how the funding affects students who are travelling from one school division to another one?

Mr. Caldwell: We will likely spend a bit of time on this, I think, but Schools of Choice continues to exist in the province. There are no impediments for students or parents to make a decision on transferring students between school divisions. There is a small change in the support for students going from one division to another. I am advised that there are only two divisions where it made any significant impact and the department has not had any formal complaints from those divisions, in that regard, to the department, but we can pursue that.

Mrs. Smith: Could the Minister outline for this committee—I will give the Minister an example. Let us say a student in '98-99 transferred into another school division. Previously, all the money went with that student to the neighbouring school division; that is my understanding. So they have gone to another school division outside of the area in which they live. Now, that same student will be affected somewhat by the funding that will be allotted to them.

First of all, could the Minister advise this committee how much funding specifically will be going to that same student that remains in the neighbouring school division?

* (16:10)

Mr. Caldwell: There was a very small impact of funding in a very limited number of school divisions in this regard. The staff is reading entrails over here, as we are talking. Pardon me for a second, and I am going to discuss this with staff.

I can give an idea of the negative impact. For example, in St. James school division, it amounted roughly to \$20 per student was the differential. In Morris-Macdonald, the impact was somewhat greater because of the adult learning centre. The comment back from Morris-Macdonald was: How come it took you guys so long to figure this out? So it was a very, very small amount of dollars in a very few school divisions that had any impact, and, as I said, an impact in St. James-Assiniboia was approximately \$20 per student.

Mrs. Smith: Could the Minister please explain, going to Supplementary Support on page 20 of the School Funding, I see that Mr. Power is here, and I have had some calls from some concerned principals regarding the Schools of Choice. I want to be able to be accurate in what I tell them. I understand, Madam Chair, that the Minister feels it is a small impact of \$20 a student. This is why I am asking the questions where the concern is. In all fairness, I just want to be totally accurate in what I am saying because I do continue to get these kinds of calls. The concerns I am hearing is, number one, when a large number of students from outside the division go into a neighbouring division, then depending on the staffing, depending on the resources, the money does add up. To begin with, if I could have an explanation, I notice Mr. Power is here, on the Supplementary Support, so I can have that on record and perhaps back up some of the concerns that I have heard. This is why I am asking the question today, for accuracy.

Madam Chair, perhaps this would help a bit. Section E on page 21 of the school funding

document is what I have been told impacts on the students from out of division. I am asking this line of questioning as a result of questions that have been brought to me. This is where I would like the Minister to clarify, to eliminate any concerns that might be out there and when I do answer so I can be accurate.

* (16:20)

Mr. Caldwell: I will try my best here. All the base funding still exists for individual students. There was an alteration this year based upon the adult learning, the students, the post-21-year-old-and-over student, because of the huge growth in adult learners. The supplementary support, primarily equalization, is based upon the spending and assessment per pupil, comparisons with the highest division assessed per pupil, and the idea is to equalize this proportion to schools. That is, poorer divisions get more in assessment from the Province than wealthier divisions.

Prior to this year, the numbers used were eligible enrolment; now the Department uses resident pupils as opposed to eligible for enrolled pupils. This corrects the distortion in the per pupil assessment that existed previously. The distortion made divisions with a great many choice pupils look poorer than they really were. This meant that these divisions were getting more in resources than they should have been getting, and now the funding is provided in a more accurate and equitable basis. I know that it is quite a complex formula, but I would encourage the Member if she does have division inquiries from the field, from principals or superintendents or so forth, to refer them to Mr. Power in the educational finance branch. He can walk the principal or superintendent, as the case may be, through the details of the supplemental funding, but there is no change in base support to the students.

There is a small change in per pupil amounts that was reflected in my comments about the St. James School Division to equalling approximately \$20 per student. In other divisions, you had the response. Morris-Macdonald, who is the biggest loser in this case, was more of a—they were interested as to why the Government had not caught on to this earlier, but I would refer the

Member, if there are questions, that it would be useful perhaps to have Mr. Power discuss the matter with the principal or superintendent in question so that they could go through the details of the individual division, which may be a more satisfactory answer for the division in question at any rate.

I think it is a very complex issue. It is a one-year blip as we start to get a handle on the adult learners in particular, but I think it would be useful to have individuals that have detailed questions to discuss the details of their specific division with Mr. Power.

While I have the microphone, I guess I should welcome—we just had a shift change in the building—the Member for Assiniboia (Mr. Rondeau), the Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk), the Member for Brandon West (Mr. Smith) and the Member for Riel (Ms. Asper), as well as the Member for Dauphin (Mr. Struthers), who just walked in the room. Welcome them to the Committee as well.

Mrs. Smith: In all due respect, it is wonderful to see all these people, but, Madam Chair, if we could have it nice and quiet in here so I can hear the answers, I would sure appreciate it.

Madam Chairperson: I was waiting for the opportunity. Order, please. I would just like to take a moment to remind all honourable members to please provide the courtesy of your attention to the Member who has the floor. It is acceptable to carry on conversations at the Committee table as long as they do not disrupt the proceedings. It can make it difficult to hear when there is talking.

Mrs. Smith: Could the Minister please clarify for this committee how much money is given to a student in a given school division? I know that schools are given their funding according to population. How much per student is allotted?

Mr. Caldwell: There is no per pupil allocation. It depends on the property assessment level in the individual division. It depends on the special needs of the individual student. Each student literally would take with him or her a different amount of money depending on where in the province they came from and depending on the

special needs or lack of of the individual student, transportation needs and so forth.

Mrs. Smith: In all due respect, could the Minister then explain why \$20 has been allotted as what a student will miss. Please clarify this for me.

Mr. Caldwell: That was in the example of the St. James School Division, with approximately 10,000 students and approximately a \$200,000 adjustment based on the choice question that was asked. That is where it came from.

Mrs. Smith: So then could we use St. James School Division as an example just to clarify this whole process? How much money then per student is given to each student to attend, let us say, St. James Collegiate, Madam Chair?

Mr. Caldwell: I take the Member's point. I was making averages based upon the St. James School Division with approximately \$200,000 and 10,000 students. The St. James Division has been allocated \$30 million and change, approximately \$3200 per student in St. James-Assiniboia School Division, and approximately a differential of \$20 per student with regard to the question that the Member was asking, schools of choice and so forth.

Mrs. Smith: Could the Minister then advise this committee what percentage of that money would be lost from that student if he or she transfers to another school division in the city?

Mr. Caldwell: The division would lose most of it. They would lose all the base support. So most of it would be lost if the student left.

Mrs. Smith: Could the Minister reclarify that again?

Mr. Caldwell: All the base support would be lost with that student, most of it would be lost, not all of it, but most of it would be lost if the student left the division. The base support would all be lost. It would go.

Mrs. Smith: So, if the base would be lost, how much money would actually go with that student to a neighbouring school division?

Mr. Caldwell: The money would transfer with the student. So the amount of base support that the student would have in St. James, using St. James as the example, would be lost to St. James, but the money that the new division would gain would be dependent upon the assessment in the new division. So it is not a constant figure. Each division has a different assessment rate, enrolment rate and so forth. So it would depend upon the division to which the student is going.

* (16:30)

Mrs. Smith: So \$20 per student might not be accurate, depending on whether the student is travelling to a richer division or a poorer division. Could the Minister please clarify that?

Mr. Caldwell: Maybe there is a bit of confusion between the supplementary amount and the amount of funding related to Schools of Choice. The \$20 figure was the average of the \$200,000 and change that St. James lost in 2000-2001, divided by the 10 000 students that St. James School Division has. If the student is leaving, and we are using St. James as the example here now pretty extensively, so we might as well stick with it, the student that would be leaving St. James would take with him or her the amount of money that would be dedicated to that student in the St. James School Division. But that total amount may not be the same amount if the student went to St. Vital or Winnipeg 1 or so forth, because there is a different assessment, a different level of support literally for each school division in the province of Manitoba, depending upon their enrolment rates, depending upon their assessment, the property tax rates and so forth.

Mrs. Smith: Could the Minister clarify? I am still confused as to how this really works. I daresay I think perhaps the Minister needs some clarification in this. We are both in the same canoe here, I think. There is also the element of transfer fees as well for these same students. How does the transfer fee affect the money that goes to that student?

Mr. Caldwell: The receiving division charges the sending division a transfer fee. The transfer fee is dependent upon the local levy in the receiving division. It is very complex. It is

almost like property assessment generally. It is kind of an arcane science, almost like reading entrails of a disembowelled goat. I could give some standard transfer fees. This gives an illustration of how transfer fees differentiate between divisions. The transfer fee per pupil in Winnipeg 1 is \$1,632. The transfer fee in St. James-Assiniboia is \$1,291. The transfer fee in Hanover, for example, is \$817, more than half as much as it is in Winnipeg 1. The transfer fees range from \$801 in the Sprague Consolidated to \$1,800 in the Leaf Rapids School Division. So there is quite a wide range of transfer fees. The provincial average is \$1,307, but it really does depend upon what the local property assessments are per division.

I would be very pleased if the Member so desires. I know that I have sat through a number of these briefing sessions myself to try and get a handle on the whole issue of assessment and supplementary funding and so forth. Now, my deputies are laughing at me. I am afraid it has come to that. But I would be pleased to have the Member and any of her colleagues, frankly, that would like to have a session with the senior staff from the Finance branch to have a briefing session because, as the Member points out, it truly is a very complex issue with all sorts of variables independent of the individual divisions with which the issue of transfers occurs.

Mrs. Smith: I thank the Minister for that semi-clarification. We are getting there. Could the Minister please advise this committee what percentage of funding to school divisions is supplementary funding?

Mr. Caldwell: About \$35 million of the \$811 million, just a little over 4 percent is supplemental. Madam Chair, if I could, I see you are getting up, too, would you mind if we took a five-minute break?

Madam Chairperson: Is it the will of the Committee to take a five-minute break?
[Agreed]

The Committee recessed at 4:36

The Committee resumed at 4:51

Madam Chairperson: Will the Committee of Supply please come to order. The floor is open for questions.

Mrs. Smith: Going back to our questioning just for further clarification, it is my understanding that at this point supplementary funding is only available to residents of the school division per resident pupil under age 21 in the province. So, to clarify, Madam Chair, can the Minister clarify that the supplementary funding does not go with the student when they leave the school division?

Mr. Caldwell: That is accurate.

Mrs. Smith: Madam Chair, could the Minister clarify for this committee? As I have stated earlier, the reasons why I have pursued this line of questioning is I am hearing things like schools are having to turn away students from out of division because they cannot afford to receive the students.

Could the Minister comment on this? Is this a reasonable statement that has been made, and, if not, could he please explain why this may be accurate or it may be an overexaggeration, and this is due to the questioning that I have had.

Mr. Caldwell: No, it is not an accurate statement that you have been hearing from the field. Mr. Power just advises me that he has not heard from anyone in the field in this regard, so I can only speculate on why individuals would be contacting you and stating such. Sorry, it is Mr. Power. I am told he is not Power. Although he has tremendous powers, he is Steve Power. Mr. Power has not had any formal complaints from the field or contact from the field in this regard, and the statement that has been relayed to you is inaccurate, I am told.

Mrs. Smith: With all due respect, it is irrelevant whether Mr. Power has had this kind of questioning from the field. I would give a reason for people calling my office is it is because I am the Education critic.

The reason why I have continued to get these calls from time to time with concerns—and this is why this line of questioning has been pursued. I know, with all due respect, Madam Chair, that because Mr. Power is under a

different government right now and they do not want to get politically involved, I think these questions from the people who have phoned are legitimate concerns, and it would be good to be able to put their minds at ease.

I know, Madam Chair, I will put on the record and I have been told that, you know, sometimes people are reluctant—I think Mr. Power can appreciate this too—to call, especially whether it was under the former government or our government, but I have had these questions. What I want to be able to do is to be able to have the answers on the record and to be able to send them a copy of the answer on the record to reassure them.

The concerns that I have had, and I am sure the Minister will appreciate this, I am telling you quite categorically what I have heard and the queries that have come to my office. I understand, too, the complexities of funding, but, Madam Chair, does the Minister feel that this new allocation of supplementary funding will not impact the students or the school divisions in any significant way?

Mr. Caldwell: Well, Madam Chairperson, the divisions gain resources from students moving into their division. The senior civil servants are nodding their heads yes to that. Divisions receiving a student get an average cost of that student coming into the division but usually only have to spend a marginal cost for adding a student or two to a class. So, typically, student divisions gain resources by students coming into their division. There is nodding all around me. I note that everybody here, save for Mr. Levin, has served for many administrations in government, so there is no partisanship expressed there at all.

The comments that are being transmitted to the Member, Madam Chairperson, the senior administration again stress that they are largely inaccurate. I do not know how to respond better than to say that. It is a concern. We are concerned, truly, about funding the public school system appropriately. We did have an explosion of expenditures that were related to the increase in adult learners last year. I know that there have been some impacts upon those divisions that had a large number of adult learners take advantage

of the previous funding formula which provided to adult learners support for things like transportation, library services, clinical services, and so forth, that are more accurately associated with kindergarten to S4 students, as opposed to adult learners. So there was this past year a restructuring of funding to adult learners vis-à-vis funding to child learners in the public school system. So I understand that there has been some concern raised in the field in that regard. I made note of Morris-MacDonald's commentary to the Department about that reality earlier.

But in terms of the Schools of Choice and the abilities of students to move in and out of divisions, receiving divisions typically gain resources for students entering into the receiving division. There is no restriction on a choice that may be, in fact, consequential to the funding of individual students. Again, senior staff is nodding its concurrence with that, so we are all in it together.

Mrs. Smith: Having said this then, could the variable be, in some school divisions, Madam Chair, the number of students that have been in neighbouring school divisions that have for whatever reasons transferred to a new school division, and perhaps this might have caused the concern because that would impact on the classroom?

* (17:00)

Mr. Caldwell: Madam Chair, I am advised there may be some impacts where children wanting to exercise school of choice into a division may be precluded from doing so. Because individual schools are at capacity or divisions are already at capacity, or the addition of one more student or two more students may necessitate the creation of an entire new class, a decision is made not to have that occur. But systemically, there is not any reason for that. It was noted to underscore, it is not a funding issue. If indeed that is occurring, and I believe it is even in my own home division, I know that I have had concerns that way, it has more to do with capacity of existing infrastructure than any single other issue.

Mrs. Smith: Madam Chair, so to clarify, what we are saying is the supplementary funding does not go with the student to a neighbouring

division as the Minister has stated. I do not want to put words in the Minister's mouth, I want to just clarify, but it should not have a significant impact on the student unless the classroom is at full capacity, so that supplementary funding that is not available and if there are several students involved as supplementary funding might have an impact, this is why things went forward.

Mr. Caldwell: Madam Chair, the statement has been made to me by senior staff that no division would refuse to take a student because of the supplementary funding issue. It is fundamentally not related in any substantive way. The decision is primarily based upon capacities of existing infrastructure.

Mrs. Smith: Well, I thank you for that clarification. I guess, Madam Chair, when I am hearing these things this is why I needed to come today and ask these questions. You know, I have had Mr. Power explain things and go through it earlier. I am still having some phone calls, quite honestly, come through with concerned principals having to turn students away because the full funding is not there. But what you are saying is that is not the real reason. The real reason would be the classroom is to capacity and so one or two students would cause a new classroom probably to be created and so that would cause the problem. So, in effect, the fear that I have heard about schools of choice being closed down, would the Minister comment on that?

Mr. Caldwell: Madam Chair, it is safe to say that students and parents are going to continue to be able to exercise choice in what schools they attend. The primary mitigating factor in limiting that is existing capacities within divisions or within schools.

Mrs. Smith: Madam Chair, I thank the Minister for those answers. I have consulted with my assistant, as well, and we have clarified the questions that have come to our office. These were real and legitimate concerns. So, basically, what the Minister has said the funding is 4 percent, I think you stated a little earlier. Yes, supplementary funding, and that does not go with the student and that should not impact in a significant manner, although it might to some extent with a large group of students.

Mr. Caldwell: Supplemental funding, Madam Chairperson, is related to individual divisions' assessment per pupil. It is not related to schools of choice or opportunities for students to move from division to division. The primary factor in terms of schools of choice being limited for parents or children is the available infrastructure within the receiving division. It is not related to supplemental funding at all.

Mrs. Smith: I understand that, Madam Chair, but I think the difference is the funding equalization, and the supplementary funding now reads "per resident pupil under 21 in the province" instead of "per eligible pupil under the age of 21 in the province." Is this accurate?

Mr. Caldwell: Madam Chairperson, it is accurate. It is per resident pupil as opposed to the previously existing protocol.

Mrs. Smith: I think we have clarified that the supplementary funding indeed does not go with the student, but it is of such a nature that it should not have an impact as the Minister has described.

Mr. Caldwell: There has been, as was noted earlier, a small impact on a small number of school divisions. In the best opinion of the Department, however, this has not made any substantive change in a division's willingness to accept students from other divisions. The implications for the acceptance from other divisions is primarily related to capacities and available infrastructure within divisions.

Mrs. Smith: Madam Chair, could we move on to 16.6.(a)? And I thank you, Doctor Farthing and Mr. Power. I thank you very much for your assistance in this as well.

Under Training and Continuing Education, Madam Chair, I recall the Minister saying, "Access programs are currently being reviewed and will be redesigned as required to meet the needs of a new economy." However, I note the Access programs are not listed anywhere on the organizational chart. Could the Minister please clarify what is happening to the program while it is under review?

* (17:10)

Mr. Caldwell: Madam Chairperson, the Access programs are not on the org chart because they are integral to the operations of the institutions which we fund. They are integral to the universities and colleges primarily. So we work with our partners in the universities and colleges to enhance Access programs in partnership.

Mrs. Smith: I thank the Minister for that clarification. Madam Chair, could the Minister clarify: How will the Department determine whether or not its policies and programs will respond to, and I quote the Minister, accessibility and critical issues surrounding inclusion with our First Nations and Aboriginal population in the province?

Mr. Caldwell: Fundamentally, by monitoring the participation and success rates from programs at the post-secondary level.

Mrs. Smith: To clarify, Madam Chair, so the programs that are under review, like the Access programs, are in place and will be continued. Is that the intent of this Minister?

Mr. Caldwell: Yes, it is accurate to say that the programs that are in place will continue. The government is interested in strengthening the existing programs in partnership with the post-secondary institutions. That is what the review is currently assessing, how best we can strengthen access programs across the system.

Mrs. Smith: Thank you so much. I appreciate that clarification. I thank the Minister for that. With the Minister's permission, I would like to, as I stated earlier, I had four things we were going to cover today. I know the Minister has brought staff today.

I have some questions now on the Red River initiative that the Minister could clarify for us as well if we could at this time. Okay. Thank you. The new government created a new and independent office, I understand, to implement the College Expansion Initiative. A press release in January or February announced Dr. Curtis Nordman, formerly the Dean of Continuing Education from the University of Winnipeg, as the new executive director for the initiative. Is this the case?

Mr. Caldwell: It is accurate. The College Expansion Initiative did hire Doctor Nordman. Doctor Nordman was chosen as part of the standard civil service hiring protocol whereby we advertised for the position and—oh, no, we did not. I am sorry. Wrong person. Doctor Nordman was appointed by the Province to head up the College Expansion Initiative and has been in that position now for a number of months.

Mrs. Smith: Could the Minister please clarify why this office was created when the Council on Post-Secondary Education has previously taken care of this kind of initiative?

Mr. Caldwell: Primarily it was to give the College Expansion Initiative a visible champion within the civil service. The provincial government recognized the College Expansion Initiative, as did I believe the previous administration recognize the importance of enhancing colleges system-wide. When the present government came to power in September it was determined that we wanted to have a significantly enhanced profile for the College Expansion that was committed to by the government during the election campaign. We felt it was very important to have a visible champion in the post-secondary system advocating specifically for the College Expansion Initiative. It was essentially to have a champion, a high-profile advocate working closely with the Council on Post-Secondary Education, but working with some independence and some profile in addition to the Council on Post-Secondary Education. So it was more of a consequence of the importance and significance placed on the College Expansion Initiative by the current government that led to the decision to have a director for this post.

Mrs. Smith: Could the Minister just clarify: Does the Council require an executive director position when there is only one or two staff to supervise at this time?

Mr. Caldwell: The rank of the position, Madam Chairperson, does not relate so much to the number of staff that the position has but more to the capacity of the director to relate at a level of equality with college and university presidents as well as CEOs and senior business people in the wider business community.

Mrs. Smith: Could the Minister clarify: Will the Council on Post-Secondary Education continue to exist?

Mr. Caldwell: Madam Chairperson, yes, the Council on Post-Secondary Education will continue to exist. I believe we discussed it, it seems to me, a week or two ago, when previously we were touching upon the Council on Post-Secondary Education, particularly the appointment of Mr. Robertson as the new chair of the Council on Post-Secondary Education, moving from a previously full-time chair to the part-time chair capacity of Mr. Robertson.

We view the Council on Post-Secondary Education as being a very, very valuable organization, co-ordinating and providing the best advice on the development of post-secondary programs in the province of Manitoba, as well as capital projects and general direction of the post-secondary sector, across systems.

The College Expansion Initiative, which is a specific initiative of this government, was determined as being a cornerstone of policy for significant expansion of the college sector. It was felt that an executive director was valuable to have in place for dealing on a position of equal footing with college and university presidents as well as senior members of the business community.

Mrs. Smith: Madam Chair, just to clarify, I understand Dr. Curtis Nordman was formerly the Dean of Continuing Education for the University of Winnipeg.

Mr. Caldwell: That is correct.

Mrs. Smith: Could the Minister clarify if a special position is required for college expansion initiatives? Would it not be more appropriate for it to report to the executive director of COPSE to maintain the integrity of developing the post-secondary system as a system, or could the Minister clarify the rationale for why this was done?

Mr. Caldwell: Doctor Nordman works closely with COPSE. There are regular meetings in fact with Doctor LeTourneau as well Pat Rowantree,

the ADM responsible for the post-secondary side of the Department's operation.

Doctor Nordman reports to Doctor Levin and myself on a regular basis, because of the importance that the Government places on the College Expansion Initiative as a catalyst for growth in Manitoba's college system.

Mrs. Smith: Could the Minister just outline what experience the new executive director does have to oversee the expansion of the college system independent of COPSE? I understand, Madam Chair, that maybe the Minister could clarify this. I understand that Doctor Nordman, maybe the Minister could help me with this, I do not know whether this is correct or not, so maybe the Minister could clarify, but I understand that Mr. Nordman was an unsuccessful candidate for the presidency of ACC. I just wondered if he could clarify. I believe that this kind of position needs to be available for people who can work collaboratively with all colleges and college presidents. So if the Minister could clarify that for this committee, I would appreciate it.

* (17:20)

Mr. Caldwell: Doctor Nordman has extensive experience as an instructor at the community college level in British Columbia, has been involved in labour force development, and also has an extensive background in continuing education, all of which speaks to the close integration that we desire as a government to have occur between the college and university sectors as well as the transition from college and university to work.

I do not know about Doctor Nordman's application for a community college in Manitoba or any other job opportunities that he might be pursuing or might have pursued. But I do know that he has significant experience at the community college level as well as at the university level. We felt it was desirable to have someone in place that had extensive experience with the two sectors, with the two post-secondary sectors, the college sector and the university sector, as well as familiarity with continuing education and workforce issues.

Mrs. Smith: I thank the Minister for that clarification. As a new executive director, I understand was a member of the Minister's transition team.

Mr. Caldwell: There is no transition team anymore. Obviously we have been in power for a number of months. I do not know what took place before I was sworn in as minister. He did work for me as an adviser in my first couple of months as a minister. Doctor Nordman was seconded from the University of Winnipeg to the Department to work in an advisory capacity with me for the first couple of months.

Mrs. Smith: Could the Minister please clarify who the new executive director is accountable to? Who does he report to?

Mr. Caldwell: Doctor Nordman has a direct accountability to the Deputy Minister of Education and Training, Dr. Ben Levin, Oxford and Columbia graduates, I believe, Harvard.

Mrs. Smith: Could the Minister clarify: Has the new executive director ever run for the New Democrats at any point in time, the NDP at any time?

Mr. Caldwell: I have not the foggiest idea. Joining us now is Dr. Leo LeTourneau for the post-secondary side. Maybe Doctor LeTourneau has an idea. Doctor LeTourneau believes so, but I do not know.

Mrs. Smith: Could the Minister please instruct Doctor LeTourneau to bring that information back to this committee, please? It would be good to clarify whether the new director actually has run for the NDP party, when and where.

Mr. Caldwell: I will not give it over to Doctor LeTourneau because he is a civil servant, but I will make an endeavour myself to find out if Doctor Nordman has ever run for the NDP, although I do not know exactly what it has to do with the Estimates process.

Mrs. Smith: Madam Chair, to clarify what it has to do with the Estimates process, I guess what this committee would like to clarify is why the Government is spending almost a quarter of a million dollars annually to duplicate a function

that the Council on Post-Secondary Education has always done in the past and is capable of doing now. For example, in 1999 to 2000, the College Expansion budget was \$4 million and was handled by the existing COPSE staff. In 2000 to 2001 it is \$5.1 million. Does the Minister have any comment on that? That clarifies the reason why I am asking this question.

Mr. Caldwell: Well, the primary reason that we have a director of the College Expansion Initiative as outlined earlier is because this is a major commitment of the provincial government to have the largest single investment in community colleges in a mandate in the history of the province of Manitoba. It is a major undertaking by the Government of Manitoba, a tremendous commitment to growth in the college sector, strategic growth in the college sector. We need and feel very strongly that the importance of this initiative, being central to the educational mandate of the Government at the post-secondary level, requires a considerable focus on a specific action and that action being the doubling of college spaces during the mandate of the Government.

It was determined, very correctly in my view, that we needed an individual of significant stature and familiarity both with the college and post-secondary system to put into reality our commitment to the college expansion. Doctor Nordman is an Oxford graduate and is someone with considerable experience both in the college and university sector. He fit that bill very admirably, and the reason clearly why there is a director for this initiative reflects the importance that the Government places on this particular initiative and the desire to have this initiative succeed with the best possible result.

Mrs. Smith: I thank the Minister for that rationale and for the answer. Madam Chair, the supplemental Estimates show a commitment of \$230,000 or so for the new office of the College Expansion Initiative. I understand this includes salaries, rent, operating expenses. I would like to know what the new director's salary is, and my understanding is there is two staff involved. So if the Minister could clarify the reason \$230,000 was set aside for the College Expansion Initiative, and if this is indeed an accurate

statement or if it is something else, I would appreciate the clarification.

Mr. Caldwell: On page 159 of the Estimates book, the Managerial salary, there are three staff people for the College Expansion Initiative. The managerial staff position, which is Doctor Nordman's, is \$94,000, which, I understand, is some few thousand dollars less than he was making at the University of Winnipeg. Then two support staff coming in: Professional support staff/Technical support staff, \$46,000; Administrative Support at \$30,000; Employee Benefits at \$17,000, for a total of \$188,000 for that entire branch.

I should also add, Madam Chair, since we are spending some time on Doctor Nordman's political background, I will try and find out a little bit more about it. I know that we do have in the Department a number of individuals who have worked on a variety of political campaigns for all three political parties in the Manitoba Legislature: New Democrats, Liberals, and Conservatives. I really do not concern myself with the political stripe of the individual that works for the Department, nor do I think I should. I am more concerned about their level of expertise and professionalism and what they can bring to education in the province of Manitoba. Under that criteria is why we chose Doctor Nordman, and under that criteria is why individuals continue to work for the Department very capably, whatever political stripe they are, to promote educational excellence in the province of Manitoba. I am very proud of the Department of Education and Training and all staff members, regardless of what political stripe they may have.

* (17:30)

Mrs. Smith: I appreciate the Minister's comments. Madam Chair, over the four years of the College Expansion Initiative, this will result in almost a million dollars diverted from programs into what is believed to be duplicated administrative overhead. Could the Minister clarify why the office of the College Expansion Initiative is not located within the existing offices of COPSE? Does locating it in separate space add to the administrative overheads costs?

Mr. Caldwell: Because of the simplest reason; there was no space in the COPSE office when we located the College Expansion Initiative. I mentioned it earlier in my discussion, and maybe we will just have to agree to disagree on it, but I really do not perceive there being any duplication of service whatsoever. The College Expansion Initiative, the director and his office, was formed to undertake the most significant expansion in Manitoba's history of the community college sector.

It is a major undertaking, a very ambitious undertaking, and one which the Government of Manitoba felt required, and rightly so, a very high profile director working in close partnership with the Council on Post-Secondary Education, but separate from it in managing what is a very ambitious undertaking and specifically having a focus on the College Expansion Initiative in the province of Manitoba.

There is tremendous liaison that takes place between COPSE and the executive director of the College Expansion Initiative, but the Government was very adamant and very determined that the College Expansion Initiative will succeed. There is going to be tremendous work that has to be undertaken to make it succeed, and we felt very strongly that an office focused on the College Expansion Initiative in the province of Manitoba was required to succeed in this very ambitious undertaking.

So we may have a disagreement about duplication of services, but this is something that has never happened in the province of Manitoba before in terms of focusing so many resources in such a short time on such an ambitious project. For those reasons, we felt, again correctly I believe, that a director for the College Expansion Initiative was preferable to having the entire bailiwick put under the Council on Post-Secondary Education, which is involved, in addition to the College Expansion, as the Member knows, with every other post-secondary institution in the province of Manitoba, and the very, very tremendous need of those institutions and the tremendous demands that those institutions place on government from year to year.

Mrs. Smith: In all due respect, Madam Chair, as the Minister has stated, the partnership between COPSE and the College Expansion Initiative is of paramount importance. The purpose of COPSE was to bring colleges and university planning and operations together, and by this minister's admission, this partnership is very important.

With all due respect, to have one person at a salary of \$93,000-plus and support staff and new offices, I am not sure that this will fly with the public. Unless we can have some rationale why the COPSE and the College Expansion Initiative is not housed together, even though there is no room, finding a joint office and working together in collaboration.

Could the Minister please expand on this?

Mr. Caldwell: Madam Chairperson, I think it is important to note that all new college programs go through the Council on Post-Secondary Education for approval and review. There is a true partnership—well, not even a partnership. The Council on Post-Secondary Education is the senior body, there is no doubt about it.

The point that I have been trying to make is that this is the single largest expansion initiative of the college system in Manitoba's history, and we were not going to have that initiative undertaken as just another item of business under the Council on Post-Secondary Education.

We were very determined to put an independent face, an independent focus so that there would be no divergence of attention to the task at hand, which as I have said, is the single largest expansion of the college system in the province of Manitoba's history. So we felt very strongly, to ensure the success of the College Expansion Initiative, to ensure that attention would not be diverted from the task of doubling the college spaces, and to ensure that there was a very high profile and capable individual at the head of the College Expansion Initiative, that an office should be structured to bring that initiative to fruition.

There is a steering committee for the College Expansion Initiative comprising of Dr. Ben Levin, Dr. Leo LeTourneau, Dr. Curtis

Nordman and Dr. Pat Rowantree to ensure co-ordination not only with the Council on Post-Secondary Education but also with the training and adult education components of the Department generally. So it is a very complex undertaking, but more importantly, as I have stressed over and over, it is the single largest initiative in Manitoba's history in the post-secondary sector, with a very, very ambitious program that it hopes to achieve in a relatively short time period.

So I think it is important to note that the reasons for having a separate office in this regard are because there is literally tens of millions of dollars, \$68 million projected over four years to be dedicated towards the College Expansion Initiative, very significant dollars, very significant levels of support that require some close working relationship with the College Expansion Initiative in the field without diverting focus to other operations of the college or post-secondary system.

Mrs. Smith: Madam Chair, thank you for your comments, Mr. Minister.

For further clarification, the Minister talked about a very ambitious initiative that is taking place here in the province. Does the Minister intend to take away these locations, college locations, from the business industry and community and locating them at the University of Winnipeg? Is that the intent for the downtown locations?

Mr. Caldwell: Madam Chairperson, there has not been a decision (a) on whether there is going to be a new building at all yet, or (b) at what location the new building will be placed in. The decision has yet to be made upon whether or not we are going to build or where we are going to build, if indeed the Government does build. I know that there has been a lot of media speculation around this issue more recently vis-à-vis the University of Winnipeg, Red River Community College, education hub on Spence Street or the Princess Street development across from the Public Safety Building in the Exchange District, but that is media speculation. The assessment on the best spending of the educational dollar in the province of Manitoba

vis-à-vis a new construction project is yet to be made.

Mrs. Smith: Madam Chair, could this minister clarify: Is this government looking at an alternate location for the college expansion?

* (17:40)

Mr. Caldwell: The Government is committed to doing due diligence on each and every project, whether it is in education or any place else in the Government, under the purview of government operations. We are assessing all options, have had a number of assessments with regard to the best educational rationale for any expansion in terms of buildings, but we are committed to having due diligence before expending precious educational dollars. We are very determined that decisions be made with full understanding of the implications for our expenditures and our decisions.

More students, of course, in the college system means more spaces are required, but we want to spend dollars primarily on programs and not on buildings. Of course, one of the major challenges of the College Expansion Initiative will be to expand programming while minimizing expenditures on infrastructure. There are a number of ways that this may be undertaken. The innovative use of technology, the development of partnerships with other delivery agents, training in the workplace, the use of underutilized public facilities can all assist in making the training dollars of the College Expansion Initiative go farther.

New capacity will be entertained and is being entertained with regard to Princess promenade, the Princess street structure, as well as the Spence Street opportunity. But only as a last resort will education dollars be spent on new buildings and only after a thorough examination of all available options. So we are still undertaking a process of due diligence in this regard, and it is going to be placed into the context of the College Expansion Initiative as a whole, how we best can get educational dollars into programs, into brains and not bricks.

Mrs. Smith: Madam Chair, I thank the Minister for the comments.

Could the Minister clarify will the developers who expended substantial amounts of money in good faith on developing proposals, is there any chance, in the event that there is a change of plans, or the original plan, about location, are there any plans to compensate these developers at all for the money that they have put into this?

Mr. Caldwell: Madam Chairperson, requests for proposals are requests for proposals, and I do not want to speculate on what might happen in the future. There has not been a decision made one way or the other on the Princess Street proposal which was the RFP that was issued. In any request for proposals, decisions are made based upon what proposals come forth. That decision has not been made yet. Upon a decision being made, I will be in a better position to answer that particular question, but at this stage, we would be purely and simply dealing with hypotheticals.

Mrs. Smith: Madam Chair, could the Minister clarify this new plan? Is it a precursor to the merger of the college and the university? Is there any aspect of that possibility in the forefront?

Mr. Caldwell: Madam Chair, I assume the Member is talking about the Spence Street education hub. There is no plan. There has not been a plan, and there is no plan articulated for the merger of Red River Community College and the University of Winnipeg. There is a very real desire in government and, frankly, within the university and college sector to have more articulation of programs.

I know that the Creative Communication program, for example, at Red River College, which provides a two-year diploma, can be translated into a four-year degree in terms of articulating the Red River program to the University of Winnipeg. There are a number of programs at the University of Winnipeg and Red River College that do have joint programs already. It is something that this government encourages, more articulation between the college sector and the university sector. In fact, I would stretch that even further to suggest there are some opportunities for articulation between the workforce and the college and/or university sector.

So we do have a commitment to break down artificial barriers to education between institutions, and between institutions and the workplace, and even between the public school sector and the post-secondary sector. That is a philosophical stand of this government, that we wish to maximize the use of our educational resources. But there is no plan ever been discussed in the Department to have the university and Red River College amalgamate or merge. It has never been discussed, nor is it planned.

Mrs. Smith: Madam Chair, it would appear that the Minister would agree that taking these colleges away from a business location would not be in the best interests of the education of the students. Talking about the merger and the partnership with business.

Madam Chair, it appears from press reports that cabinet is planning to entertain a proposal to build a \$25-million facility for the college at the University of Winnipeg. Could the Minister please clarify whether or not this report is something that is of speculation or a real possibility?

Mr. Caldwell: Madam Chair, at this point it is complete speculation. There has not been a decision made by government on whether to proceed at all, let alone whether to proceed with the educational hub at Spence Street or the Princess promenade or, frankly, whatever options cabinet may choose to discuss during cabinet's deliberation.

The current Red River College campus out on Notre Dame is not exactly in a business location, as I am sure the Member will acknowledge, out by the airport. Certainly, both locations downtown: the Spence Street hub and the Princess Street option would be far closer and far more accessible to the business community than the Notre Dame campus. Having said that, it should be noted that Red River College has a fantastic relationship with the business community now, and no doubt that will continue in the future.

I also think it is important to mention, again, in terms of breaking down barriers between institutions and having programs that are able to

have articulation between universities and community colleges, that a joint program has been developed in child care and child development between the University of Winnipeg and Red River College. As well, the Red River College business administration program has got a cross-articulation with the bachelor of arts degree program in administrative studies at the University of Winnipeg. The Red River College geographic information systems and civil technology cluster of programs are articulated with the University of Winnipeg's geography program. Joint baccalaureate programs also exist in chemistry, biology and environmental science between Red River and the U of W. As well, there is the joint creative communications program, which I just previously discussed, the bachelor of communications program at the University of Winnipeg, with a cross-articulation with the two-year creative communications diploma at Red River.

In 1998, Red River College and the U of W began the joint delivery of the business and industrial arts teacher education program. Out at the University of Manitoba, graduates from the College's early childhood education program receive five credits in the child care concentration family studies degree program at the University of Manitoba. There is also the joint baccalaureate nursing program in partnership with the U of M. Now students take their first three years at Red River College and then transfer to the U of M for their fourth year. An articulation agreement has also been reached in the mechanical engineering and technology program at Red River College and the industrial engineering program at the University of Manitoba. There is also an informal arrangement between the electrical and civil engineering technology program cluster, giving one year of credit towards an engineering degree at the University of Manitoba.

At Brandon University, there is a two-plus-two arrangement with Brandon University and Red River College in the business administration and early childhood education programs. As well, graduates of electrical and electronic technology can receive two years' credit towards a degree in applied physics at Brandon University, and then there are a number of

programs at Athabasca University with Red River.

* (17:50)

So there are a lot of transfer arrangements between Red River College and the universities in the province of Manitoba, as well as universities outside the province of Manitoba. This government is determined to continue to build upon that ability to have cross-articulations, and indeed to try and break down barriers wherever we can between institutions and between post-secondary sectors. I think that is something that the previous government, obviously, with these programs, was also committed to during their tenure in government.

Mrs. Smith: Thank you very much, Minister, for that clarification. Could the Minister advise this committee: What is the call date, or when is the Minister making his decision regarding Red River?

Mr. Caldwell: It will be a cabinet decision, and it will happen in due course. We are committed, as I mentioned earlier, to significant due diligence on this particular issue. It is a major expenditure of Government, and we want to ensure that due diligence is carried out in this regard, to the greatest degree possible, bearing in mind that educational factors will be the primary consideration in making the decision on whether to build and, if to build, where to build.

Mrs. Smith: I have one more question on this topic, and then my colleague the Member for Portage (Mr. Faurshou) has a couple of questions he would like to ask as well. Number one, Madam Chair, could the Minister please outline the consultation that he has gone through with all the colleges regarding this initiative? What specific part of the colleges and what colleges have you met with in determining the ultimate decision about Red River?

Mr. Caldwell: Madam Chairperson, I have met with all the colleges' presidents a number of times on the College Expansion Initiative. I know that Doctor LeTourneau and Doctor Nordman have met extensively with the colleges on the College Expansion Initiative and specifically with Red River College about the

build option that will be before Cabinet in the future.

The University of Winnipeg has also been consulted with regard to the Spence Street option to get their advice on potentials that may or may not exist on the Spence Street educational hub option, but we are in constant dialogue with the college presidents and with the university presidents on a wide variety of issues, not the least of which is the College Expansion Initiative but also including issues revolving around affordability and accessibility, the bursary program, the tuition rebate, the capital needs of the universities, the operating needs of the universities, general philosophical discussions around targeting sectors for investment at the college and university level, so we have a very open dialogue with the college presidents and the university presidents in regard to all issues around post-secondary education in the province of Manitoba.

My last meeting with the President of the University of Winnipeg and the President of Red River College, Dr. Connie Rooke, and President Tkachuk took place about two weeks ago, just before the two individuals went on some vacation time for the summer months. We had a very good discussion about what opportunities may exist at both sites.

Mrs. Smith: Madam Chair, I believe my colleague has a couple of questions he would like to put forward at this time.

Mr. David Faurshou (Portage la Prairie): Okay, quick short snappers. I think we have only four minutes left here. In regard to your strategic planning in the college expansion, has there been direction given that a greater co-operation exists between Assiniboine College and Red River College?

Mr. Caldwell: Both Assiniboine College and Red River College is what you referred to? There is an ongoing discussion as to which is the appropriate sphere of activity for the colleges to be involved with, conversations around distance ed issues, conversations around the nursing program, particularly at Assiniboine Community College and delivery of some of the critical

issues around the nursing program in rural Manitoba, but it is an ongoing dialogue.

It is something that predates this government frankly. They have been discussing their specific interests and spheres of activity for a number of years now, and there has been fruit borne, particularly with cross-articulation between colleges and universities. We think that there is still a long way to go. It is likely a process that will never end, frankly. I think that all three parties in the Legislature can agree that efforts to break down artificial barriers to Manitobans' educational opportunities are very worthwhile to break down those barriers, and those sorts of discussions continue at perhaps a bit of an enhanced pace but nonetheless bearing upon the basis that was established in the past to break down those barriers.

Mr. Faurshou: I want the Minister to really come to grips with this particular situation because there is so much of the resources. I am pleased with his coined phrase "brains not bricks," that a lot of energy is expended in turf protection. The Council on Post-Secondary Education is the vehicle that I hope you continue to support and to bring to bear the crossover of credits and programming so continuing education does truly exist in this province.

My last question that I have time for here is to appreciate, though, that almost half the population is not in residency district, their principal residency distance to the principal post-secondary education institutions. I do want to bring the Minister's attention to the concept of bringing the three universities together under Campus Manitoba distance education programming and has anticipated to bring a thousand students on-stream that probably would not have been pursuing their university programming, which is an expansion of monumental magnitude.

I want to stress with the Minister the importance of Distance Education and to making that available to the persons without the cost of second residency.

Mr. Caldwell: I appreciate the Member's remarks, and I do take them to heart. I agree. I note that the Member for Assiniboia (Mr.

Rondeau) was applauding as the Member was making his comments. It is something that we share. It is a view that we share, and I thank him for those comments.

Madam Chairperson: The hour being 6 p.m., committee rise.

HEALTH

* (14:30)

Mr. Chairperson (Conrad Santos): 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.

We are on page 87 of the Estimates book. Resolution 21.1. Administration and Finance (b) Executive Support (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$558,100. Shall this item pass?

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Health): While we wait for the particular departmental staff to assemble, perhaps, I would take this opportunity to provide some information that was requested previously by the Member for Charleswood (Mrs. Driedger). First, I would like to table a copy of the organizational chart that was requested by the Member that deals with the various capacities staffing occupying the various positions as outlined in the chart in the Estimates book. So I will table three copies of that.

The Member also requested information regarding the employment history of Mr. Rick Dedi. Mr. Dedi's previous employment history includes positions as executive director of Manitoba Prior Learning Assessment Centre; director, College Secretariat, Manitoba Education and Training; project manager, College Governance Initiative, Manitoba Education and Training, where he played a significant role in the creation of board-governed colleges in Manitoba; secretary, ministerial advisory committee, Community College Governance. In the Department of Education and Training, Mr. Dedi was responsible for the development and implementation of The Colleges Act and The Council on Post-Secondary Education Act.

Mr. Dedi came to the Department of Education and Training from Red River College in 1990. He arrived in Manitoba in 1985 from the Northwest Territories, where he served as regional development officer in the central Arctic. Mr. Dedi is an experienced public sector manager with extensive experience in (1) labour market programs, workplace education of post-secondary education and training, and (2) the management of accountability relations with external service delivery agencies. Mr. Dedi is not directly involved in labour negotiations but is familiar with the requirement of management and mandate development in a collective bargaining environment, has extensive experience in workforce planning and policy development. Mr. Dedi holds a community college diploma in electrical technology, an undergraduate degree in social anthropology and a master's degree in public administration. He is a career public sector manager.

The Member also asked about the employment history of Mr. Dwight Barna. Mr. Barna has an extensive public service, 31 years federal, 10 months provincial. His employment history includes extensive training and experience in a multitude of disciplines, including operational and administrative. Mr. Barna was employed by the RCMP as a regular member for 31 years, the last 12 years at the commissioned officer rank. Upon retirement, Mr. Barna was at the rank of superintendent. While employed by the RCMP, Mr. Barna spent the last 20 years in the administrative discipline. During the last 12 years, Mr. Barna acted as officer in charge of financial services and supply, corporate management, a responsibility that is similar to the current ADM position he is filling. Duties include finance budgeting, planning, auditing, comptrollership, property management, capital planning, material management and administration.

Upon his leaving the RCMP, Mr. Barna was managing a staff of approximately 50 employees, many at the professional, accounting, administrative and property management level. He has managed personnel for the past 20 years and has extensive management training at recognizing institutions. Mr. Barna has been extensively involved in change management, having made significant changes

within his areas of responsibility. Also, he has chaired and co-chaired committees involved in reorganizational initiatives of provincial structures and regional structures within the RCMP. These responsibilities have provided extensive exposure to developing relationships at senior levels with government and private organizations. Mr. Barna has lived and worked in seven provinces and has been a resident of Manitoba for the past eight years. He holds several administrative and finance diplomas and also has a Bachelor of Commerce, Honours degree.

Mr. Chairperson, the Member also asked with respect to panelled patients in hospitals in Winnipeg. As of the week of June 21 to 27, 2000, there were 38 persons in Winnipeg who were panelled and in hospital while waiting for a personal care home bed.

The Member asked for the revised organization chart that reflects the names of individuals and that has been provided. The Member asked for the names of political staff in the Minister's office. The following individuals form that group of individuals: Marla DiCandia, Special Assistant; Evelyn Livingston, Executive Assistant; Kim Morrison, Policy Analyst; and Terry Goertzen, Special Advisor.

The Member asked about cardiac patients leaving the province for transplant procedures. The number of patients who left the province for transplant procedures in '95-96 was four; '96-97 was six; '97-98 was four; '98-99 was five; '99-2000 was two.

On July 5, the Member asked the number of hearts donated from the province of Manitoba. In 1999, two hearts were harvested from donors in Manitoba and were eligible for transplant. These two organs were exported out of province, as a match in Manitoba was not available for the organs and Manitoba does not currently perform heart transplants. In 1995, five hearts were donated that were deemed eligible for a valve use.

Registered potential organs are not available in the province of Manitoba at this time. British Columbia, Nova Scotia and Yukon Territory are the only places in Canada with a central donor

registry. As per direction received from the Minister of Health, a committee of professional stakeholders has recently been formed in the province of Manitoba to present recommendations to improve organ donation in Manitoba.

The Member also raised the case of an individual regarding the care rendered to her mother, now deceased, while a patient at Victoria General Hospital. Two things, I think, Mr. Chairperson: I will just outline the highlights from the Department for the Member. If the Member wishes further elaboration on this considering personal health information and the related, I want to be very careful in terms of the release of this information.

I have been advised that an investigation was conducted by the Victoria General Hospital and the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority regarding the care of that particular individual at the Victoria General Hospital and St. Boniface General Hospital. I understand that staff in the Department of Health have also been involved in this investigation. I have been advised that the policies and procedures regarding reporting echocardiogram test results performed at SBGH have been changed as a result of this investigation. Policies and procedures of the VGH regarding the transferring of medical care from one physician to another has also been changed as a result of this investigation. The WRHA advises that they are confident that these changes could prevent similar occurrences in the future.

* (14:40)

Keeping in mind the difficulties and, of course, the functions under The Personal Health Information Act, I am quite prepared to discuss this with the Member, where I can, in length with respect to this particular matter.

There are several other outstanding requests from the Member, which we will also endeavour to provide. Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): I would like to thank the Minister for that information. I am particularly pleased that he has looked into

this one particular case. I probably will give him a call a bit later just to follow up on that.

I am also very pleased to see that there was a committee struck to look at the issue of organ donors in Manitoba, certainly a proactive approach, and that is a very, very positive one. I think it is a very good initiative to undertake in Manitoba. So I think that is a good initiative, and I am glad to see it happening.

I would like to start today's questioning by looking at waiting lists. I just have some brief questions, really, in terms of what those waiting lists are for the various tests, surgeries and procedures. I guess I will start with MRIs. I wonder if the Minister could tell us how many people are on the waiting list for MRIs.

Mr. Chomiak: If the Member is asking the number of people on the waiting lists, I do not have that data in front of me at this point.

Mrs. Driedger: I wonder if the Minister would be prepared to provide that information, either later on in Estimates or in a section where it might be more appropriate for me to ask it, or if he would be willing to table that particular bit of information.

Mr. Chomiak: I am prepared to provide the information. Generally, my experience in the past with Health has been the lists have been provided in terms of weeks of waiting lists or those kinds of circumstances. In terms of the number of people on waiting lists, I generally do not think that that information has been made available. I do not even know if it is readily obtainable because of the regional and the various matters. But what I can provide the Member, I can provide the Member with lists on all of the areas, sort of the standard list that we provide in all of the areas. I am prepared to do that.

Mrs. Driedger: Would the Minister have before him information on the weeks or, you know, the length of time people are waiting for an MRI?

Mr. Chomiak: Yes, Mr. Chairperson, I do have that. I can indicate that, in May of 1999, the waiting list for MRI adults was 19 weeks, and in

May of this year the length for an adult is 8 weeks.

Mrs. Driedger: Could the Minister provide that same information for ultrasound?

Mr. Chomiak: The ultrasound adult waiting lists were eight weeks in May, and they are now sixteen weeks, despite the fact that we are actually providing more tests than last year. This year's budget, under which we are dealing today, has included an additional funding for a considerable number of tests this year.

Mrs. Driedger: I wonder if the Minister could just confirm for me: Was he meaning that in May of '99 it was eight weeks and in May of this year it was sixteen weeks? I wonder if he could give any indication of why it might have increased.

Mr. Chomiak: That is, in fact, part of a special project and process that we are undertaking right now at the Department of Health. We are actually performing 13 000 more ultrasound tests this year—I should say, there were 13 000 more ultrasound tests done at the end of this year, that is '99-2000, than were done in '97-98. So the number of tests has gone up almost 20 percent; yet, it is one of these issues of the elasticity of the test and the waiting lists. So despite performing 13 000 more tests, the waiting list has gone up.

Now, I should say that with respect to those tests, that does not mean urgent or emergent cases do not get the immediate or as-soon-as-possible tests. That is still done, but there are waiting lists for non-urgent or non-emergent which is significant for people. The problem in that area appears to be a number of areas. As I say, we have allocated funding in this budget to, despite the increase of tests, increase even more tests.

There is also a program that we will be bringing forward with respect to ultrasounds to try to come to grips with the ultrasound issue. It has been a problem that despite best efforts—it is interesting, because the waiting list, despite doing more tests—and that often is the case in health care—the actual waiting list has gotten larger, and one of the issues is with respect to

sonographers and the recruitment and retention of, and, as we speak, there actually is a plan that we are reviewing now.

So in addition to the fact that this year's budget is going to see an increase of thousands of tests more for ultrasound, the crucial issue appears to be revolving around retention and recruitment of staff, about which we will be bringing forward a plan shortly to try to come to grips. Internally, I have asked that we try to come to grips with this certainly by year-end with respect to programs and mechanisms in place, because it is one of these areas where despite the increase in the number of tests and despite the increase of funding, the waiting list is more of a problem.

Now, that also involves clinical application and the clinical utilization of ultrasounds which is an interesting area and which is an area that we have to continue to work on. But I can indicate that there will be a specific plan coming forward in that area.

Mrs. Driedger: I wonder if the Minister could indicate how many sonographers we might be short and if that is something new.

Mr. Chomiak: I will endeavour to provide the Member with the information concerning that either later today or in the next day or two. I have it in my head, but I want to confirm it with respect to my notes.

Mrs. Driedger: I wonder if the Minister could tell me how many ultrasound machines we have in the province and whether he has any intention of increasing those numbers.

Mr. Chomiak: We will endeavour to see if we can canvass that particular issue.

* (14:50)

Mrs. Driedger: I neglected to ask back on MRIs, and I would like to just ask for that item as well, how many MRI machines we have in Manitoba. The last I heard, there were three and it was our intent in government to buy one for Brandon. I am wondering if he could just comment on that.

Mr. Chomiak: I will just confirm the number, but I did not see any allocation within last year's Estimates from the previous government that there was any intention to buy another MRI for Brandon.

Mrs. Driedger: I am wondering if the Minister could tell me the length of time people are waiting for CT scans.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, currently, the average wait for an elective CT scan at the tertiary care hospitals is eight weeks. The wait for a CT scan currently at a community hospital in Winnipeg is seven weeks.

Mrs. Driedger: I wonder if the Minister could tell me how many CT scanning machines we have in the province.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, I will endeavour to provide that information for the Member.

Mrs. Driedger: I wonder if the Minister could tell me how long the waiting list is, in terms of weeks, for bone density scans.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, the average wait for bone density in Winnipeg is 21 weeks. The bone densitometer at SBG is in need of replacement. We are providing funding at SBGH for 4000 SBGH and 4000 at Brandon. We are going to have further testing expansion in Winnipeg this year for an additional 4000 tests, all subject to change. I believe, subject to confirmation, if memory serves me correctly, we are replacing that bone density scanner at St. Boniface Hospital, and I believe, just subject to confirmation, that we are replacing that and putting it into the clinic, I believe, but I will just confirm that for the Member.

Mrs. Driedger: I wonder if the Minister could indicate what the waiting list had been May of last year. I notice that he had the information for the other tests, and I wonder if he could indicate with the bone density scans what that wait might have been a year ago.

Mr. Chomiak: I do not have it for May of last year, Mr. Chairperson.

Mrs. Driedger: I wonder if the Minister could indicate how long people are waiting for knee replacement surgery.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, it varies depending upon the surgeon and the severity of the patient, the patient's condition. The number of knee surgeries performed has increased 350 percent from 1998-99 to '99-2000. We are in the process of developing a central waiting list for patients waiting for orthopedic surgery. Presently each of the 20 orthopedic surgeons maintains a list of patients and prioritizes his or her patients according to a clinical assessment. As of this May, there were approximately, and this is one instance where there are numbers, I guess because of the allocations— there are about 1300 people on lists for orthopedic surgery.

Mrs. Driedger: I wonder if that 1300 breaks down into specifics like knee or hip or if that is the overall number of people waiting for orthopedic surgery.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, the note seems to indicate to me, and I believe it is correct, that it is orthopedic in general because of the nature of the lists, but with orthopedic surgery, we are trying to move into a centralized list.

Mrs. Driedger: Mr. Chairman, I think the idea of centralizing the list for orthopedic surgery is a good idea. I think it will certainly benefit patients. I know that when we were in government we had kept the information separate in terms of the number of people requiring knee surgery and number of people requiring hip surgery. I am wondering if the Minister would be prepared to provide me at a later date with a breakdown of those two numbers.

Mr. Chomiak: If it is readily available, I will attempt to provide it to the Member.

Mrs. Driedger: I wonder if the Minister could indicate how many patients are waiting for coronary artery surgeries or cabbages as we used to call them.

Mr. Chomiak: I can indicate to the Member that in the seven years in which I was opposition critic, this kind of information was never

provided to me. Never provided to me. *[interjection]* No. It was simply not provided to me by way of policy. The wait list information was simply embargoed and not provided to me, so this is a first in this Chamber as we provide this information. I hope the Member appreciates that.

We do not have that information with us at this point. If it is available, we will endeavour to acquire it.

Mrs. Driedger: I thank the Minister for providing the information to me as these lists, the media seem to have an opportunity of finding out the information, so I certainly appreciate the Minister providing that information to me. I find it very helpful in establishing, I guess, a view towards what is happening in the health care system.

I am wondering if the Minister has any figures in terms of the number of patients waiting for cataract surgeries, what the length of that might be. I know that in government we actually did have numbers of patients, and I think the Member in opposition certainly used those numbers.

Mr. Chomiak: I know the Government had figures previously, but I do not think I had those figures provided to me. I would ask regularly, and the response I would get back from the Minister is a whole bunch of figures and numbers that were not related to the lists. It was not provided to me.

The waiting time for cataract surgery is three months to two years depending on the cataract surgeon. As of May this year, there were approximately 5000 people waiting for some kind of cataract surgery at the Misericordia Health Centre or the other facility.

Mrs. Driedger: The last numbers I recall hearing, and I could be wrong because my memory might not be serving me properly, but I thought that when we were in the government the waiting lists had been 1000 people. I am wondering if we have seen a dramatic increase like this only within the last year.

* (15:00)

Mr. Chomiak: No, that is categorically wrong. That is out of the range. What I should try to do is try to pull the last year's ministerial briefing book and make a comparison between the number of people that were on the list last year at this time and this year. Now the Member might be comparing something with something else, and that is the problem. These numbers were never provided. The Member might have had access to them as a member of caucus, but we were not provided with them in Opposition.

I will try to see what the situation was with respect to that. In fact, the number of cataract surgeries that are being performed from the data I have in front of me is going up. It is going up on a regular basis, so we will see what the reference was to the thousand. But that is not comparing apples to apples. I can assure the Member of that.

Mrs. Driedger: As I said, I am not sure where I got my number from for a thousand. so I certainly would appreciate if the Minister has an ability to clarify that. I do not want to use misinformation, and I would appreciate clarification on that.

I appreciate, with our elderly population in Manitoba, I expect that we are going to see increasing numbers of people needing cataract surgery. I am wondering if the Minister has given any consideration to, I guess, how to deal with that. I imagine those numbers are only going to continue to go up. Does he have a strategy in mind in terms of addressing the way to get that number down?

Mr. Chomiak: Yes, Mr. Chairperson, I do.

Mrs. Driedger: I am wondering if the Minister would be prepared to share that with me.

Mr. Chomiak: Yes, Mr. Chairperson, we are reviewing some strategies in this regard right now at the Department of Health with respect to this type of surgery, as well as other areas, and there will be announcements in due course in this regard.

Mrs. Driedger: I would like to ask the Minister about dialysis treatments. I know the number of treatments in the last number of years has been

going up dramatically. I know that, in some instances, we are looking at a diabetic epidemic. We certainly see a challenge to the dialysis program. I am wondering if the Minister could indicate how many dialysis treatments are projected for this year.

Mr. Chomiak: We could probably do the balance of the Estimates on dialysis and this treatment alone. This area has been phenomenal in growth for the past three to four years and is projected to increase dramatically. The current level of people on dialysis, from the note in front of me, is 605 for this year.

Hemodialysis services are provided at 12 sites: Health Sciences Centre, St. B., Brandon Regional Health Centre, Dauphin, Flin Flon, Morden, Pine Falls, Portage, The Pas, Thompson, Ashern, and I believe we are operating in Selkirk now. There are also plans for dialysis, of course, in Norway House. Some other expansions will be announced shortly, as well, in some other areas.

Mrs. Driedger: The whole issue of diabetes certainly is a challenge, and I will come back to asking some questions about that program later on in Estimates.

I am wondering if the Minister could tell me the length of the waiting lists for breast cancer radiotherapy and prostate cancer radiotherapy.

Mr. Chomiak: In front of me right now I know that, in June, the radiation therapy, wait list for all disease sites was five weeks.

Now, I know from various discussions, because of the nature of this, that we are in a unique situation, insofar as we are waiting for ratification of some votes in this area. So I have tended to try to stay out of this area in terms of discussion in any great extent while the ratification of those other matters are dealt with, because of the labour implications in that regard.

Mrs. Driedger: I am wondering, though, if the Minister would have the numbers for the waiting lists for breast cancer and prostate cancer radiotherapy, unless he feels that might compromise the situation.

Mr. Chomiak: The figures I am looking at, radiation therapy for all sites is five weeks. Breast is 12 and prostate 12.

Mrs. Driedger: I wonder, and I do not know if the Minister has information like this, in terms of the number of patients waiting to see specialists, and I do not know if that is being tracked. The Minister is indicating not. I had heard that one particular neurosurgeon had a wait list of 800. I think it would be interesting if that kind of information was tracked, again because I am sure there are other neurosurgeons that might have much less of a number. I would wonder, too, about neurologists' and cardiologists' waiting lists to see any number of these specialists. I am wondering if there is any consideration by the Minister for starting to keep track of waiting lists in these areas.

Mr. Chomiak: As I understand it, there is a process with respect to cardiologists. I should advise the Member that we have, as the Member knows, made a significant announcement, frankly, probably one of the bigger announcements we will ever make with respect to a cardiac program dealing with the number of areas. The Member probably would have heard about a recent radio report with respect to an initiative or some initiatives with respect to neurologists in Manitoba, and I can indicate there will be some further developments in that area.

Mrs. Driedger: I wonder if the Minister could tell me how long the waiting list is for the sleep apnea clinic.

Mr. Chomiak: I do not have the specific on the waiting list length. It is fairly considerable. There are two sleep laboratories in Winnipeg, one at Health Sciences Centre and one at St. B; '99-2000, 182 Manitobans, there were a considerable number of Manitobans, have to receive specialized treatment. The number of sleep studies are now being increased as of May of this year to 12 per week from eight per week, but I do not have the actual length of time in front of me. I am advised that it is prioritized.

* (15:10)

Mrs. Driedger: I know that at one point it had been two years. I do not know whether that has gone up or down. Certainly, as a challenge in trying to address this, having been a nurse in an area that cared for patients that had sleep apnea, it certainly is a challenge to the patient and their families and creates quite considerable stress, especially because people can end up with hypertension and end up with stroke in situations of prolonged sleep apnea. So it certainly does lead to some considerable medical problems.

I am wondering if the Minister could indicate to me if any patients, in order to address any of these waiting lists, are being sent to Grafton for any tests.

Mr. Chomiak: I am just subject to advice from the Department. I do not believe we send people to Grafton for tests from the Department of Health. What we did do is we did invoke a policy, as the Member might be aware, that when we came into office, with respect to the waiting lists for radiation therapy treatment, we determined that the levels were so high for radiation treatment that we made a decision to transfer patients to the United States to receive their radiation therapy.

Now, that decision obviously helped to deal with what is a serious problem in terms of providing radiation therapy. We felt that we had no choice but to make that decision in the interest of patient care. So as a consequence, patients who were offered the option—it is not an easy option because you have to leave your home and your loved ones to travel for a difficult treatment—faced with the prospect of waiting longer in Manitoba, the feeling behind it, and I know that this proposal came up in the spring of last year when members opposite were government, faced with the prospect of all general waiting lists increasing as a consequence of these very serious prostate and breast patients requiring treatment, we determined if we could take the pressure off the system, it would enable us to provide for additional treatments. So that is the scenario. I am advised that since the inception of the program 55 patients have been approved for out-of-country referral with respect to that program.

Mrs. Driedger: Personally I support patients going south. I think to me that makes sense when we have waiting lists like we do and somebody is sitting worried about having breast or prostate cancer. I have no issue with that whatsoever.

I am looking at a newspaper article from the *Winnipeg Free Press*, Saturday, June 24, of this year indicating, one of the sentences says: The province budgeted \$1.1 million last year and \$1 million this year to pay for the care.

I am wondering if, because it also indicates here, at a cost of \$20,000 U.S. for each treatment, and if we have got close to 68 Manitobans receiving treatment, I would assume that that money could be out. I am wondering if that might be the case and if there is any contingency in the Budget in terms of addressing this further.

Mr. Chomiak: There was \$1.1 million budgeted last year. Halfway through the year when we came in we put in what we called a critical shortages fund. This year's budget I think there is a million dollars in the Budget with respect to the critical shortages fund. That program was directed to the cancer treatment program. I think that is what the Member is referring to. The billings are not all in and the billings, because of the nature of billings, it is not clear. We do have flexibility in there. We wanted to maintain flexibility in there.

It gets back to a very delicate balance right now with respect to providing that kind of treatment and the various machinations that we are experiencing with respect to the finalization of the collective bargaining process. Obviously a policy decision was made to budget money to allow people to go receive a special and different type of service than had been present in the past. Obviously on a policy basis we will do everything we can to make sure that people continue to get that treatment no matter what we have to do, because that is basically the bottom line.

I do appreciate the Member's comments with respect to support for that program. It is appreciated.

So with respect to the numbers, we do have some funds still available. There are still billings, arrangements that are being made. The Member has to appreciate there was a last year expenditure and a this year expenditure as well. We have some flexibility still.

Mrs. Driedger: I am wondering what the Minister will do when the budgeted amount is reached. Is he going to look for and find more money so that patients who need to have the treatment can still go down and have it? How does he intend to manage that?

Mr. Chomiak: We will basically do whatever we believe is necessary in the interests of health. Obviously the preferred route is to be able to provide the service here. We are hopeful that we will be able to be in a situation where the service can be provided appropriately here. Until that eventuality occurs we are prepared to be flexible and to do what is necessary to try to provide the appropriate care for those patients in particular.

Mrs. Driedger: I wonder if the Minister could tell me if we are still short 10 radiation therapists and 7 physicists?

Mr. Chomiak: I will provide the Member with that information.

Mrs. Driedger: I would like to thank the Minister for that offer. My next series of questions I probably cannot get into because of the ratification, but I did have a whole page full. I guess I will have to save them. So I will defer my questions on radiation therapy, just to add though that certainly we had the money in the plan in order to address that. We were short of therapists, which really did create a problem. I understand that it is a national shortage of something like 200 across Canada. I look forward to hearing what happens with the ratification. I look forward to seeing some positive things come out of it. I am a little bit skeptical from the rumours we hear out there. However, I guess all we can do really right now is wait and see.

I am wondering if the Minister could just tell me where we are at in terms of looking at a prostate cancer screening program and a comprehensive prostate cancer centre.

* (15:20)

Mr. Chomiak: Yes, we have budgeted for a prostate cancer centre. We are working on the details of the program.

Mrs. Driedger: Does that also include a prostate cancer screening program?

Mr. Chomiak: Yes. I will confirm the details of that. I will provide the Member with subsequent information. It may not be before the Estimates conclude, but I will provide the Member with all of that information.

Mrs. Driedger: I would like to ask the Minister, we had received some information that an RFP has gone out to provide backup and replacement home care services in the Winnipeg region.

It was issued by the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority. It had been issued on May 29. I know that the Minister does have some sensitivity to private home care services. The RFP was related to looking for backup and replacement of home care services in the event of worker illness or other absence and to assist with facilitating client discharge from hospital. The current agreement was held by Central Health Services. The WHA was looking to contract with perhaps up to two proponents to deliver the services in the Winnipeg region. I am wondering if this is supported by the Minister.

Mr. Chomiak: I remember this issue very well because it arose out of a process that commenced in 1995 whereby backup services with respect to home care was awarded to Central Health Care Services. As I understand it, it is renewed on a yearly basis.

Mrs. Driedger: I am wondering if the Minister is going to continue on with this and whether this is actually an increase in the number of patients that are being provided services via privatized home care.

Mr. Chomiak: As the Member knows, the services delivered by the WRHA with respect to that, when I was queried about that by a particular reporter two weeks ago, I looked into the matter. Just generally within the matter as I understand it, it is a continuation of the backup

contract provision that has been entered into on a regular basis since 1995.

Mrs. Driedger: Does the Minister have any intention of altering that particular agreement in any way or eliminating it in any way?

Mr. Chomiak: Obviously the Member knows of the general intent and procedures in terms of how we approach this particular issue. My general pragmatic approach to most of these issues, and we have done it in several areas, as we move towards particularly different policy changes, we are basically maintaining the status quo in a number of areas while we examine the options and services that are available to us.

Mrs. Driedger: Of the hundred beds that the Minister had hoped he could open, I am wondering how many of those beds were actually opened in hospitals.

Mr. Chomiak: This is an interesting area. I could not get any bed information out of the previous government for seven years. We got into huge fights in this Chamber. In fact it preceded me. I can remember watching the former critic, Judy Wasylycia-Leis, and the Member for Pembina, Don Orchard, fight this out over day after day after day in terms of dealing with this particular information. This kind of information generally was not provided. I will see what is available to see if I can provide it to the Member.

Mrs. Driedger: As this was an election promise, a very specific one, I would hope that the Minister would have some commitment to providing that information. Now, somewhere I had seen, and I do not know where, so I am asking for clarification, something about \$6.7 million annually for these beds being built into the Budget. Now, I do not know where I got that from. I am wondering if the Minister could clarify where I might have seen that and if it is in the Budget.

Mr. Chomiak: I can indicate that what we did was when we announced our program on November 22 of 1999, we made available funding to open a hundred beds. It was something that had not been done in a long time in this jurisdiction. We made available, and we

canvassed the various facilities to make available, 100 beds in order to take a load off. I can indicate to the Member that not all of those beds were opened because of the severe nursing shortages that we were faced with. We did build in, and I believe it is \$12 million year to year, hallway medicine initiative for all of our hallway medicine initiatives into the base of the budgets.

Mrs. Driedger: I wonder if the Minister could indicate for me whether those acute care beds are still needed in the system.

Mr. Chomiak: There is no doubt, Mr. Chairperson, that there is a need for beds. There is also no doubt that there is a difficulty, in some cases, staffing the beds that are required. We have undertaken a review. We have asked the WRHA to do a review and a bed map of the system in Winnipeg to determine the type and location of beds that are needed and are required in Winnipeg. We are anticipating that for sometime in the fall.

Mrs. Driedger: I am wondering if the Minister could tell me whether it is accurate or not to say that Manitoba has the highest number of acute care beds per capita in Canada.

Mr. Chomiak: I am not sure that that is an accurate statement. I am not sure, and I am going by memory. Also, the staff is not sure that that is a conclusive statement as well.

Mrs. Driedger: I had understood, at one point, that that was the case, that Manitoba certainly was more generous in allocating acute care beds per capita than other provinces. I am wondering, with all of the personal care home beds that are currently opening or have opened, whether or not we still need to be looking at opening more acute care beds in the hospital. If we were managing this in such a way that there were enough personal care home beds and they were taking the strain off the system, whether or not we would still need to be looking at 100 new beds in acute care hospitals?

* (15:30)

Mr. Chomiak: This is one area that I get into long discussions with people on. This relationship between personal care home beds

and acute care beds, because I think it misses—a strict correlation between acute care beds and personal care home beds is not necessarily the ratio that will provide the solution to the problem. There is no doubt that there was and is a need for personal care home beds in Manitoba. Numerous studies during the '90s were effected in order to determine that. Most notably, the Morrow Report, I think, in '92-93, suggested a need for 1 600 personal care home beds by 1995. In fact, it was that particular recommendation that I believe the previous government made a determination in its capital plan of 1995 and announced all those personal care home beds, which they subsequently put on hold, and then reannounced some of them several years later and built some.

That was part of the reason why there was a major problem with respect to congestion and confusion in the hallways over the past several years. But I would be very cautious about a strict correlation between just the personal care home beds and the needs of personal care homes and acute care beds because it is far more—and to say if we better managed the acute care beds in the system, then we have enough or things will work fine. I think it is theoretically a fine solution, but, in practice, and the Member knows, the Member worked in the health care sector, it does not always work. There is no question that the better a bed management—it is clearly one of the points of our hallway medicine initiatives. The correlation between straight personal care home beds and acute care beds does not necessarily solve the problem. There is a huge gap in between. I can tell the Member that that is part of our discussions with other jurisdictions and the federal government in terms of a solution to the problem.

So, as regards the initiatives in hallway medicine, and the Member can agree or disagree with our policy or what we did, half of the initiatives in hallway medicine were community-based. Half of the expenditures went towards community-based programs. We are trying to be very pragmatic and cautious as we approach the bed situation, which is one of the reasons why the bed map issue has been so important and we are doing that to determine the kind and the need for beds and for other support services related to that.

I often get off onto tangents. It is not simply a correlation between personal care home beds and acute care beds in terms of managing patient needs and patient requirements.

Mrs. Driedger: I would like to have the Member for Minnedosa ask some questions now.

Mr. Harold Gilleshammer (Minnedosa): I have a few questions around a facility in Souris called the Victoria Park Lodge that I believe the Minister raised questions about in the past and I am sure he is familiar with. Can you tell me what the status of Victoria Park Lodge is?

Mr. Chomiak: I will provide the Member with specifics of that when we next—I presume next Estimates.

Mr. Gilleshammer: I am sorry. Just for clarification, you would do that tomorrow if we meet tomorrow? Thank you. I would appreciate that. I know that the Minister has some knowledge of Victoria Park Lodge in that he asked a series of questions about it in the past. I know he has correspondence from the reeve, the mayor, the RHA, and a private citizen who is known to the Member, who was a candidate out there. I think it is an issue that needs to have some closure put to it.

Can I ask next about the template on the minimal standards for acute care hospitals? I have a draft revision from January 25 and the terms of reference that were finalized on November 1, 1999. Can the Minister indicate where this process is at?

Mr. Chomiak: As I explained to the Member's colleague the Member for Russell (Mr. Derkach), as I understand it, the process commenced in August of last year in terms of this process being put in place. It was largely driven by the RHAs with respect to review of the minimum standards, largely based from what I understand on the fact that there was concern that certain hospital facilities in rural Manitoba were forced on various occasions to cover the H on the highway because they could not necessarily guarantee a particular level or a particular type of service, and this was entered into by the RHAs. So what has happened at this point is the template has now come together I

think largely on the same basis as the draft. It has been forwarded to us. We are going to take the template and farm it out now back.

There are three areas, and I referred to them to the Member for Russell (Mr. Derkach) and I know the Member was listening diligently, but I will just highlight what I said to the Member for Russell when I last dealt with this issue. There were three areas of activity that were entered into by the previous administration. The first was lab consolidation, and the lab consolidation process was entered into, and a report came to our attention upon assuming office. We have distributed that report out to the broader community for general comments and advice.

The second issue was with respect to emergency services as well. There were two or three reports done by the previous administration with respect to emergency services. As well, a report came to our attention again when we assumed the office of government, and it made a number of recommendations. We farmed out those recommendations and we are still reviewing a number of those recommendations, but we did act upon a number of the recommendations because of the nature of emergency services and the requirement for upgraded emergency services. In fact, we doubled the amount of funding to emergency services outside of Winnipeg. That is the biggest increase I think in memory to emergency services with that report.

With respect to the template, the template report will be farmed out for advice and comment and direction, and we will be looking for the advice and comment of people in the community with respect to those particular recommendations and those particular issues that were prepared by the RHAs.

Mr. Gilleshammer: Can the Minister give me additional detail on what it is he is farming out? I presume that you have taken the template and applied it to each regional health authority and the facilities within that RHA. Is that what the Minister is farming out, or can he tell me if it is simply a revised copy of what the draft revision of January 25 was?

Mr. Chomiak: Yes, Mr. Chairperson, there is a revised copy that has now come in. In the Department, our intention is to take the report and to farm it out to the health authorities and regions for their input and their advice and the advice of anyone in the public.

Again, it is as was the case with the other two reports. They were commenced prior to our assuming office. We have come into office, we have received these reports, and now we are asking for advice and comments from the wider community without drawing any conclusions from those particular recommendations.

Mr. Gilleshammer: Would the Minister be prepared to share a copy with members of the Opposition of the revised template that he now has?

* (15:40)

Mr. Chomiak: Yes, just subject to any administrative details that I am not aware of. I have no problem in doing that.

Mr. Gilleshammer: The revised template that he is going to farm out will be a very public process, I gather, and will go to not only RHAs but municipal councils, reeves, councillors, communities to be part of this process. Is that correct?

Mr. Chomiak: I would presume that. The general policy that we have adopted is not to deep-six reports and not to hide reports.

That is the general policy that we have adopted when the reports come in. We did that with the lab consolidation report, and we did that with the emergency services report, and I have no reason to believe that we would do otherwise with the template report.

Mr. Gilleshammer: Can you indicate a time frame? Communities out there are in a state of rather nervous anticipation about when this process is going to kick in.

Is it your belief that this template would be available to RHA boards, municipal councils, and the general public before the end of summer, by September 1, for instance?

Mr. Chomiak: Something in that time range, I suspect. I certainly understand the anxiety, the concern out there in the communities, so I respect that position, and I think our intention would be to do that sooner rather than later.

Mr. Gilleshammer: The regional health authorities now have a budget figure for the current year that they are in, yet I think they are still in the process of finalizing their budgets. I would presume, maybe the Minister could confirm, that there were increases in those RHA budgets to take into account settlements with various health care providers, and to accommodate deficits from previous years. Is that correct?

Mr. Chomiak: Yes, generally, the policy that we adopted, coming halfway into a fiscal year, and relying on information dated that was available to us, was to generally try to meet those needs and expectations, and to try to deal with all of those issues within base budget where we could.

Mr. Gilleshammer: There are a number of communities who have requested an opportunity to meet with the Minister. Is he going to be able to accommodate them in the near future?

Mr. Chomiak: What was that? I am sorry.

Mr. Gilleshammer: I will repeat the question. There are a number of communities who have requested an opportunity to meet directly, face to face, with the Minister. I am wondering if he has indicated to them when those meetings can take place.

Mr. Chomiak: I am sure the Member can appreciate that the number of communities he referred to probably numbers in the dozens with respect to meetings, and I am endeavouring to meet with as many groups and individuals as at all possible. I believe I have meetings set up with several groups; I will be setting up shortly with several groups from the southwest Manitoba area.

Mr. Gilleshammer: I appreciate that, and I appreciate how valuable the Minister's time is, and how difficult it is to meet with everyone. The Reeve from the R.M. of Daly had indicated

they had a request for a meeting, and had not heard from the Minister or his office, and I know the town of Rivers, the mayor there, and a group that has been formed called the Rivers and Area Health Action group are anxious to have a meeting with the Minister. I would ask if he can indicate whether his staff have set this up for the near future.

Mr. Chomiak: I do not know whether or not the staff has set it up in the near future. The basic programming with respect to my visiting and meeting with a number of groups at this point is contingent on a couple of issues: The question of the House and when the House will prorogue, and some federal-provincial meetings that I have to be a part of that are making August a somewhat difficult to structure at this point. So I am in a bit of a difficult position in definitely booking August because of those issues that are out of my control.

Mr. Gilleshammer: Well, perhaps when we get back together to talk about Victoria Park Lodge, the Minister could also indicate his availability in July and August. The Estimates process will be wrapping up, I am sure, this week, and I wondered if he understood that one of the members on this side is prepared to pair him to make him available for responsibilities away from the House and would try in every way to accommodate the Minister to get out there and meet with Manitobans in the Westman region.

Mr. Chomiak: I try to get out and meet, as I indicated to the Member, with as many individuals as I think any Minister of Health has, or perhaps more, and I will continue to do that. I outlined for the Member the difficulties with respect to there are any number of communities that members on that side and this side of House would like me to go meet with tomorrow, that it would be very useful.

There are some that I am seeing on various contingencies. I will endeavour to do the best I can to meet with as many people as possible.

Mr. Gilleshammer: Perhaps, and I will not speak for them, they would be prepared to come to the Minister's office in the near future. If that would be easier for him, would he be amenable to meeting with them there?

Mr. Chomiak: Just in practice, I actually prefer to get out to meet with individuals within their own communities. That is my preferred. If the Member only knew how many swings I have done and how many swings I have had to cancel in the last little while with respect to visits. I mean, the Member can appreciate that, and those will be taken care of.

Mr. Gilleshammer: Yes, I should have recalled the Member's visit to Minnedosa a few years ago. I know he was very interested in coming out at that time, and I am glad he has not changed. I know the people of Rivers will look forward to having that meeting with him. I will pass on the Member's remarks to them, and I know they will look forward to seeing him out there.

The other day in the House, in response to a question on June 28, the Minister said he would be prepared to discuss the issue of the template with the Mayor of Boissevain. I am wondering if the Minister has picked up the phone or found time to meet or talk to the Mayor of Boissevain.

Mr. Chomiak: As I indicated to the Member previously, I am intending to discuss the whole issue of the template in terms of farming it out, and having comments and advice is something that we are going to engage in shortly.

Mr. Gilleshammer: So in terms of his commitment in the House two weeks ago, I gather he has still not met that but will do so shortly, and we can pass that on to interested members of the public.

Mr. Chomiak: I would not want the Member to literally take to members of the public the fact that I will be meeting with every member of the public, as much as I would like to, across the province of Manitoba. I would not want him to literally interpret that to be the case with respect to his comments.

As I indicated to the Member, we are not going to deep-six or avoid the process that was started by members opposite with respect to the template, and we will endeavour to seek advice from Manitobans with respect to the template process.

Mr. Gilleshammer: I certainly do not expect the Minister to meet with all members of the public, but, as the Minister knows, there are organizations within communities that represent the will of the people, and I would expect him to meet with the community leaders on issues of health care and would appreciate him doing so as early as possible.

* (15:50)

As I have indicated, we would pair the Minister at any time to go out to meet regarding his responsibilities and make his efforts out there as easy as possible for him.

Another question I wanted to ask is to do with appointments to the regional health authorities. I gather the Minister is following the same process as previous where individuals within communities are appointed to serve on the health authorities' board rather than having them put there through election. Could he confirm that?

Mr. Stan Struthers, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, as I indicated to the Member for Charleswood (Mrs. Driedger), the process generally in place at this point is the process that we have continued to follow.

Mr. Gilleshammer: One of the previous guidelines was to appoint people from the catchment area of all of the facilities and to, I suppose, not appoint people who had a vested interest in that their livelihood came from working for the RHA or a neighbouring RHA. Is that practice still being continued?

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, if memory serves me correctly with respect to the issue of the catchment areas, I believe we are following the same process as was the previous case. With respect to the issue of individuals who perhaps work or obtain their livelihood in that particular region we have indicated in a policy sense that we are not adhering to that particular policy.

Mr. Gilleshammer: You are not changing the policy?

Mr. Chomiak: We are changing that particular policy, though I do not believe, and I could be corrected with respect to appointments to boards, whether or not we have made any appointments with regard to that changed policy.

Mr. Gilleshammer: So, given the Minister's comments, that would mean that doctors, nurses, employees of the regional health authority may be or are now eligible to be appointed to those boards.

Mr. Chomiak: Yes, Mr. Chairperson, that is correct.

Mr. Gilleshammer: Does the Minister not see that there is a conflict in that individuals could be responsible for governance decisions while they are employees of that board? I see nothing wrong with having advisory boards with health care practitioners from the region having an opportunity to input some advice to the board, but what the Minister is saying is that he is prepared to put employees on the board which have a direct responsibility to make governance decisions, and I am wondering if the Minister would not see that as perhaps troublesome in the future.

Mr. Chomiak: Yes, Mr. Chairperson, I believe the original manifestation and, if memory serves me correctly, the original recommendations and manifestations of the northern and rural task force that looked at the regional governance had recommended that employees be allowed to sit on the various bodies, firstly, and secondly, I believe that conflict-of-interest policies that already prevailed for a variety of areas on specific governance decisions would apply.

Mr. Gilleshammer: Can the Minister confirm then that some of these appointments have already been made to RHAs?

Mr. Chomiak: I will attempt to confirm that, but if memory serves me correctly, I do not believe that policy change saw light when we made the recent rounds of appointments to the various RHAs, which was based on the previous timeline. I stand to be corrected, but I do not believe so.

Mr. Gilleshammer: Well, I would urge the Minister to give that some serious reconsideration. I think there are other ways under which people who derive their income directly from an RHA board can make a valuable contribution, in terms of advisory boards or any type of structure that the Minister might want to set up within the legislation. But to have them participate directly in board decisions, I think, would put them in conflict more often than not.

I would urge him to reconsider that when he makes his appointments, because I believe there are a lot of capable people out there who would primarily represent the views of the community. You can seek out whatever specific talents you might want in terms of putting people on the board without putting employees directly on the board. I know that you can go through government and find other examples where that exists, but I think that, in terms of the communities and the way the RHAs have been developing, you might be wise to take a very close look at that.

Mr. Chomiak: I thank the Member for his considered advice on this.

Mr. Gilleshammer: In an earlier answer, the Minister indicated that he had made appointments for the catchment area of all the facilities. I think that he may be in error, if that is what he said. He is shaking his head. Can you clarify that for me?

Mr. Chomiak: I indicated in my response that we did not change the previous policy of appointments with the catchment areas. If memory serves me correctly, we have not made all the appointments with respect to catchment areas. I think that is the distinction.

Mr. Gilleshammer: Well, the reality of the situation out there now is that you have certain communities with facilities in them who feel that they have been disenfranchised. I use the example of the town of Rivers and the R.M. of Daly where a previous board member, who served on the Marquette Regional Health Authority, was replaced. It ends up that a community like Minnedosa has three representatives on the RHA board and the town of Rivers has none. Am I given to understand

that the Minister will make further appointments to remedy that situation?

Mr. Chomiak: I thank the Member for raising that issue, and we are looking at that issue.

Mr. Gilleshammer: In looking at that specific issue, can the Minister make a commitment that he will put somebody on the regional Marquette board that indeed does reside in the town of Rivers or the nearby municipality, or is he saying that this will not happen?

Mr. Chomiak: I am saying to the Member that we are aware of that issue and attempting to resolve that issue.

* (16:00)

Mr. Gilleshammer: The town of Erickson recently was without doctors for a two-week period, something that had never happened before. I would bring this to the Minister's attention, that this is the closest acute care facility for the national park which, in the tourist season, and I know the Chairman can attest to this, might have upwards of 20 000 people in the park on a given summer's day, plus it serves a number of the First Nations reserves in that area and a number of other communities.

Can the Minister indicate how this could happen?

Mr. Chomiak: I believe the Member for Russell (Mr. Derkach) raised this issue as well during his discourse, and I said I would be getting back to him with additional information.

Mr. Gilleshammer: I look forward to that information from the Minister. A recent letter in the *Brandon Sun* references the fact that patients are being turned away from the regional health authority in Brandon. A letter had gone out to other RHAs, and this is at a time when the Brandon Regional Authority is attempting to encourage nearby municipalities to assist with their fundraising to meet some of their fundraising needs. Is the Minister aware of that situation, and has it been remedied?

Mr. Chomiak: I had a discussion with the Member for Russell regarding this issue in

general. Is the Member saying a letter has gone out from general regional health authorities to various areas indicating not to admit to a Brandon hospital, is that what the Member is saying?

Mr. Gilleshammer: This was an issue that was in the media I believe in May and June. Whether it was by letter or press release, I can tell you the feeling of constituents in the surrounding areas was that preference was given to cases in the city of Brandon, and communities like Wawanesa and Carberry should send their patients to Winnipeg because they could not be accommodated in Brandon.

My understanding of the regional health authority concept is that we want to develop the site in Brandon as a regional centre to accept cases that hospitals and doctors and nurses predetermine should go to the nearest acute care hospital that can handle them.

I am just wondering if the Minister is aware of that, or is this something that is new to him?

Mr. Chomiak: I had a long discussion about this issue in general with the Member for Russell who talked about significant policy changes that he thought might have been in effect, and I inquired with respect to those particular issues. I am still doing more inquiries.

I have yet to ascertain any policy change directly. With respect to the issue of Brandon and the surrounding areas and their access to the acute care facility or the tertiary, well, the acute care facility in Brandon, I will endeavour to find out as well and do some inquiries and background for the Member.

Mr. Gilleshammer: I thank the Minister for that undertaking. There was another letter to the editor which seemed to indicate, in the mind of the writer at least, that the Government had directed facilities to release patients earlier than was previously the case to the point where physiotherapy was not available for things like a broken hip and that the cost of some of the physiotherapy and other costs were now being borne by the patient and the patient's family.

Can the Minister indicate whether he is familiar with any cases like that, whether there is a policy change or a directive for hospitals to release people back into their communities and back into home quicker than was previously the case as is being asserted by this particular letter?

Mr. Chomiak: I am not aware of any policy change from the Department of Health with respect to this.

Mr. Gilleshammer: Would the Minister think that perhaps some of the funding policies that have been put into place would lead facilities to release people earlier than was normally the case in previous years?

Mr. Chomiak: I am not sure specifically what the Member is referring to generally, but we have generally increased funding across the board and across the province.

Mr. Gilleshammer: Well, this letter writer references, again, the Brandon Health Centre and what is called the Assiniboine Centre in Brandon, where physiotherapy is provided. This person was from a community in the Dauphin region, and the assumption here is to save money and to make room for other patients who might have to be located in the hospital in a place other than a patient's room, that there was a new way of doing things, which was sending people home so that people could be accommodated in rooms. The Minister is saying then that he has no knowledge of this, and in fact, nothing has changed?

Mr. Chomiak: From time to time, with respect to the demands in the system and the patient loads, there are movements of patients to and from hospitals and hospital facilities. We are encountering a significant problem, and I have referred to this generally during the course of the Estimates debate, right across the board. One of the difficulties with the way we have evolved the medicare system is that one is permitted to receive services and a variety of services while in an acute care facility, and then when one is out of the acute care facility, to a lesser extent those services are provided outside. That has been the difficulty of the change in the system over the past decade and the difficulty with the way we deal with the overall medicare and the

overall funding system. That is one of the areas, and we have had active discussions with the federal government and with the other provinces with respect to how we deal with these issues.

One of the reasons in our hallway medicine initiative that half of the resources we put into a hallway medicine initiative was directed towards the community to try to provide resources in the community that were provided in the hospital so that, when a sick person does receive service in a hospital, there is a commensurate service that is offered in the community. Now that is a long-term and significant situation to overcome as we move towards a different approach to the overall health care system.

The criticism has always been in the past that we have to move towards a more community-based system, provide services outside of the acute care sector in the community. To a greater or lesser degree, various jurisdictions have responded in a more positive or negative fashion in this regard.

* (16:10)

Again, preparing a budget six months into a budgetary year, one of the conditions we looked at was to what extent we could put resources into the community that would take pressures off of and provide for service in the community. That is why there was a significant increase in home care this year and as a result of our hallway medicine initiative. That is why programs such as PACT were announced, put in place, and not put an emphasis only on the acute care sector.

Right across the board, when I look at health care, that is a need, and it certainly is a direction that we have to proceed in. There will be initiatives that will be incorporated in this regard, some of which are included in this budget, that deal with significant benefits that are provided in the community, but it is not just an—I was going to use the word "interesting"—interesting question, it is a very real and pressing question that when someone presents at a hospital and they have a symptom, there was a time in the acute care sector where they would have stayed in the hospital, say, three weeks. Now they present at a hospital, and they are in and out much faster. The commensurate services

that are offered may have not kept pace. The commensurate services that are offered or required by that patient may have not kept pace or not existed in the community, whereas they were represented in the hospital prior to that where the individual required those services.

There has not been a policy change from the Department of Health with respect to that overall, except that one of the overall directions and goals is to provide more community-based service and take into account the needs and the requirements of patients and of people in the community. This is a significant goal that we have to strive to work towards over the term of the next—and when I say "we," I do not mean "us" as the Government of Manitoba, but I mean anyone that is in the management of health care in the province of Manitoba.

It is one of the reasons why, in our discussions with the federal government, we have been very, very suggestive of the federal government becoming involved in a financial way on the community and on the primary care side so that we can maintain our existing acute care system and that the funding model that is going to come into place will take into account the need to expand resources and services in the community and to provide those services. It has been wrapped up in our discussions with them. It is a recognition of the deficiencies that exist, that are pre-existing, that were existing, that continue to exist within the health care system.

I can remember long discussions with the former, former, former, that is the Honourable Jim McCrae. This was one of his favourite areas and tangents that he used to go off on, about the gap in the ambulance service, that medicare does not cover ambulance services. He used to insist that this was an area that just was not funded by medicare and why would anyone make demands to finance under the ambulance system. But, then, if you look at the evolving health care system where people are transported more frequently and, in some cases, longer distances, there is a gap that is there that is not covered for under the existing arrangement.

As I said to the Member for Charleswood (Mrs. Driedger) and the Member for Russell (Mr. Derkach), it is why we have spent an

inordinate amount of time, more than I would have liked to have spent, with the federal government trying to hash through these issues as we move towards some kind of a new funding arrangement which I am hopeful we can achieve with all of the potential. Perhaps, without being overly optimistic, one would hope, although one cannot guarantee, that whatever arrangement comes about, we could somehow deal with this issue.

As all health care has evolved in the past decade with more of an emphasis on acute care than emphasis on the community, how we can provide those community resources and have the funding to do it when we are faced with maintaining the acute care and a burgeoning community.

It is a real dilemma and a problem. The Member for Minnedosa, as the former Minister of Finance, knows exactly what I am talking about and how difficult it is to come to grips in those areas. In fact, the dilemma is the reduced funding from the federal government just backfills and provides the existing services but does not evolve the system and does not move the system forward along the lines that the Member for Minnedosa is suggesting through his question. It is a serious difficulty that we face. It is something that we have spent a lot of time on, dealing with the federal government in this regard.

Mr. Gilleshammer: Would the Minister consent to take a very simple question on the Pan Am surplus in this venue, just for information? I understand there is a Pan Am surplus that the Minister of Sport would be looking after. Is there a process by which Manitoba communities that were involved in hosting can make submissions to participate in that surplus and how it is eventually taken care of?

Mr. Chomiak: The Member is correct. There is Pan Am surplus. Many communities have already contacted the Department of Sport with respect to requests. There has not yet been a determination as to the final disposition of those funds.

Mr. Gilleshammer: I thank the Minister of Sport for that answer. Has a template been put in

place to deal with that surplus, or are you encouraging communities to be in contact with you over this?

Mr. Chomiak: Many communities have already contacted. The need is great but the amount—I am trying to think of an analogy—is not sufficient to probably—*[interjection]* Something like that, yes. It is an interesting policy question to determine how that funding should be utilized, and we are still discussing it at the policy level.

Mr. Gilleshammer: Is the Minister prepared to make Manitobans aware that there is a pool of money that could be used for a community places-type program that all Manitobans who presumably were part and parcel of providing that funding to the Pan Am might be aware of and participate in? I am just looking after the best interests of the Minister, that he does not get blamed for doing this secretly and people do not know about it. Is the Minister prepared to put out a press release or some public announcement to make Manitobans aware of it?

Mr. Chomiak: I thank the Member for those suggestions. There have been press releases indicating that there is surplus monies available.

Mr. Gilleshammer: I think the Minister has been here long enough to know that I am asking is he prepared to go one step further and make people aware that there will be a process involved.

Mr. Chomiak: I thank the Member for those suggestions.

* (16:20)

Mr. Gilleshammer: And I thank the Minister for his responses. I know that he has learned a lot here in the last decade. I thank him also for looking into a special case that I brought up in Question Period. I have indicated to him that I would rarely, rarely do that, but I thank him for taking a special look at that case. Thank you.

Mr. Chomiak: Perhaps a five-minute break at this point might be appropriate.

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Struthers): Is it the will of the Committee to take a five-minute

recess? *[Agreed]* We will meet back in five minutes.

The Committee recessed at 4:21 p.m.

The Committee resumed at 4:29 p.m.

Mr. Chairperson in the Chair

Mr. Chairperson: Committee, please come to order.

Mrs. Driedger: Mr. Chairman, the Minister has previously offered to give me a copy of the Bell-Wade Report. I wonder if I could ask for that. *[interjection]* The Bell-Wade Report. You actually suggested a few times that I should read it.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, in fact, I would give the Member my copy, which I carried with me until today when I removed it from my files of things I was carrying with me. But I will ask the staff if they would not mind photocopying a copy of Bell-Wade to provide to the Member.

* (16:30)

Mrs. Driedger: I thank the Minister for that. I am wondering if he could tell me with the growing seniors population, has he requested the development of a seniors health strategy?

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, in terms of where the Department of Health is going and in terms of the recognition of the demographics that we are facing, in terms of needs development, I am not sure if necessarily designating a specific seniors strategy is actually the way to encapsulate what in fact we have to do as a Department of Health. Given the demographic reality and given where we are going in trying to develop a needs-based approach to health care across the spectrum, I think that the issue of seniors' health naturally will gravitate in towards that.

When one gets into it, it is an extremely complex area. We know, for example, that the average age of individuals who are placed in personal care homes has gone up demogra-

phically quite dramatically in the past decade or so, which means there are more seniors living longer years outside of any kind of institutionalization, which therefore means that there is a required need for expanded home care services which has happened obviously for the past decade.

With respect to specific illnesses as they relate, clearly, for example, if I can use the word—I was going to use the word "explosion." Explosion is the wrong word, but the dramatic increase in cancer, for example. If one were to look at the increase in cancer, it is a natural reflection of aging that cancer rates will go up. As we live longer, it is very clear that cancer rates will go up because of one's tendency to develop a particular type of illness, cancer being one that increases as age increases. The effect of various strategies related to seniors is therefore reflected in that regard. So there are a number of initiatives across the area in a number of ways dealing with the demographic shift, the demographic changes that are proceeding.

I think it is interesting. I was just handed a note talking about Aboriginal health, women's health, PCH, home care, cancer, cardiac and Pharmacare. All have significant components that deal with seniors. I could add to that risk management as one. I could add to that the issue of vaccinations. I mean, we are increasing our vaccinations of seniors dramatically. In fact, our emphasis is on people over 65 years of age, et cetera. [*interjection*] Mental health, oh, that is a very good point, also raised.

Mental health issues, boy, oh, boy, talk about an area that is seeing—now it is interesting whether or not we are seeing a radical increase in, now I am speaking personally here, whether we are seeing a dramatic increase in mental health problems amongst seniors or whether in fact we are diagnosing it more, if it is a reflection of a different emphasis in society or in fact if it is a combination of both.

But that is another significant area that initiatives are in place and will be in place to deal with that particular issue. So I would suggest that the issue dealing with seniors per se is a larger part of a demographic and a needs-

based approach that we are trying to institute across the entire health care system.

Mrs. Driedger: Mr. Chairman, certainly from the treatment of illness, what the Minister indicated sounds like there is an approach that is touching on a number of areas. I am wondering if in looking at seniors' health there is also a component in what he is looking at in terms of promoting healthy lifestyle in seniors and diet, exercise, socialization. Is he looking at illness prevention, health promotion, looking at population health indicators in terms of trying to encourage seniors to have a more healthy lifestyle?

Mr. Chomiak: I think yes to all of that, to the Member. All of those issues are being approached. It is an interesting discussion insofar as, of course, we have a Healthy Child Initiative, and the interesting discussion is the other in a majority of—I will say this and I am not saying this scientifically, but I think the majority of Manitobans do not use the health care system until they are after 55 generally. Certainly, the increase and the preponderance increases as one goes on. It is interesting whether or not that would warrant a specific seniors health strategy, say, modelled along the lines of the child health strategy.

My tendency would be to say that generally I agree with what the Member is raising. Generally, most of these issues are approached on a straight population needs benefit across the spectrum, but it is an interesting approach to determine whether or not there would be a specific wrapped-up-in-one kind of policy as a sort of overall seniors health strategy, as I say, similar to a Healthy Child Strategy. I think it would be difficult to do that because of the regional and the clinical nature and the breakdown of the way the administrative structures work in this province, but it is an interesting observation.

Mrs. Driedger: Perhaps not unlike addressing the issues of disabled people, just a thought in terms of making sure there is a comprehensive, co-ordinated, integrated approach, because if we do, as I understand, have the second eldest or oldest population in Canada, it is going to create

some significant and interesting challenges in the next 10 years. So a thought anyway.

The Minister, I am sure, is very aware of my strong interest in children's issues. When I was in the community, I was quite aware of the Postl report and the number of recommendations that he had made. Then, when I got into politics and heard actually from the Minister, when he was in opposition, making some comments that the Postl report was not one that was being significantly addressed, I tried to find more information on it and found a June 3, 1998, update. Of the 116 recommendations that were made in the Postl report, it had indicated that 90 of the recommendations were implemented or implemented and ongoing, 12 were in process, 9 were referred to a specific department, 2 were under consideration and 3 had no action. In fact there was quite a lengthy report on the status of all of those recommendations. I guess, for my own clarification, I am wondering why the Minister was, in opposition, so discouraged, when in fact, from what I have been able to find out, a lot of these recommendations were being addressed.

* (16:40)

Mr. Chomiak: I am not going to re-debate those issues with the Member.

Mrs. Driedger: Well, I have not had the debate, so I cannot really very well get into a re-debate on it, but it sounds like a lot of the Postl recommendations, in fact almost all of them, probably 98 percent, were being addressed or completely addressed. So I am not sure what all the criticism was about it or about our government not doing anything in terms of addressing all the issues that Dr. Postl had recommended.

But I will leave it if the Minister does not want to get into that, but I would like to go into the area of the Healthy Child Initiative. In one of the news releases from September, there was an indication that the NDP were going to hire nurses for school health programs. I am wondering if the Minister could give me an update on the progress in that area.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, it just does not seem to me to be, if the Member wants to spend a lot of time debating the merits or the demerits of that particular press release or other initiatives passed by the other government, I mean we can do that, but I am not sure if that will change anyone's viewpoints that were determined at that time and continue to be determined.

I am going by memory but always the lead minister in terms of the Healthy Child is the Minister of Family Services, and I can provide responses to the Member's inquiry. The usual practice is to bring the lead minister in here and do that. I am prepared to provide specific responses not today but to the Member with respect to the Healthy Child. I think that is probably the practice we follow. We may as well continue to follow that practice, unless the Member—if the Member wants to provide a list of questions on the Healthy Child, for example, if there is not an opportunity to canvass that from the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Sale), I will try to get those responses back to the Member.

Mrs. Driedger: I am wondering, I understand that there are five cabinet members that oversee the Healthy Child Initiative, and I assumed—maybe I should not have—I wonder if the Minister could clarify for me whether he is one of the committee members of the cabinet ministers that oversee the Healthy Child Initiative.

Mr. Chomiak: Yes.

Mrs. Driedger: I wonder then if the Minister could tell me how often that particular committee meets.

Mr. Chomiak: Just met today.

Mrs. Driedger: Besides the meeting today, I am wondering if the Minister could indicate, over the last six months, how often it has met.

Mr. Chomiak: On many occasions.

Mrs. Driedger: It was interesting, in Justice Estimates, it had sounded like the answers being given in that committee indicated that this particular cabinet committee had not met very

often. In fact, the Justice Minister could not even indicate for me once that the Committee had met. Now the Health Minister is telling me that they have met a number of times. I guess I am somewhat confused in terms of who to believe. Could the Minister tell me, because Health plays a huge part, I am sure, in looking at a lot of initiatives around developing healthy children, I am wondering if the issue of hiring nurses for schools health programs has come under discussion at that committee level.

Mr. Chomiak: As this is a committee of cabinet, I am not sure if I want to go down the road of discussing what takes place in cabinet and what, by virtue of extension, takes place in cabinet committees.

Mrs. Driedger: When we had been in government, we had a committee that oversaw the Children and Youth Secretariat. That particular committee had a very definite role, had a very definite meeting time and had a very definite agenda of what it was hoping to achieve. I believe it was called the Human Resources Committee of Cabinet, and there were seven or eight ministers on it.

We were kept well-informed about the initiatives and progress that particular committee was making. When we are looking at initiatives that will impact on children and some of the innovations that are possible to see come from such a committee, I am wondering of the Minister could be a little bit more definitive for me in terms of the expectations this committee has regarding how often it will meet.

Mr. Chomiak: In the course of the Member's question, the Member floated around a number of issues related to when a committee meets, what the agenda is. The Member specifically asked me if I would tell her what is on the agenda of a cabinet committee, and my response to the Member was I was not going to reveal cabinet information to the Member with respect to the agenda of the cabinet committee.

The Member ended her question by somehow saying, well, the number of times the Committee met. I indicated when we started this discussion that the lead minister on this was the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Sale). I do not

know the exact framework. As I recall from the way Estimates work, generally the lead minister on that kind of issue would respond accordingly. But I did indicate to the Member that I would provide her with responses to her questions, if she did not get an opportunity to ask that. I do not know why the Member is dancing around and indicating in her preamble one issue and then ending up with another issue. I said the Committee has met on many occasions. I indicated that it had met today. I indicated that I was not going to provide the Member with specific notes and references from the meeting of that committee. I said that we would make information available from either the lead minister or, if the Member wanted to provide me with the questions in that regard, I would endeavour to find out the responses to those questions for the Member.

Mrs. Driedger: I would be interested in knowing a little bit more about the frequency of the meetings, the policy direction that is being set by that committee, because I understand certainly what the Minister would be able to make public, would certainly be appreciated. Just from the Estimates in Justice, which was only a few weeks ago, there was no indication that this committee had met, so I have a concern that the Children and Youth Secretariat was dismantled. It was reformulated. I understand, even from just being around various people within government, it seems to have lost its emphasis and focus. It does not have the same dynamic position it had before, and I have some real concern that some of those programs we are not hearing very much. I just have some concern that we could see children's programming falling through the cracks now, and I would hate to see something like that happen.

I think that particular program, the Children and Youth Secretariat, was beginning to make some significant inroads. It was bringing different departments together to work together. For me, out in the community, I was excited about it because, prior to having the Children and Youth Secretariat, when groups in the community wanted to relate to government, we had to go to various different departments to find out the information. Once the Children and Youth Secretariat was in place, we were able,

with one phone call or one meeting, to have all the information that we needed.

* (16:50)

So, for us in the community, it was a bonus and having been involved with it prior to coming into government, because of my interest in child prostitution, we were starting to see some really good things happen in that area. Now we do not seem to hear very much. I do not know the frequency of the meetings or whether any emphasis is being placed on where all of the children's programming is going and what stage policy development is at, and what stage programming is at.

I did want to get into the Estimates in Family Services, but unfortunately, they have been at the same time as Health and I have missed them totally. I certainly will be following up with the Minister of Family Services on a few issues, because I have spent considerable years working on the issue of child prostitution, and I do have a big interest in that area. I also have a serious interest in a lot of children's health issues, so I would look forward, if the Minister is willing to provide me with more information about the Healthy Child Initiative, to receiving it.

Mr. Chomiak: As indicated, for the third time, I am prepared to provide that information to the Member. I did not have the same view of the Healthy Child Initiative undertaken by the previous government, and I do not want to go down that road, but I did not have the same view, having followed the file generally for about five years. That was not my view in the community with respect to the way that the system and the programs were working. I did indicate that I am only trying to follow the past procedures that I am aware of in terms of how this works, and I indicated to the Member, now for the fourth time, that I am quite prepared to provide her with that information.

In fact, in the past, when I was critic, the Minister would often say, well, you have to ask that appropriate minister, and shut it down at that. I did not say that. I said I would provide the Member with information with respect to those

particular initiatives. So if she will just forward those particular requests to me, or if she wants to do it verbally now, that is fine. We will take it as notice and then endeavour to answer.

Mrs. Driedger: Actually, my preference would be to put it in writing so that I can be sure I do not miss anything in my request. I would certainly look forward to the response.

I would like to move on now to the Women's Health Strategy. I know that prior to the election we had been looking at a women's health strategy. A women's health advisory committee had been set up, and the Women's Health unit had been set up within Manitoba Health. The intent was to set up a particular women's health strategy. I wonder if the Minister could indicate for me the status of each of these.

Mr. Chomiak: We are getting into specifics with respect to program lines. I will endeavour, if the Member would give me a second, to determine those responses.

As I understand it, the Branch has been set up; a director has been hired; and we are working with the community with respect to the program of developments.

Mrs. Driedger: I am wondering, would the Minister be prepared for a few questions—I do not have many on this particular area—or would he prefer to wait until this comes up in the appropriate section of Estimates?

Mr. Chomiak: We may as well try now.

Mrs. Driedger: I know that the women's health policy was going to develop, with assistance from the Women's Directorate, a discussion paper to guide a consultation process, and subsequently the policy development. I am wondering if the discussion paper was developed, and if consultations have been held and with whom.

Mr. Chomiak: I am advised that the Branch is still working on that.

Mrs. Driedger: I wonder if the Minister could tell me if there was a fund to promote women's health research and projects established.

Mr. Chomiak: I wonder if the Member could be more specific.

Mrs. Driedger: It was just a general question. I am wondering, in setting up the Women's Health Strategy, if either at the time it was being set up, or since the Minister has been the Minister of Health, whether there has been any funding allocated to looking at specifically health research around women's issues.

Mr. Chomiak: I understand we are working with the Women's Directorate and with the Prairie Women's Health Centre of Excellence in looking at initiatives to incorporate and expand upon some analysis to better understand and address issues relating to gender in the health programs and policies.

Mrs. Driedger: Other than that, would the Minister be prepared, or would the Minister consider looking at providing any funding to promote women's health research?

Mr. Chomiak: I am advised that we do provide funding to the Prairie Women's Research Centre.

Mrs. Driedger: I would like to ask the Minister if he could indicate for me what that money is spent on if he has that information.

Mr. Chomiak: I am advised that it deals with the gender-based analysis to better understand and address gender in health programs and policies.

Mrs. Driedger: I wonder if the Minister has the information of the amount of funding that they receive.

Mr. Chomiak: I will take that question as notice.

Mrs. Driedger: Could the Minister tell me if the screening program for cervical cancer has been established?

Mr. Chomiak: That process is still being worked on.

Mrs. Driedger: I wonder if the Minister could indicate for me the progress that has been made on it in terms of how far it has come in its development.

Mr. Chomiak: I can indicate that we are actively involved in some policy initiatives in this area that we are attempting to resolve as soon as possible.

Mrs. Driedger: Could the Minister tell me whether or not this screening program for cervical cancer will be affiliated with the breast cancer screening program?

Mr. Chomiak: There have been discussions with respect to that.

Mrs. Driedger: Has there been any funding allocated in this budget towards the cervical cancer screening program? I understand that the development may take some time, that it will not readily happen overnight, but I am wondering if any finances have been allocated in this budget towards the developmental phase of this.

Mr. Chomiak: It is probably correct to say that the development of the program is not precluded by lack of funding.

Mrs. Driedger: Could the Minister confirm for me then—I do not want to make an assumption—there is no money in the budget for the development but that staff in Manitoba Health will be working on policy?

* (17:00)

Mr. Chomiak: If the policy considerations could be solved with respect to the cervical cancer program tomorrow, the cervical cancer program would have the resources to be up and functioning. Subject to that, it is not a question of resources, as I understand it, being made available.

Mrs. Driedger: I am wondering if the Minister could put a time line on this in terms of when he would like to see this program up and running.

Mr. Chomiak: I would like to see this program up and running several years ago. I would like to have seen this program up and running today,

frankly. I think it would be of service to everybody in the province.

Mrs. Driedger: With the Minister feeling that way, I am wondering what kind of focus this is getting then. Is it being treated as a priority and moving along fairly rapidly so that we can expect to see the program initiated within this particular budget?

Mr. Chomiak: It is in the best interests of all of us to get this program up and running. I always felt that it should have taken place in the past. I am endeavouring, as Minister, to do everything I can in my power to get it up and running as soon as possible.

Mrs. Driedger: Prior to the election, we had supported, in principle, a proposal submitted by the Mature Women's Health Program. It had been put forth as a number one priority by the Women's Health Program team at the WHA.

I am wondering if the Minister has met with Terry Ibbitt and Doctor Boroditsky. I know that, at one point, soon after the election, they had been trying to seek a meeting, and I wonder if the Minister had an opportunity to meet with them and to discuss the program.

Mr. Chomiak: I am not sure if the program, as outlined by the Member, is entirely accurate in terms of how the Member characterizes the prioritization and the commitment with respect to that particular program. There are ongoing discussions with regard to that program.

Mrs. Driedger: Could the Minister indicate whether or not there is any funding in this budget for that particular program?

Mr. Chomiak: I do not think there was a funding commitment in last year's budget for this program, because the Member indicated in principle that they were in favour of it. There were a number of mixed messages and mixed signals that were projected about this particular program. I think it is now a part of the WRHA's determination, with respect to the particular program and a needs assessment in that regard.

Mrs. Driedger: I wonder if the Minister could tell me if this ranks with any high degree of

priority in terms of what he wants to see achieved as the Minister of Health.

Mr. Chomiak: I always find it difficult to answer that question, both philosophically and otherwise, because, literally, when you are talking about people's health, every issue is a high priority. It is very difficult to determine that this is higher priority than this other high priority, particularly when we are dealing with particular segments of the population and particular areas of concerns.

So, I have actually avoided, personally, using the word priority on all kinds of things. I just do that out of principle. I might have fallen into that trap on a few occasions, but I have tried, just in terms of my own approach to issues, not to, because, frankly, when it comes down to it, everything is a priority. Then it is a question of how do you rate one priority vis-à-vis another priority.

Issues of women's health and the various aspects and review of how one deals with women's health is an important issue. We try to deal with issues as best we can through allocations both through the Budget and in terms of attention and direction to try to deal with as many policy areas as possible.

We are trying to move forward in a whole variety of areas. Some are moving faster. Some are moving slower. Some we have wanted to move faster on and we are not able to. Some we are moving faster than we probably thought we should. Obviously it is an area of importance.

Mrs. Driedger: I guess my particular interest in that may be partly because I am a woman but also being a nurse. I really have found that not as much attention has been given to women's health over many decades. It is something where I think it is certainly time that more emphasis was placed in addressing the issues of women's health. I think we need to see more research dollars spent in that area, and we need to see more efforts put into programming around women's health issues. So I will leave it at that but certainly would encourage the Minister to take this a step further in terms of putting some degree of emphasis and priority on moving ahead this whole issue of women's health.

The other area I am sure the Minister has serious concern in, as do I, is around the issue of Aboriginal health. Having been a student nurse who spent some time on a reserve during my senior year, I certainly saw the challenges that are faced in that area. I am wondering if the Minister could give me an update in terms of whether or not we have an Aboriginal health strategy in place. Last year, we had been at the beginning of addressing that, and I am wondering if that has proceeded at all.

Mr. Chomiak: I appreciate the comments of the Member with respect to the women's health issues. I tend to agree with her in terms of emphasis and need.

Aboriginal health could probably take the bulk of the rest of the Estimates time. To travel up to many of the communities and to see the state of Aboriginal health—and I have heard it suggested to me on many occasions, if these health conditions prevailed in the urban centre, you would have a significant outcry beyond any proportion and beyond anything that has ever happened in health care.

Now, I hope the Member will appreciate that what I am saying is I would almost like to deal with this issue on a non-partisan basis, like we deal with issues of mental health and like we deal with some other issues because it is of such grave concern, and in some ways there is such a deficit. The Member asks for an overall Aboriginal strategy, and my modus operandi with respect to Aboriginal issues has been generally to forge forward, just forge forward, because there are so many deficit areas that you cannot go wrong. Basically, you will make some mistakes but you cannot do worse by just moving forward. We could probably move forward for a decade in this province and still not achieve the kind of health determinants and health indicators in Aboriginal health that we would like.

* (17:10)

So the general modus operandi for myself has been to forge forward on a whole number of fronts on Aboriginal health. That is not to say that there is not a very extensive and very well-functioning, I am very pleased, Aboriginal

health unit at the Department of Health that has done yeoman service, just terrific service, in terms of putting together a whole variety and a whole range of services and needs that are required.

Mr. Cris Aglugub, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair

Like so many areas of Health, if we could find 100 nurses and if we could find 50 doctors that we could relocate, if we could deal with some transportation issues and some housing issues, if we could deal with major infrastructure issues, our task would be made much, much easier. As a government, we are, in a whole variety of areas, attempting to approach a lot of these areas, and a lot of the infrastructure building, and a lot of the changes.

One of the frustrations, and I am not meaning this to be a political criticism, but when we were on the other side of the House, and we would ask ministers here about Aboriginal health, the general response was that is a federal government responsibility. The result was that it got bogged down in federal-provincial jurisdictional questions. I can say in Estimates that I have been quoted publicly on many occasions saying we want to throw away the rule book. I am—I should not say I; it is we—we are tempting to forge forward on the Aboriginal issue by doing a number of things differently. As a start, we have been working quite closely with the federal government on a number of Aboriginal issues to put in place a different communication strategy and a different—I do not mean public communication strategy, but I mean a strategy of talking with each other and not paying as much attention to whether this is your job, and this is our job, this is not your job, this is your job. I am fully aware that proceeding on that kind of a basis opens us up to a number of difficulties in the future on constitutional grounds and jurisdictional grounds.

But, frankly, it is our view that the deficit is so extreme in so many areas that we have to forge ahead on a number of fronts. For example, something very unusual happened, I believe it was February, where the department of Indian and Northern Affairs—what is it called now? The federal department met with the provincial

department, and we just sat down for a day-long seminar as to how we were going to communicate and how we were going to move the whole agenda forward without getting caught up in the issues of "this is your jurisdiction, and you are not going to move, so we are not going to move, this is our jurisdiction," et cetera. We have made some progress in that regard.

I have in front of me a whole series of briefing notes about all of the initiatives dealing with Aboriginal health. I can outline some of them, but I just want to give the Member a flavour as to part of the way we are approaching this. I have referenced, on many occasions during the course of these Estimates, the fact that we are in ongoing discussions with the federal government with respect to trying to develop a new cost-sharing model, or a new approach to financing health care. I can assure the Member that Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, and, to a certain extent, Québec, and other jurisdictions with significant, and of course the three northern territories, have prioritized, have placed Aboriginal funding and Aboriginal issues at the top of the federal-provincial agenda in terms of when and if we acquire some kind of a new financing approach, there will be an actual recognition of the needs, and we all know them, of the tremendous needs in deficit, in terms of Aboriginal health. To that end, I have been very encouraged, quite frankly, that my federal colleague, Allan Rock, has recognized that on numerous occasions and represents and understands, I think, that issue.

Whether or not we can move forward because it is caught so much up in the history and the structure and the jurisdiction of this federal state is a question. I prefer to be hopeful in this area and forge forward.

The Member indicates that she was employed as one of those people that worked up there. I mean, I think those are the real heroes. People who do that do incredibly, incredibly good work under some very incredibly trying conditions.

If I were to outline to the Member the number of meetings that I have had with Indian and northern communities, again I would spend

the whole day in terms of Estimates. We have tried to recognize some of the needs.

Having said that as a preamble, I can indicate that there are a number of areas we are moving forward in specifically. Clearly the diabetes and dialysis epidemic that is sweeping the nation and more significantly sweeping our Aboriginal population is in the forefront of a number of our efforts. While we like to talk about dialysis and the expansion of dialysis, and we rightly recognize we have done so much of a better job of providing dialysis, when you really look at it, I do not want this to be misinterpreted, but dialysis is a failure, right? Dialysis is the end stage of a disease that has to be addressed at the front end. We are going to be doing additional and unique dialysis solutions in Manitoba. We are going to be doing some things that have not been tried before with respect to dialysis. Whether or not we succeed, I am hopeful we will succeed.

Having said that, the whole diabetes strategy that was put together the last few years in the province we are trying to move forward on. The first phase with respect to the announcement of the diabetes strategy and the approach to diabetes in terms of clinical guidelines and practice standards has been released across the province. We are working diligently to proceed in that area and to release other areas of the overall diabetes strategy and to launch that particular initiative.

We are also attempting to talk with and resolve some long-standing issues dealing with the Aboriginal population. Those include a whole range of initiatives and a whole range of areas, some of which were included under previous government strategies and some of which we will be expanding and providing additional services for. I am thinking of the Aboriginal Health and Wellness Centre in Winnipeg as well. But further than that, we are working with Sandy Bay, Island Lake, southern chiefs, Swampy Cree Tribal Council, Norway House, MKO, Nelson House and Norway House to develop new and innovative health care treatment and related health issues.

* (17:20)

In addition, in the city of Winnipeg, which has an incredibly large, growing Aboriginal population, there are a number of initiatives that cross other boundaries that we have to be involved in. As a tangential issue I should tell you that the prevention and treatment of AIDS for example and STDs is also a serious dilemma and an issue that we are not moving as fast as I would like on in this regard but that we are taking action to deal with.

When the Member references Aboriginal health issues, I am not trying to deal with time. I am actually try to give a bit of an overview in terms of how we are approaching this issue. There are any number of areas where we are trying to move forward on specific programming areas. The overall goal, obviously, is to increase the health determinants and the status of Aboriginal people for their benefit, obviously, and for the benefit of all of us in society.

We are doing a fair amount in terms of the treatment side. We are expanding on the treatment side, but it is sadly an area that we have to deal with and we have to expand. But we have to continue to put emphasis on the other side where we are supposed to be taking the Department of Health in general anyway, the whole issue of population health and needs base and determinants and the like. That is a part of a larger picture.

In terms of some of the nitty-gritty issues such as northern training, for example, we will be taking some initiatives in terms of northern training. The Member for Russell (Mr. Derkach) indicated when we were having our discussion here the other day the need for expanded training of Aboriginal people in all areas of health care for a variety of reasons. I can indicate to the Member that we are going to be undertaking initiatives in that area right across the spectrum of the various health care provider professions.

I think I will stop at this point and determine other specifics the Member may wish to inquire.

Mrs. Driedger: Just for the clarification of the Minister, I did not work on a reserve. I had actually spent time as a student nurse, doing my senior practicum. So I did not have a huge amount of time spent there but certainly was

impacted by what I saw when I was there. One cannot argue at all that some real emphasis has to be put in the development of promotion of Aboriginal health.

When I was in The Pas visiting a hospital there a year or so ago, I had an opportunity to talk to nurses who indicated to me that a lot of patients who came into their emergency were Aboriginal people who came in for a dressing change because there was not a home care program on reserves.

I am wondering if the Minister has had an opportunity to discuss with the federal government and push for a home care program being developed on reserves and whether the federal government is willing to do the job that they should be doing in financing that.

Mr. Chomiak: The Member is correct. In fact, I can tell the Member that we have spent considerable time on that specific issue. The Member is accurate. The Member is correct.

I do not want to go into too much detail because we are following a couple of different tracks with respect to negotiations with the federal government on issues of this kind, and they are leading different ways, but it has been identified clearly as a significant, and the Member rightly states, detriment to First Nations people, and it has been a part of numerous and varied discussions at a very senior level and at all levels with the federal government. It is clearly an issue, well identified as important.

Mrs. Driedger: I wonder if the Minister could tell me if he maintains the position that it is the fiduciary duty of the federal government to provide medical services to First Nations people on reserves?

Mr. Chomiak: That certainly is a viewpoint that is offered and certainly put forward by many people in the health care system.

Mrs. Driedger: I wonder if the Minister could tell me whether he agrees with it.

Mr. Chomiak: I am trying not to be difficult. I am trying, actually, to stay away, in terms of public pronouncements, from necessarily

hardened and fast decisions and observations. I am simply suggesting, as the Minister of Health, that we want to work with whomever we can to improve the standard and quality of life for Aboriginal people, people from First Nations. Clearly, there is an overriding consideration and a long-standing legal principle that the federal government has a fiduciary duty to people of First Nation descent.

Mrs. Driedger: I do not mean to be picky about this, but it is because I am fairly new. Within the two years I have been here, I have not been involved in a lot of discussions around Aboriginal health. I am sincerely asking these questions in order to find out whether or not my understanding is accurate, because I understood that costs related to health care on reserves, and the Minister could correct me, was the responsibility of the federal government. I do not know if the provincial governments have contributed to that over the years. That is what I am trying to clarify. Is there already precedence set in terms of provincial funding for health care on reserves, or is it strictly an expectation, policy, law, whatever, that it is federal funding? I am just looking for information.

Mr. Chomiak: Generally, the Member is correct, unless one looks at the 1964 agreements of which there is litigation flowing out of them. It is really complex. For me to wrap my head around it, every time I wrap my head around it, and I am legally trained, I forget it within half an hour of my three-hour meeting because it is incredibly complicated. In general, we provide the doctors on reserve; the federal government provides the nurses.

Generally the position, I think, of the First Nations community is that the responsibility for health services is a responsibility of the Government of Canada. Then there are breakdowns and variations as to what the responsibility of the provincial government is with respect to on reserve and off reserve. Then you get into the complicated factor of nearby locals that are not on reserve, of which there are on-reserve people living, and it gets to be a very convoluted and difficult process. The general legal position is that it is a fiduciary responsibility of the federal government. The process has been we have been providing the

doctors, they have been providing the nurses, on reserve. Then transport off reserve, et cetera, is generally provided by the federal government, but then it gets very tricky. I am not trying to be evasive as well.

* (17:30)

Part of the reason, we are doing various negotiations at various levels with various parties, on a variety of issues, and I am trying to move the agenda forward in terms of just providing service and just getting service to people who need service. That generally has been the principle we have tried to follow. "Overlooking," well, that is the wrong word, but trying to avoid jurisdictional questions and trying to be more pragmatic in our approach to these issues.

Mrs. Driedger: Again, I am not here to pick a fight. I am here to try to understand this because, when it came to the crisis situation of farmers in southwestern Manitoba, the Government has determined that there is a federal jurisdiction. Basically the provincial government here is holding federal government's feet to the fire on that one in terms of crisis funding.

Is the Minister, in Health, going to adhere to those same principles that what has been known to be federal jurisdiction, whether it is in health care or farming or other areas, will that same principle be withheld throughout all departments?

Mr. Chomiak: I wish it were that clear. It is not that clear. So my response is yes and no. On some levels in some areas, we are very strongly adhering to a particular jurisdictional question. On other areas, we are trying to be innovative and see if there are trade-offs or other areas that issues can move forward having regard to the sort of mutual jurisdiction and matters at hand. What I am trying to do as Health Minister, what we are trying to do as a Health Department, is move the agenda forward with respect to issues of providing health care. It is not as simple as simply determining jurisdictional questions in this instance, because when someone flies down, say, to Winnipeg to receive treatment that is not available, we end up paying for the cost of the

treatment here. So if one wants to look at dollars and cents, it is sort of a different issue.

Clearly, the bottom line is the federal government has to be involved. There has to be federal government support and federal government resources. What I am saying is maybe there is a different way that we can take advantage of that without getting locked in some jurisdictional questions to move the agenda forward on this very complex issue. It is also the subject of significant negotiations, as we speak, with relation to federal-provincial cost sharing. There are ramifications and negotiating positions that I actually am trying to avoid necessarily expressing publicly so that it does not preclude negotiations in doing certain things in certain areas.

Mrs. Driedger: I am wondering if the Minister would be prepared to provide me with the memorandum of understanding that was signed in regard to the Garden Hill agreement for the dialysis program or dialysis machine. They talk about maybe an entire hospital to one northern reserve. I am wondering if the Minister would be able to provide me with a copy of that memorandum of understanding.

Mr. Chairperson in the Chair

Mr. Chomiak: Yes, we can undertake to provide the Member with a copy of that.

Mrs. Driedger: I thank the Minister for that. I would now like to move onto just a few questions, particularly I think the Minister's stand over the last few years in regard to regulations in personal care homes. I would just like to hear his current stance, I guess, in terms of what he feels or the direction he is going to take in terms of adequately funding personal care homes. I am aware from reading some newspaper articles over the last few years that he did not feel that personal care homes were adequately funded. I am wondering if he is going to be addressing that.

Mr. Chomiak: The Member started out talking about regulations and then ended up on funding. I do not know if there are a couple of different questions in there or not.

As I indicated previously during the course of these Estimates, we did increase funding to personal care homes in this year's budget significantly, but, more importantly, we did provide increased funding to pre-existing personal care homes for various equipment and supplies as well as staffing. If I stand corrected, I believe that is the first actual increase along those regards since about 1992 or '93, or certainly in the mid-'90s.

Mrs. Driedger: In a newspaper article back in 1998, the Minister was quoted as saying he would like to see a better staff-patient ratio. Is that still something the Minister is moving toward?

Mr. Chomiak: The issue of staffing levels at personal care homes has been something that we have addressed in opposition for some time, and one of the reasons for our increased funding was to make a start to address that issue that has not kept pace with the need. That was a recognition in this year's budget. There is a recognition in this year's budget for increased funding in that regard—again the first time in my experience, and that is some time—from the Department of Health.

If the Member were to look back over Estimates, the Member would see there has been increased funding to personal care homes relatively consistently, not great but relatively consistently since the early to mid-'90s. That generally has gone to expand the capacity of personal care homes, et cetera, and we actually earmarked funding to specific areas to deal with that.

There is no doubt that the increased demand and the increased acuity of care in personal care homes necessitates a need for increased resources to provide that care. I say that well aware of the fact that we are facing a huge human resource deficit in the health care field across the board. That is a major difficulty that we face in that regard. Having said that, it is clear that it is an area of need and an area that requires attention and will over the course of the mandate be accorded the attention that we think is necessary.

Mrs. Driedger: I guess I would like to ask the Minister that as we see improving numbers of nursing staff in the workforce, what is his strategy, how does he plan to manage moving forward so that there is a change in the staff-patient ratio? Is there going to be involvement from an outside consultant, or are we going to look at the people involved in the front lines having a say?

How does he plan to move ahead with this to address the issue of what that staff-patient ratio should be?

* (17:40)

Mr. Chomiak: That is a complex issue, as if there are any issues that are not complex in Health. As the Member is probably aware, there was a piloting of a particular information data system at personal care homes with respect to determining the ratios and the data associated with that. Actually it is quite a fascinating exercise. It is a movement towards a better management tool but, at the same time, towards a better recognition of commonality of particular types of care and needs across the system which actually has the potential to be expanded into a quite interesting variation which is utilized in some jurisdictions that see standard criteria applied to various patients, standard actually types of care plan applied to particular individuals across the spectrum of health care.

But having said that, the MDS system has been piloted. We will probably see some form of an application with respect to utilization in Manitoba. There are federal funds involved in this and various ramifications of that. That certainly is an interesting area. It is very clear too with respect to the issue of personal care homes vis-à-vis, for example, acute care facilities, there is a tendency to underscore the value of personal care homes. It is evident from my discussions with front line nurses that there is not a lot of attractiveness and not a lot of encouragement often provided to personnel to make a career, for example, of the personal care home sector.

Contingent with that, though, are the related issues of the fact that we are seeing complex needs of patients that require treatment in

personal care homes that we did not see years ago. That is a function of a movement away from patients being in acute care settings and patients moving to acute care settings.

So issues like psychogeriatric or issues dealing with dementia are paramount in terms of how we approach the personal care home sector, the patient mix, the staff mix, the actual physical layout, and all the matters relating to dealing with patients. Compounded and layered on top of that is the whole issue of complexity of needs in terms of if there is a chronic need or chronic care and how one relates to chronic care and provide the services in that regard. Layered on top of that is the issue of some prognostication that in fact our demand for personal care homes because of the demographics and because of the utilization may actually, some predictors are that we will have less need for personal care homes in the future and in fact we should be building up capacity in other areas to provide health care versus some others that say the need will still be there.

So the issue is complex and compounded. We have met with both nurses, health care aides and related professionals in the personal care home field to receive their input and advice. In fact we will probably see a process for that actually being put in place in a more systematic way so that it does not get lost in terms of making determinations as to how we are going to deal with these issues. On top of that is the whole question of issues of equity and pay scale.

Frankly, one has to approach that. I mean, that is a problem in this area. The typical case scenario that we are hearing right now is someone gets trained in the community as a health care aide, moves to a personal care home and then moves to an acute care facility. Again it is that curious disincentive in our whole medicare system where the wages and the emphasis is in the very top higher end of the system, and at the lower end, as you move, say, through personal care homes and down at the community, you get paid less to provide those services. It is a disincentive to actually be involved in working in the community. That is not something we can change overnight. In fact that is not something we probably can change. Again, that is wrapped up in some discussions

with the federal government in terms of how we deal with issues of equity and pay scales.

I should indicate that within this particular budget, and within this particular first few months of a government, we have taken a number of initiatives to deal with this issue. First thing, we brought in The Protection of Persons in Care Act before this legislature, which is being debated as we speak, sort of, as the process works its way through. Secondly, we have actually increased funding to personal care homes in this budget, and, more specifically, we have increased funding for staffing and supplies and service supplies and equipment, which is something that has not happened in a long time, specifically to pre-existing personal care homes. Thirdly, we have, and it fits up into the overall complexity of this, already provided to all personal care homes in the province, and all regions, the first phase of the standards process that was put in place following the 1995 recommendations of the Committee, and the various inquests that occurred, personal care homes. So the regulations, those particular standards are out in the community for feedback and for implementation in a context of providing us with advice as to how workable it is. Fourthly, we have the issue of the MDS, the whole information system, which we are hoping to implement, but which is pending some developments. Finally, there are some specific allocations in this particular budget to take into account particular needs and requirements of the personal care homes sector that will be communicated at some point.

Mrs. Driedger: I want to thank the Minister for that information. With some degree of trepidation, I will ask my next question. What is the Minister planning to replace SmartHealth with so that we can improve the accountability within our health care system?

Mr. Chomiak: I have said for some time, I appreciate the discourse and discussion we are having. I have always preferred, when I was critic, to have a discussion and discourse rather than a rhetorical battle back and forth. I know we always fall into it. I like not doing that if we do not have to do that, but we do that. So, I am not going to fall into that with respect to this question.

An Honourable Member: You are tempted?

Mr. Chomiak: No, I am not even tempted because I actually—it is the ebb and flow. I could suggest that if members—I know there are lots and lots of members here in the House, but if there were certain members of Member's caucus that were in attendance, I could already see us going off on a tangent. Fortunately, they are occupied on other committees, so I will not be.

* (17:50)

The response to that question is not simple. I have said publicly that the SmartHealth initiative has put us probably four or five years behind on information technology in this province. There is a gap that has to be made up. Given the experience with SmartHealth, there is a need to be vigilant in terms of how we approach this particular issue. Suffice to say that it has been identified as one of the key issues to be addressed by Health. Actually it is a key issue that has to be addressed across the whole system of government, in some ways, but Health in particular, because of the incredible demand and the incredible need. You can tell already because of the notes that are flying back and forth here with respect to dealing with this initiative.

If we attempted to realistically come up to what would be termed the industry norm in this particular area, it would probably cost the province in this budgetary year alone several hundred millions of dollars. It would cost the needs and the demands in the area of hundreds of millions of dollars. What we have to do is to attempt to address the issue in a sense that provides us with the best utilization of—in fact, I just was indicated that the current estimate of the need in health care alone is something like \$300 million in terms of information technology in the health care field.

If members doubt that, just take a look across the health care system literally from north to south, from east to west in every single area. In virtually no areas are we up to what would be industry norm in terms of the information technology. It was identified in the Webster report most recently as one of the highest priorities required. So having said that in terms of introduction to my discussions about

SmartHealth, we are grappling at Health and we have not finalized yet the prioritized list of information needs and technology that we are going to approach given the limited budgeted capacity, knowing full well that any initiatives we undertake will only cover a very small portion of the requirements that are necessary in health care.

Mrs. Driedger: I appreciate the challenges that government faces in addressing the technology issue within health care. It certainly is going to be huge, an incredible one, a very costly one, and does take a lot of study and thought in terms of making the decisions.

I guess, we have time for one final question today, and it is on a new area altogether. It is from a newspaper article of June 24 that talks about ambulance crisis, and it is about the city ambulances. There is one particular paragraph that I just needed some clarification on. It is quoted here: Provincial funding to the health authority for programs that include helping drunks on the street will be redirected to fund the new ambulances, said Councillor Garth Steek. The previous paragraph to that indicated the Doer government's May 10 budget included \$750,000 for the City's ambulance service, which was only enough to put one more ambulance on the road. Then it goes on to say, provincial funding to the health authority for the programs that include helping drunks on the street will be redirected to fund the new ambulances. I wonder if the Minister could just explain what exactly this article meant?

Mr. Chomiak: The issue here is that Winnipeg has felt for some time that they have been underfunded from the Province with respect to emergency services. The initial thinking when we came into office was that discussions had basically stalled and that the City was so frustrated with the discussions that we were going to go nowhere. What we did is we said, let us talk about this, and, as a consequence, we ended up in this budget almost doubling the

amount of resources provided to the City of Winnipeg ambulance service. We doubled the rural, but we almost doubled—I think it is \$2.1 million, if memory serves me correctly—to the City of Winnipeg for their ambulance service.

The complicated factor is that Health does not negotiate with the City of Winnipeg for the ambulance service. The ambulance service by legislation is operated by the Regional Health Authority. So what we did is we funded the Regional Health Authority to that amount, and then what we did is that we said to the City of Winnipeg—the City of Winnipeg had come forward last spring prior to us being government, saying: We want you to take over into facility transport, Province. We want you to take over the Main Street Project, Province, and we want you to also fund a couple other services. So we put together a package of money to the WRHA to negotiate with the City. I do not think the negotiations are entirely complete yet, and again I am not trying to be difficult, but the negotiations are still between the City and the WRHA.

At this point, the arrangement still is that we have almost doubled the funding to the City of Winnipeg as a package to WRHA. The WRHA is negotiating with the City of Winnipeg for the allocation of those funds. The bottom line is there will be considerable additional resources available to the City of Winnipeg to the ambulance services. Whether the City of Winnipeg puts new ambulances on the road or whether they divert existing resources—

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

Please call the Speaker.

IN SESSION

Mr. Speaker: The hour being 6 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. tomorrow (Tuesday).

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, July 10, 2000

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