



Third Session - Thirty-Sixth Legislature

of the

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

**Official Report
(Hansard)**

*Published under the
authority of
The Honourable Louise M. Dacquay
Speaker*



Vol. XLVII No. 58 - 1:30 p.m., Tuesday, June 10, 1997

MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Sixth Legislature

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, June 10, 1997

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Mobile Screening Unit for Mammograms

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Madam Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Noella Gaudet, Ed Gaudet, Betty Churchill and others praying that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba request the Minister of Health (Mr. Praznik) to consider immediately establishing a mobile screening unit for mammograms to help women across the province detect breast cancer at the earliest possible opportunity.

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Madam Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Geraldine Lowe, Shirley Leask, Marni Switzer and others praying that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba request the Minister of Health to consider immediately establishing a mobile screening unit for mammograms to help women across the province detect breast cancer at the earliest possible opportunity.

Ms. Diane McGifford (Osborne): Madam Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Darlynn Clarkston, Marsha Clarkston, Sherry Delorme and others praying that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba request the Minister of Health to consider immediately establishing a mobile screening unit for mammograms to help women across the province detect breast cancer at the earliest possible opportunity.

Central Guaranty Trust Company—Transfer

Mr. Marcel Laurendeau (St. Norbert): Madam Speaker, I beg to present the petition of TD Trust Company and Central Guaranty Trust Company praying for the passing of an act to transfer the trusteeship and agency business of Central Guaranty Trust Company to TD Trust Company.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Mobile Screening Unit for Mammograms

Madam Speaker: I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk), and it complies with the rules and practices of the House (by leave). Is it the will of the House to have the petition read?

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: Dispense.

WHEREAS medical authorities have stated that breast cancer in Manitoba has reached almost epidemic proportions; and

WHEREAS yearly mammograms are recommended for women over 50, and perhaps younger if a woman feels she is at risk; and

WHEREAS while improved surgical procedures and better post-operative care do improve a woman's chances if she is diagnosed, early detection plays a vital role; and

WHEREAS Manitoba currently has only three centres where mammograms can be performed, those being Winnipeg, Brandon and Thompson; and

WHEREAS a trip to and from these centres for a mammogram can cost a woman upwards of \$500 which is a prohibitive cost for some women; and

WHEREAS a number of other provinces have dealt with this problem by establishing mobile screening units; and

WHEREAS the provincial government has promised to take action on this serious issue.

WHEREFORE YOUR PETITIONERS HUMBLY PRAY that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba may be pleased to request the Minister of Health (Mr. Praznik) to consider immediately establishing a mobile

screening unit for mammograms to help women across the province detect breast cancer at the earliest possible opportunity.

Madam Speaker: I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak), and it complies with the rules and practices of the House. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read? Dispense.

WHEREAS medical authorities have stated that breast cancer in Manitoba has reached almost epidemic proportions; and

WHEREAS yearly mammograms are recommended for women over 50, and perhaps younger if a woman feels she is at risk; and

WHEREAS while improved surgical procedures and better post-operative care do improve a woman's chances if she is diagnosed, early detection plays a vital role; and

WHEREAS Manitoba currently has only three centres where mammograms can be performed, those being Winnipeg, Brandon and Thompson; and

WHEREAS a trip to and from these centres for a mammogram can cost a woman upwards of \$500 which is a prohibitive cost for some women; and

WHEREAS a number of other provinces have dealt with this problem by establishing mobile screening units; and

WHEREAS the provincial government has promised to take action on this serious issue.

WHEREFORE YOUR PETITIONERS HUMBLY PRAY that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba may be pleased to request the Minister of Health (Mr. Praznik) to consider immediately establishing a mobile screening unit for mammograms to help women across the province detect breast cancer at the earliest possible opportunity.

Madam Speaker: I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member for Osborne (Ms. McGifford), and

it complies with the rules and practices of the House. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read?

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: Dispense.

WHEREAS medical authorities have stated that breast cancer in Manitoba has reached almost epidemic proportions; and

WHEREAS yearly mammograms are recommended for women over 50, and perhaps younger if a woman feels she is at risk; and

WHEREAS while improved surgical procedures and better post-operative care do improve a woman's chances if she is diagnosed, early detection plays a vital role; and

WHEREAS Manitoba currently has only three centres where mammograms can be performed, those being Winnipeg, Brandon and Thompson; and

WHEREAS a trip to and from these centres for a mammogram can cost a woman upwards of \$500 which is a prohibitive cost for some women; and

WHEREAS a number of other provinces have dealt with this problem by establishing mobile screening units; and

WHEREAS the provincial government has promised to take action on this serious issue.

WHEREFORE YOUR PETITIONERS HUMBLY PRAY that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba may be pleased to request the Minister of Health (Mr. Praznik) to consider immediately establishing a mobile screening unit for mammograms to help women across the province detect breast cancer at the earliest possible opportunity.

Obstetrics Closure—Grace General Hospital

Madam Speaker: I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale). It complies with the rules and practices of the House. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read?

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: Dispense.

THAT the obstetrics program has always been an important part of the Grace Hospital's mandate; and

THAT both people in the community and a number of government studies have recommended against the further closure of community hospitals' obstetrics programs; and

THAT as a result of federal and provincial cuts in the health budget, hospitals are being forced to eliminate programs in order to balance their own budgets; and

THAT the closure of the Grace Hospital obstetrics ward will mean laying off 54 health care professionals, many of whom have years of experience and dedicated service in obstetrics; and

THAT moving to a model where more and more births are centred in the tertiary care hospitals will be more costly and decreases the choices for women about where they can give birth.

WHEREFORE YOUR PETITIONERS HUMBLYPRAY THAT the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba request that the Minister of Health (Mr. Praznik) consider stopping the closure of the obstetrics program at Winnipeg's Grace Hospital.

* (1335)

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Committee of Supply

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

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

Motion agreed to.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Pine Falls Paper Company Limited

Hon. James Downey (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism): I have a statement for the House, and I have copies for the members.

Madam Speaker, I am pleased to inform the House of an important achievement involving more than a thousand jobs and a lot of hard and solid effort. Just three years after saving their mill from potential closure, the new employee-owners of the Pine Falls Paper Company Limited have been able to retire the \$30-million line of credit from the Province of Manitoba.

In 1994, the Pine Falls employees faced a serious situation. The newsprint industry was in recession and the former owners were no longer willing to make large capital expenditures to keep the mill competitive. At that time the mill employed approximately 500 full-time and 700 seasonal staff in harvest and forest renewal work. I was also informed this morning by Mr. Pitre, who is with us today in the gallery, that they currently have over 520 employees at the plant.

The community of Pine Falls depended heavily on the mill, not only because of the jobs, but because it operated or funded many local services such as the elementary and high schools, recreation centres, garbage collection, fire protection and road and sewer maintenance. The management, employees and other investors purchased the mill and kept it going with the help of a \$30-million line of credit from the Province of Manitoba. In fact, the Pine Falls Paper Company Limited not only kept it going, they are now retiring the line of credit seven years ahead of schedule.

During the past three years, the company borrowed only \$5 million on the line of credit. The Province of Manitoba's line of credit has enabled the company to leverage some \$53 million in credit from private sources and repay their loan. In addition, it helped the company finance two major projects, a waste-water treatment plant to meet federal and provincial environmental standards and a new de-inking plant to

produce recycled paper. Now, thanks to their efforts and strong performance, Pine Falls Paper Company Limited is able to operate totally from private financing. This is a great vote of confidence and is richly deserved by the company's performance and in its future. In 1994, the total annual benefit to the province from the Pine Falls mill was an estimated \$75 million. It is certainly more than that today.

We are delighted with the turnaround in the fortunes and the future of Pine Falls Paper Company Limited and in the lives of the workers, managers, investors and the community. We are pleased that the government was able to help leverage the private financing that helped make the buy-out possible, and we are even more gratified by the early repayment.

Madam Speaker, we want to congratulate the Pine Falls Paper Company and all those involved in saving their community and putting it on a firm footing. Through faith in themselves and the refusal to give up, the community of Pine Falls has shown what Manitobans can do by working together. Thanks to all of these factors, an important, well-established Manitoba operation has been saved and has a bright future ahead.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): I would like to join with the Deputy Premier in congratulating all the members of the Pine Falls Paper Company and the members of the adjacent community that worked so hard together to maintain the jobs and resources in their community and to do an excellent job when faced with the potential closure from the Abitibi corporation. It shows us that employees and management working together in a co-operative, long-term way, working together in Manitoba, with Manitobans, together as Manitobans can make a difference. We believe this is a model for other companies that are facing similar situations.

We would like to look at this example and perhaps look at the situation at Repap in The Pas, where we have had promise after promise after promise, deal after deal after deal with a multinational corporation when maybe we should be looking at modest goals, modest kinds of objectives and having realistic plans with

Manitobans for Manitobans in northern Manitoba as we have seen in terms of the Pine Falls Paper Company.

* (1340)

Long ago we called on the government and the Premier (Mr. Filmon) to proceed with the waste-water treatment plant. We are pleased that the company has developed this technology. We also stated that we believed the de-inking plant was absolutely necessary in terms of the long-term survival of the company, and we are pleased to have the opportunity to have visited that de-inking plant. I know it is a site that many school kids also visit to be able to witness the long-term recycling that is taking place with the de-inking plant.

Madam Speaker, employees sacrificed, people in the area sacrificed, the government put up the line of credit. We supported that decision. We did not call on the government to withdraw that money in the election campaign in our alternative budget. We thought that it was a realistic proposal to bridge this company from the private owner into the community owner. We believe in that, in bridging communities that are under tremendous pressure, particularly in commodity markets, through the rough times, so that they can survive over the long haul.

We would also continue to monitor the whole issue of the sustainable resource that is in that area. We know that the company is very interested in maintaining sustainable resources, and all Manitobans are interested in long-term forest practices that make sense for all Manitobans, including the employees of the plant.

We are also very concerned, and have raised this with management in the past, the relationship with the First Nations communities that are in part of the cut area and adjacent to the community. We will continue—when we meet with the employees and the management of the Pine Falls Paper Company—to ask questions about the relationship with Sagkeeng and the positive relationship that they have. We will continue to push that for employment for First Nations people in the resource area that is so important.

So I want to congratulate the employees. I want to congratulate this success. As I say, we are ever vigilant in terms of this company, but we think it is a very, very

positive announcement today and for that we are thankful. Thank you.

Introduction of Guests

Madam Speaker: Prior to Oral Questions, I would like to draw the attention of all honourable members to the Speaker's Gallery where we have this afternoon members from the Pine Falls Paper Company: Mr. Fern Pitre, president; Ashok Narang, chairman of the board; Glen Pennel, vice-president for Woodlands; Michael Sinclair, secretary to the board; Judy Habing, director of communications; and Fred Ayotte, vice-president of finance.

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

Also, seated in the public gallery, we have thirty-three Grade 9 students from Pinawa Secondary School under the direction of Mr. Brian McKenzie. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable Minister of Health (Mr. Praznik).

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

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Health Care System Two-Tiered System

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): We are committed, of course, on this side to the principles of the Canada Health Act and the principles that allow Canada to have a health system that does not require a big wallet or a large purse to access health care but rather a universal system that is available to all on the basis of medical need. In October 1995 I asked the Premier questions about their position on the federal government's penalties for two-tier private health care, and the Premier took the questions I raised with him as notice. Can the Premier tell us today: What is their policy in dealing with private health care resources in the province of Manitoba, and what has been the impact of those decisions that the provincial government has made on the deductions or penalties by the federal government?

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, I think all Manitobans of all political stripes appreciate and want a public health care system that provides to them the health care that they need, both in a preventative and supportive role but also in a treatment role when they require it. One should appreciate, though, in a province like Manitoba, like in so many others, our system was not built at one particular time but did evolve over a period of time when most of our health care was provided by private institutions, religious orders, et cetera, and it has evolved today to what is by far almost an entirely publicly funded and directed system. We have some difficulty with the holdbacks that the federal government has proposed under the Canada Health Act. Those are matters that are under discussion and negotiation, but they are certainly there, I think, out of the historical basis of our health care system and not because of a policy decision to have a private-public system.

* (1345)

Mr. Doer: The minister did not answer my question, what your present policy is and what is its impact on deductions and penalties. According to the latest Canada Health Act report '95-96, Manitoba was deducted or fined some \$269,000, and we were second only to the province of Alberta, which is well known for its profit health care system in terms of the amount of penalties based on violations of the Canada Health Act and the movement towards a two-tier American-style health care system. I would like to ask the minister: Why is Manitoba second only to Alberta in terms of these fines and deductions, and why are we not proceeding with a universal health care system in the province of Manitoba as we should?

Mr. Praznik: The issue that the member addresses—and I think what the member is attempting to do is use that dispute with the federal government to somehow build the case that we are moving to or want to by policy in Manitoba have a two-tiered health care system. That is not our policy or the direction in which we are advancing. The rules under which we operate that have seen the development of some private clinic opportunities—which, by the way, I have said, in answer to questions from his colleague the critic for Health, that we have trouble with some of that development

because it has happened, and one sometimes has to question whether or not work is being funnelled there when it could be done in our publicly funded system. Those rules have existed through a number of governments, including the government on which he sat.

Madam Speaker, we are attempting to deal with that. Ultimately what we want, I believe, is the same as the member wants, a publicly funded system that can deal with all of the needs of Manitobans.

Mr. Doer: Madam Speaker, I would like to ask the government why it will not follow in with other provinces like Saskatchewan, not continue a two-tier health care system and just remember that debate we have had in this Chamber for the last couple of weeks where this government was going to impose user fees on spina bifida patients, looking for \$400,000 in our health care system. Would it not be better to put that \$269,000 towards those patients, spina bifida patients in Manitoba, rather than looking at user fees over here and a two-tier health care system over there? Does it not make sense to stop the Alberta health care system here in Manitoba and have a universal health care system accessible to all without this \$269,000 penalty or fine to the province of Manitoba in terms of its citizens?

Mr. Praznik: Madam Speaker, first of all, the member's analysis of the numbers does not quite add up, because the dollars we have not received. If that service had been provided in our system, we would have had to pay for it, so the dollars would not be available for other things. The member should not try to leave that impression in the House.

Madam Speaker, in the province of Alberta they have made other policy decisions or recommendations in the direction which they want to go. Those are not the same as our direction in Manitoba. We obviously want to have, and it has been our effort to have, a publicly funded system, not a two-tier system. We are working towards that, but let us remember, in some of these areas we still have work to do to be able to have enough services available, particularly in those areas where there is a growing need to be able to accommodate all of that. That is the goal that we hope to achieve in a very short while.

Health Care System Kidney Dialysis Waiting Lists

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health, and I will give the Minister of Health's answer first: We are putting into place a transparent process. We will ask the board of the Winnipeg Regional Authority to deal with this issue. We do not want to spend dollars, but we are going to better organize.

Madam Speaker, am I asking about emergency room backups; am I asking about waiting lists for surgery; am I asking for waiting lists for bone scans, the longest in the country; am I asking for waiting lists for diagnostic scans; am I asking about waiting lists for dialysis? Can the minister outline specifically what he is going to do about the waiting list for dialysis and the other waiting lists that we have raised day in and day out in this Chamber for the last several weeks?

* (1350)

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, the member for Kildonan would like, I am sure, to have a very simple answer to a very complex question, and that is not always possible. In the area of dialysis, we have discussed it in Question Period in this Chamber before. We have discussed it in Estimates. We have a crisis looming in dialysis.

The number of cases, I just share with him. In 1992 our total number of dialysis cases, I believe, was 390; it is well over 525 this year. We have a growing number of people in need. We are attempting to keep up with that need. We have been running closer to the margin than I think any of us would have liked. We have other centres that have been approved or are about to be approved. We put in some other capacity in the system that is coming online.

Today, we have a situation where we had two additional cases onto our system, one totally unexpected in an individual who moved from Edmonton—and it did put some additional pressure on the system—who has been accommodated in the Brandon facility.

Mr. Chomiak: Madam Speaker, how does the minister expect Manitobans to find it acceptable that a crisis in dialysis that is raised regularly in the Chamber since 1992 and the minister acknowledged has more than doubled since 1992 is not the result of pathetic planning and budget cuts by this government and minister after minister standing up and saying, we are going to do something, rather than dealing directly with the issue?

Will the minister table specifically the plan for once that the province is going to follow with respect to dialysis, so we do not have to stand up in here day in and day out and ask the minister to do something?

Mr. Praznik: Madam Speaker, if the member for Kildonan would look at the facts as to what has been done, he would not have to get so angry over this particular matter. Since '92-93 we have added, I understand, 20 additional stations that can accommodate 88 patients. Those came with complete funding and operating dollars. We have been putting more resources year after year into dialysis.

The trouble, of course, is that our need in this area has expanded faster. We currently have a centre approved, I believe, for another expansion in Dauphin. We have two other rural centres that are very close to the approval stages. Details are being worked out. We have a program for nurses who run the equipment that has been approved, I believe will start on the 10th of August, because one difficulty is recruiting the staff to run the stations.

Madam Speaker, this is not just a simple matter. There is a lot of detail to it, and I think the member would serve the debate better if we did deal with the detail rather than to sometimes in fact—unfactual comments on his part.

Mr. Chomiak: Will the minister, who mouthed the same words as his previous two predecessors in that portfolio, explain why there was a plan three years ago for an expansion and for dialysis that was put on hold by this government after promising in the election and still remains on hold and frustrates individuals in the system and patients who require care, when in fact machines and the ability of staffing those machines could deal with this crisis?

They have had a plan for three years and froze it, failed to act on it after promising it in an election campaign.

Mr. Praznik: Madam Speaker, I have said to the member that we have added 20 additional stations since 1992 that can accommodate 88 additional staff. We have a number of other expansions that we are working through the details of now to move towards construction and getting them into operation. So let it not stand on the record of this House that this government or my predecessor the member for Brandon West (Mr. McCrae) have done nothing. We have been moving ahead with this. We obviously need more resources in this area, and we are in the process of establishing those centres.

Madam Speaker, it just is not a matter of committing dollars. It takes a great deal of planning and effort to get those stations into operation, and that is what we are doing.

Physician Resources Northern Manitoba

Mr. Oscar Lathlin (The Pas): Madam Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister of Health a question on doctor recruitment up north. That is, he goes around telling people, on one hand, that the regional health authorities are now equipped to address the issue of a shortage of doctors in northern Manitoba, particularly in The Pas, but at the same time he told members—and he is quoted in the paper as saying—of the Health Care Liaison Committee in February when he met with them, three months ago, that in six weeks this department would develop a doctor recruitment strategy for The Pas and northern Manitoba.

I would like to ask the minister now to table that particular doctor recruitment strategy this afternoon here.

* (1355)

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, I am not sure what the member references, but the work that we have underway right now is a committee that we have had in place for somewhat over two months that involves representatives of the

Manitoba Medical Association, the College of Physicians and Surgeons, the Manitoba Association of Registered Nurses whose first charge is to deal with the emergency situation and is also, secondly, to be able to develop a plan province wide. I know the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) and the member for Concordia (Mr. Doer) do not like the word "transparent," but one of the problems we have in the whole issue of physician remuneration is an ad hoc approach that, quite frankly, has not worked over the last 30 years.

So, Madam Speaker, we have the parties to the table. They are working at it. Our staff are also working with those northern areas, but I cannot produce doctors out of a hat. They have to be recruited; they have to be interested in being in those communities, and it has been a long, hard, difficult fight over quite a number of years.

Mr. Lathlin: I think the minister is aware that right now there are eight doctors left in The Pas. This summer, when they go on holidays, only four will be left in The Pas.

I would like to ask the minister: What plan does he have in place for The Pas when that eventuality comes this summer in The Pas when those people go on holidays? What plan does he have in order that people in The Pas will have access to doctor services, just like the rest of Manitoba?

Mr. Praznik: Madam Speaker, the member for The Pas has been in office, like myself, for some time. We all have communities in which doctors are sometimes in short supply and take holidays during the period. The member, I would hope, would have been aware of our locum tenens program within the department where we do in fact pay doctors on a certain basis to fill in during these periods in areas where doctors or physicians are taking holidays or we have seasonal fluctuations in demand. That program has been in place for many years and I am assuming will accommodate The Pas this year when doctors are on holidays.

Mr. Lathlin: I would like to ask the Minister of Health one last question, and that is the doctor recruitment strategy that he referred to. Here is what he told the

Health Care Liaison Committee, co-chaired by Ronnie Evans from Norway House and the mayor of the town of The Pas, that in six weeks he would have a strategy in place, three months ago. What time frame is he now looking at in order that that strategy be completed and implemented?

Mr. Praznik: Now that the member for The Pas has identified the meeting, there were other components to that meeting. First of all, what he talked about was the 90-day committee that I have identified, which I hope we will have a report on the first part of that by the end of this month. Secondly, when we talked to northern chiefs about health care, as they are in the process of negotiating a transfer from Health and Welfare Canada, they talked about the doctors who are paid through that program and also working to co-ordinate their use throughout the system. So, Madam Speaker, those chiefs were coming with part of the solution. Part of that work that was left, as they organize their own structure, is to work with us. I do not think the member has put all the details of that discussion on the record of this House.

Physician Resources Northern Manitoba

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): Madam Speaker, if there is any doubt of the severity of the shortage of physicians in rural and northern Manitoba, it is outlined in a letter, and I would like to table copies of this from the chair, Mr. Merv Toderian, of the Burntwood Regional Health Authority, who states that in the Burntwood region the problem is reaching crisis proportion and further states: It is obvious that what you have been doing—this is addressed to the minister—is not addressing the need for physicians in northern and rural Manitoba.

In light of the crisis situation, which we all know is the case in many areas of rural and northern Manitoba, I would like to ask the minister what new initiatives he prepared to take to ensure that rural and northern Manitobans have proper medical services, something that on a daily basis is eroding into a crisis shortage of doctors.

* (1400)

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, I know when I met with the RHA this winter, this matter was discussed. I also had the opportunity to meet with one of the departing physicians. In fact, the member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Tweed) and I also spent some time with that particular individual. The former minister put in place the Burntwood Clinic model with salaried positions and, to be blunt, the real problem here has been the inability to find the interest in physicians who want to practise in northern Manitoba. It is a problem. We have changed the funding mechanism, and the problem is finding physicians who actually want to go there, live and practise medicine. It is not an easy issue; I will concede that totally to the member.

Mr. Ashton: Madam Speaker, will the minister address the concern expressed by the chair of the regional health authority that he just recently appointed which indicates and references the lack of success on the part of your department to address the shortage of physicians in rural and northern Manitoba? Will the minister look at ways in which the provincial government can work with local communities instead of dumping the problem on local communities? It is reaching a crisis situation; we need action.

Mr. Praznik: Madam Speaker, I think the member for Thompson has hit upon part of this issue. It is one in which the community has to be involved in recruiting physicians. There are other communities in rural Manitoba that are isolated that have taken steps in recruiting physicians. In the community of Pinawa, for example, they went without doctor services for a period of time. They made a very concerted effort to recruit as a community, through their health district, physicians from South Africa. They now have, I believe, two who have come there. [interjection] The member for The Pas makes the point, how far is Pinawa from Winnipeg. An hour and a half. Those areas are more difficult. That is part of the reason why it is hard to recruit.

There are other communities that have found incentives to recruit physicians. In fact, I believe in the Pinawa case they made housing available to those physicians. So I would encourage the member. We are prepared to work with the member in Thompson to help develop some of those innovative community solutions

to help recruit physicians. We need his involvement too.

Mr. Ashton: A final supplementary: Will the minister not recognize that communities have been working day and night throughout rural and northern Manitoba and that now the regional health authority, which has been working and I have been working with them—we all have in our own community—is saying to the minister: We need the assistance of the provincial government; we need some structural changes.

When will the minister address the structural changes needed to ensure that we have equal distribution of physicians throughout rural and northern Manitoba?

Mr. Praznik: Madam Speaker, first of all, my predecessor in this office approved, I believe it was somewhat before Christmas, the Burntwood Clinic model that is a significant structure that has not had the success yet in recruiting physicians. If the member is suggesting today—and I can only take it from the logical conclusion of his remark—that the province needs to allocate where physicians practise, which would, in essence, take physicians out of Winnipeg and place them into other areas, if that is what the member is suggesting, I would hope that he would be very, very clear about that. That is a significant change, and that is where we may in fact end up, but let us not leave the impression that that is an easy or simple solution that will always solve the problem. But I would like the member to please state clearly that that is the policy of the New Democratic Party.

Disaster Assistance Resolution

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Madam Speaker, I have a question for the Premier (Mr. Filmon) or the Minister of Government Services. It is with respect to the flood of the century. Today we received a copy, and it is actually a wonderful copy, for children that are receiving a tremendous amount of stress because of the flood, and I would applaud the government on its actions with respect to trying to address the issue with the children, but there are many questions that are out there that the parents have in terms of compensation.

My question to the government is: Does the government have any goals set in terms of trying to resolve some of those controversial issues dealing with the issues such as compensation and others that are causing a phenomenal amount of stress out in our communities?

Hon. Frank Pitura (Minister of Government Services): Madam Speaker, as we all know, the flood of the magnitude that it was this spring has certainly taken its toll in terms of the emotional impact on people, some of the frustrations that they have, the inability for many of them to be able to return to their homes. Some have questions about whether in fact they do have a home to return to. I would like to just inform the honourable member that, with regard to many of these issues that people have raised, we are attempting to address them as quickly as possible. We are in the process of trying to commit more inspectors for inspections, in terms of follow-up with people with information about the program and how it works and the process that they can go through, and as far as the people that have homes that they may not be able to return to, certainly to place those as a priority with regard to resolving those issues for those people.

Mr. Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, our office is still receiving—and I pose the question to the minister—calls with respect to individuals that are still waiting to get some sort of an assessment of compensation. Can the minister indicate to the House what degree of a backlog is there, and does the government have any idea when that backlog of individuals will in fact be addressed?

Mr. Pitura: To date we have received approximately 2,900 applications for disaster assistance, and I am informed that we have approximately 800 inspections done of that number. I am advised by my staff that the inspections should all be completed by the end of this month.

French Language Services

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Madam Speaker, one of the issues that was raised to me was to ask the question—in the application for assistance form, it was provided in English and English only. The concern was in many of the communities that were affected, such as Ste. Agathe, why were they not provided one in French

that would allow for many within that community whose first language is in fact French—especially when you put it in the context that this wonderful book that I applauded earlier is in both official languages. Why would that not have been taken into consideration?

Hon. Frank Pitura (Minister of Government Services): Madam Speaker, I do not have a specific answer for the honourable member on that issue, which I will investigate and find out as to the whys. Offhand, there was an urgency to having the forms available very quickly and, for obvious reasons, having the forms printed in two languages immediately would have taken somewhat more time, but I will investigate further and provide the honourable member with the necessary information.

Queen versus Bauder Presentence Report

Mr. Gord Mackintosh (St. Johns): Madam Speaker, to the Minister of Justice. This is regarding the Bauder sexual assault case. Would the minister confirm our understanding from the family of the victim that this case shifted between five prosecutors over the 18 months, taking 12 appearances, three or four of which were required because the presentence report apparently went astray and, if so, is this acceptable to the minister?

Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Madam Speaker, my department is continually striving to improve the services and duties that they perform for the province, for the people of Manitoba and, from time to time, cases take longer than others. I would remind the member that, if there is an undue length of time in the court's opinion, there is, of course, a jurisdiction of the court to make specific orders. In this specific case, the court did not, in fact, make any orders, so I assume that the adjournments in this particular case were warranted.

Protection Order

Mr. Gord Mackintosh (St. Johns): Would the minister then confirm this—what the family says in a letter to him—that no protection order was sought for the child victim after sentencing, even when the family asked for one? Is this acceptable to the minister?

Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Madam Speaker, I will have to take a close look at that particular issue but, as I understand it, the family did contact the Prosecutions branch in respect of that specific issue, and a specific order was made at the request of the family. So I am not quite sure what the member is referring to, but I think when the family did call specifically on the prosecutor, the prosecutor responded in a very prompt and favourable manner.

* (1410)

Court of Appeal Decision

Mr. Gord Mackintosh (St. Johns): Would the minister, who should be aware that as of yesterday no such order had yet been obtained—what is the minister doing to address the family's concerns set out in their letter, that Bauder's statements about victim conduct were not vigorously challenged at every opportunity? Would he consider a directive to seek better justice in this regard, especially for child victims?

Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Madam Speaker, I will not go into detail about how the appropriate process is for the member to file a complaint. If he wishes to file a complaint, certainly the director of Prosecutions is always open to speak with members of the family in this respect. Again, the member is putting inaccurate information on the record in terms of the Crown's position.

I do have here a copy of both factums of the parties, and I would in fact like to table a copy of the factum of the respondent, that is the Crown in the appeal, where, in fact, their specific response was that the circumstances of the offence are serious, appellant had sexual intercourse with his 12-year-old babysitter on more than one occasion. In doing so, he breached his position of trust involving a vulnerable victim. I can hardly see that the Crown took any conciliatory approach in respect of what the member is even suggesting.

Mr. Mackintosh: On a new question. As a follow-up to that response, which I would suggest is misleading—I am being generous, Madam Speaker. Would the minister not also confirm that the factums did not deal with the issue of victim consent whatsoever? In fact,

when the issue of victim consent came up at the Provincial Court, the Court of Appeal, the Crown sat silent. They did not raise the issue either through a victim impact statement, through objection or argument.

Mr. Toews: Well, Madam Speaker, I am not going to get involved in the debate on what happened at the Court of Appeal, but I can indicate from the transcript that occurred in front of the Provincial Court judge, she obviously did not agree that the issue of consent was relevant. In respect of the Court of Appeal, the position of the Crown is very clear. There is no transcript of the record, but I am advised that the position of the Crown was consistent with the position set out in our factum. I can hardly see how the issue of consent would even be relevant and why would the Crown put that into their factum if, in fact, what we are dealing with here is a vulnerable child. For him to suggest that there should be an issue of consent, I find very puzzling.

Mr. Mackintosh: Would the minister not answer the question, I think the essential question of this whole issue, and that is: Would he not consider a directive to his department to seek better justice to ensure that victim conduct is challenged for its relevancy at every stage, including plea bargaining on, and in that way we can better ensure justice for victims, especially child victims? Send directives just like you did for zero tolerance.

Mr. Toews: Madam Speaker, I think the Crown attorneys have been very clear in respect of the issue and the position taken by the department, and in that respect there is no requirement to send any type of directive. What I do want to indicate is that the department has had a long series of initiatives to bring the victim into the justice system to ensure that the victim is not forgotten.

I would suggest that is a far cry from the policies under the NDP when the policy was to in fact throw women in jail in domestic disputes where they refused to testify. I think this government has brought that policy a long way to ensure that these victims are respected and that their input into the process is highly regarded.

Post-Secondary Education Student Loan Debt

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): My question is for the Minister of Education. Last week the CIBC ended their contract with the province of Nova Scotia and will no longer provide student loans for post-secondary students in that province. They cited the increase in student fees, huge increases in bankruptcies and unstable youth employment as reasons for their withdrawal. Manitoba has a similar contract with CIBC, which is due to be reviewed in the next three months.

I would like to ask the minister if she would table in this session of the House a full account of the consolidated debt of Manitoba's students and tell us what steps she has taken to review this situation with CIBC.

Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Education and Training): We have not had the types of problems here in Manitoba that Nova Scotia has experienced. We have the agreement with CIBC, which has proven to be very beneficial for Manitoba students. We also have entered into an agreement with the Royal Bank, on a similar agreement with them, so we have an additional 85 locations now for students in Manitoba.

I will endeavour to provide the information the member has requested. I do not have that here with me. I do not know how much information regarding students that might be confidential is available in terms of names, et cetera, of people. Certainly, I can provide her with as much information in getting an update as we like. In fact, if she wishes this afternoon in Estimates to raise that, we might have more time to go through the kind of detail she is looking for.

Ms. Friesen: Would the minister, who must surely be aware that the average debt now of Manitoba students graduating is \$20,000 and rising rapidly, tell us what she is going to do about the fact that Manitoba is the only province, I believe, apart from the province of Quebec, which has no debt remission policy? Alberta, Saskatchewan, British Columbia, Nova Scotia, all of them have debt remission. Manitoba has no assistance for students as a result of the changes that this minister brought in 1994.

Mrs. McIntosh: In terms of financial assistance for students and access to university or college or post-secondary education of other sorts as well, we have a tremendous ability for students to access that education. The member is correct that students today owe more when they graduate. They also earn more. I was interested this morning talking to an individual, who said to me that her student loan when she graduated some 20 years ago was some \$20,000, but her earning potential in that first year was between \$4,000 and \$5,000. So, certainly, we see the starting salaries, particularly in the professions, being much higher than ever they were, and the student loans on a percentage basis, if the member wanted to do the averaging out from 30 years ago or 20 years ago versus today, while they owe more, they also earn more.

Health Records Privacy Information and Privacy Commissioner

Ms. Diane McGifford (Osborne): Yesterday when I asked the Minister of Health about our overtaxed Ombudsman, his answers were frivolous, inaccurate and misleading, so I hope he can be serious and responsive today.

I would like to ask the Minister of Health, who well knows that the MMA call SmartHealth dumb health and who see his legislation as a way of making a gigantic, huge information grab palatable, what he is doing to heal the breach between himself and the MMA, especially after he has deliberately refused the MMA a position on the privacy and confidentiality of our health committee.

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Health): I do not know where to start, quite frankly, in responding to all the comments of the member. First of all, the member indicated that I refused the MMA membership on the committee that has done the work on the legislation, whose work is now completed. The College of Physicians and Surgeons, as the representative body for physicians, were part of that committee, as were the Manitoba Association of Registered Nurses. We did not involve the labour organizations in that committee, but even having said that, Madam Speaker, when we had the full briefing and the full discussion and the full consultation on the bill, the Manitoba Medical Association had a representative there. We were quite

interested in their comments, and I enjoyed hearing what they had to say.

Ms. McGifford: Well, quite clearly, the minister refused to hear the question, Madam Speaker. I would like to ask the minister, who knows—I am glad he brought up MARN—that MARN believe their professional standards and integrity depend on a privacy commissioner, to explain why he has refused the advice of this very respected self-regulatory body.

* (1420)

Mr. Praznik: Madam Speaker, I wish the member had been with me when we did the consultation. Perhaps I should invite her next time to come so she can be accurate in her response, but we had a very lengthy discussion about this particular issue with all of the various stakeholders' groups there. We went through the issues of privacy commissioner versus Ombudsman, which really is not an issue. The issue is the powers people have, and one of the key powers that is necessary for whoever has the responsibility is the power to audit. We put that into the bill. The only outstanding issue is whether that individual can have a binding order or not, and we have said we will see how it works and consider it in five years. This is not the great issue she is trying to make it to be.

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Osborne, with a final supplementary question.

Ms. McGifford: Well, he is wrong. That is not the only outstanding issue.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. I would remind the honourable member for Osborne, this is not a time for debate. The honourable member was recognized for a final supplementary question, which requires no postamble and no preamble.

Ms. McGifford: I am sorry that the Minister of Health did not invite me to that meeting.

I would like to ask the Minister of Health why he continues to ignore the expertise of the majority of his stakeholders, why he refuses to create a privacy commissioner to oversee the legislation leaving the work to an overtaxed Ombudsman.

Mr. Praznik: Madam Speaker, for the second day in a row to the member for Osborne: The reason the Ombudsman is overtaxed today is because the New Democratic Party—and the member for Transcona said it yesterday—they are holding that position for ransom on other issues.

Point of Order

Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader): On a point of order, the minister is once again putting inaccurate information on the record. We have fully supported the most recent application of the Ombudsman's office for staff. By the way, they have been understaffed for a number of years, according to the Ombudsman, and we would appreciate it if the government—

Madam Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member for Thompson certainly did not have a point of order.

* * *

Mr. Praznik: What the member for Osborne and her colleagues have to realize is the Ombudsman is an officer of this Legislature. Their budgets are approved by the Legislative Assembly Management Commission. Every time that group met, New Democrats walked out. Walked out, Madam Speaker, because they refused to grant the resources.

So let it not be said by the member for Osborne that she supports that office. What a hypocrite. So the member for Transcona (Mr. Reid) said yesterday they were holding the Ombudsman for ransom. He said it in this House. Let them accept responsibility for their actions for once.

Ombudsman Resources

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Osborne, with a new question

Ms. Diane McGifford (Osborne): Yes, Madam Speaker, on a new question. I really would again like to ask the Minister of Health to stop being frivolous and misleading, and in response I would like to table a letter

from our House leader to the government House leader and ask him why is he insisting on deliberately misleading this House and accusing the New Democratic Party—[interjection] I am sorry. If I could quote from the letter—

Madam Speaker: Would the honourable member for Osborne please pose her question now?

Ms. McGifford: The question is: Why is this minister deliberately misleading this House? Clearly, our House leader has said that he can assure the government that our caucus would strongly urge you—that is the government House leader—to respond positively to the initiatives put forth by the Provincial Auditor, the Ombudsman and Elections Manitoba. These are requests for monies.

Point of Order

Hon. James McCrae (Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, regardless of the merits or lack of merits of the points put forward by the member for Osborne or the Minister of Health, the member for Osborne knows or ought to know that she should never accuse anyone in this place of deliberately misleading, which she did in her question, and I would ask that that matter be addressed by her.

Madam Speaker: The honourable government House leader, I believe, was up on a point of order. The honourable member for Thompson, on the same point of order.

Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader): Yes, Madam Speaker, I am sure that the member was meaning to say “misleading the House,” because definitely the Minister of Health was misleading the House. Our position is quite clear, and I am sort of surprised that the Minister of Health now seems to be speaking for the government on House matters. I would suggest, perhaps, that the minister allow the government House leader to speak for his caucus on House matters. That might help us deal with this matter, I think, more effectively than what we just saw a few minutes ago.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. The honourable government House leader indeed does have a point of

order. The honourable member for Osborne used the words “deliberately mislead,” and I would ask that she withdraw the word “deliberately.”

Ms. McGifford: Madam Speaker, I withdraw the word “deliberately.” He was merely misleading us.

* * *

Madam Speaker: Time for Oral Questions has expired.

Point of Order

Mr. McCrae: Madam Speaker, on a point of order. I understand that it has been the practice of Speakers when the time for Question Period has expired to at least finish the question that is in progress and the answer. Now the honourable member for Osborne did ask a question prior to the expiration of Question Period. I indeed rose on a point of order, at which time I understand the clock stops, and then the question remains unanswered. I do not know, but I believe Your Honour's practice is to allow that last question to be asked and answered.

Mr. Ashton: On the same point of order, Madam Speaker, I am not sure anyone can recall with any great detail what has happened in the last five minutes, so I suggest perhaps that you review Hansard, and indeed if a question was formally raised, we would have no problem extending Question Period tomorrow to give the Minister of Health the opportunity to perhaps for once answer a question on this important matter.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. On the point of order raised by the honourable government House leader, I have been informed that indeed it has been past practice that once a question has been asked right near the end of the expiry time, and it actually expired while the honourable member was posing her question, the response also be allowed.

* * *

Madam Speaker: The honourable Minister of Health, to quickly pose his reply.

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, we have obviously touched on a soft spot, and the New Democrats do not want the answer, but I say to the member for Osborne, we all heard her colleague the member for Transcona (Mr. Reid) say across the floor of this House yesterday that they were doing that because they had another agenda; that was pressure. So she should get together with her colleagues and sort out their policy.

Madam Speaker: Time for Oral Questions has expired.

* (1430)

NONPOLITICAL STATEMENTS

Transcona Seniors Centre

Ms. Marianne Cerilli (Radisson): Madam Speaker, do I have leave to make a nonpolitical statement?

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

Ms. Cerilli: Madam Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to congratulate the Transcona seniors centre which this past weekend, on June 7, celebrated their 30th anniversary of providing a community centre and resource for seniors in Transcona on Whittier Avenue. It is a beautiful facility that they have there. They have now over 500 members, many of whom are long-time residents of Transcona, many of whom are new residents of Transcona, all who enjoy many activities put on by the centre, which is entirely run by seniors. They had the tea this weekend, which is an annual event. They have games, bridge, line dancing. They have birthday parties for the members each month, many sales and also act as a resource centre.

They have over 109 honorary members of the Transcona seniors centre and to be an honorary member you must be more than 80 years old and have been a member for seven years, so this speaks to the long history and to the activity of the Transcona seniors centre. I must say that I often refer seniors that I meet through casework or in visiting seniors in my constituency, and it is very good to see on visits there

when I meet residents who now are active with the Transcona seniors centre, who have met new friends, who participate in activities, and I do not think we should underestimate the value of these types of seniors centres to our community. We know that when seniors are active and their social well-being is improved, they have better health and that they have a much better quality of life. I want to congratulate the Transcona seniors centre for contributing to these valuable services to the community and to the quality of life for seniors and wish them well on their 30th anniversary and wish them 30 more years of good community service for the residents of Transcona and indeed other areas in the city of Winnipeg.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

YM-YWCA Women of Distinction Awards

Mr. Peter Dyck (Pembina): Could I have leave to make a nonpolitical statement?

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

Mr. Dyck: Madam Speaker, each year the YM-YWCA hosts the Women of Distinction Awards dinner to recognize the contributions and achievements of women. These women are from all walks of life. They are volunteers, professional women and businesswomen. Women have always made a valuable contribution to the lives of their families, to our economy, in fact to all facets of our society. Manitoba and Winnipeg have many women of distinction. The winners of this year's awards were: Elaine Ali, president of the Women's Television Network; Heather Bishop, singer and songwriter; Joanne DiCosimo, the CEO of the Manitoba Museum; Virginia Guiang, a community volunteer who has worked tirelessly in support of her cultural community; and Dr. Jennifer Shay, an environmentalist whose work has been recognized here in Manitoba, as well as throughout Canada, as indicated by her appointment to the Order of Canada.

I would also like to pay special tribute to the young woman who received the Gerrie Hammond Memorial Award of Promise. Anita Sanan, a student at Westwood Collegiate has not only excelled in her

academic studies, she has worked tirelessly as a volunteer in her community and her school. She introduced the 30-hour famine to her school. She works as a candy striper at Grace Hospital and coordinates a tutorial program for students who are experiencing difficulty. Anita is, indeed, a young woman of promise.

I would also like to congratulate, not only the winners of the awards but all those who were nominated. I think we can safely say that they are all women of distinction.

I would also like to congratulate the YM-YWCA for providing us with the opportunity to honour the women who have contributed so much to the fabric of Manitoba life. Thank you.

* (1440)

Transcona Sports Weekend

Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona): May I have leave to make a nonpolitical statement?

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

Mr. Reid: This past weekend, June 7 and 8, the community of Transcona once again played host to one of Manitoba's largest youth sporting events. The 11th annual Transcona Sports Weekend was again a complete success involving over 2,200 youth ranging in ages from six to 14 years. These young people, their coaches, parents and grandparents participated in and cheered on the 99 soccer teams and 20 baseball teams involved in the tournament. The tournament started early Saturday morning and concluded late Sunday afternoon.

On behalf of the community of Transcona, I would like to acknowledge the participation of Canada Post, Chevrolet dealers, GNR recreational vehicles, McDonald's, MTS Mobility, St. John Ambulance, Transcona Optimists and Warren's Corner Sports. I would also like to pay special tribute to the many volunteers and organizers of the Transcona Sports Weekend event.

The organizers include, in alphabetical order, Neil Ajudhia, Keith and Jody Cahoon, Don and Cathy Champagne, Darryl Chody, Dave Dueck, Bob Johnson, Ken Langlotz, Robin Mitchell, Rick Rodgers and Wayne Tucker. These dedicated and hardworking people make this annual event the success it has become. Many thanks are in order for the continuing work for the youth of our province. Thank you.

Kate Mooney

Mr. Mervin Tweed (Turtle Mountain): Do I have leave to make a nonpolitical statement?

Madam Speaker: Does the honourable member for Turtle Mountain have leave? [agreed]

Mr. Tweed: I rise today to pay tribute to a young constituent of mine, Ms. Kate Mooney. She is an example of the quality of students Manitoba schools are producing, students who are ready to compete and win in the 21st Century.

Kate Mooney is a Grade 11 student at Souris Collegiate, but she will not be graduating there next year. She has received a \$50,000 scholarship to attend Lester B. Pearson College outside of Victoria, B.C. It offers a two-year program which students enter at the Grade 12 level, and when finished the second year they receive not a high school diploma but an International Baccalaureate degree. The 200 students who attend the college are all there on scholarship. Only 100 new students are accepted each year from 70 countries and there are only 15 to 20 students accepted from Canada. Kate is the only student from Manitoba.

Kate Mooney deserves full marks for her tremendous academic record and my congratulations and best wishes go out to her on behalf of all members. As our government continues implementing standards testing and other well-thought-out initiatives, I am confident that Kate will see more Manitobans joining her in the years to come. Thank you.

Committee Changes

Mr. Edward Helwer (Gimli): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for St. Vital (Mrs. Render), that the composition of the Standing

Committee on Economic Development for Thursday, June 12, 1997, at 10 a.m., be amended as follows: The member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Tweed) for the vacant position; the member for St. Vital (Mrs. Render) for the member for River Heights (Mr. Radcliffe); and the member for Sturgeon Creek (Mr. McAlpine) for the member for St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau).

Motion agreed to.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Messages

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, I have a message from the honourable, the Administrator of the government of the Province of Manitoba.

Madam Speaker: The Administrator (Richard J. Scott) transmits to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba revised estimates of sums required for the services of the province for Capital Expenditures and recommends these revised estimates to the Legislative Assembly.

Mr. Stefanson: Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Environment (Mr. McCrae), that the said message, together with the estimates accompanying the same, be referred to the Committee of Supply for consideration and report.

Motion agreed to.

House Business

Hon. James McCrae (Government House Leader): On House business, just for the information of honourable members, I expect shortly to move the motion to take the House into Estimates examination, and I expect that the time allotted for that would expire this afternoon.

At that point, it would be my intention to call the bills, and the ones I had in mind, initially I would call Bills 50 and 51 for introduction by the Minister of Culture (Mrs. Vodrey) and the Minister of Health (Mr. Praznik) at which point we would move to the bills as listed on page 3 in the order they are listed, unless the

opposition House leader should stand up and direct the House to a particular bill, and I understand accompanying all this is a disposition to waive private members' hour for today.

Madam Speaker: Is there leave to waive private members' hour? [agreed]

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

Motion agreed to.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY (Concurrent Sections)

HEALTH

Mr. Chairperson (Ben Sveinson): Order, please. Will the Committee of Supply please come to order. This afternoon, this section of the Committee of Supply meeting in Room 255 will resume consideration of the Estimates of the Department of Health.

When the committee last sat, it had been considering item 21.3.(m)(1) on page 71 of the Estimates book.

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Mr. Chairperson, we will now attempt to do the impossible, in an hour and a half deal with what is normally 42 hours of information. I indicated yesterday that I had received a copy of a letter, as the minister did, from the Westaway family, and I did not think it was appropriate to query the minister at that point. At this point, I am just wondering if the minister can outline for me—the minister, I assume, is aware of the facts of the situation, and on the reading this looks like a very, very difficult case and a very unfortunate situation for the Westaway family.

I am wondering if the minister can outline what steps he proposes to take in order to remedy this situation.

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Health): Mr. Chair, first of all, I do not want to get into the details of the case specifically on the record. I do not think it is

fair to the family involved. I just want to indicate to the member, as in any other matter that would be brought to attention, not just because it is presented directly to the minister, but as in all difficult cases—I am not saying that is not an appropriate avenue either. I mean, people have to access the system as they are, as they can or feel able to—but we have arranged, I think as of today, to assign a case co-ordinator in this particular matter.

I think we are using Ms. Cathy Lussier of the home care department. She is going to be co-ordinating a case conference involving home care, Tache, Community Living, Family Services and Victoria General Hospital. Obviously there are a lot of unique issues here that have to be worked out. It is a matter of getting the parties together, including the family. They are the most important people, along with, of course, Kim, who is probably the most important in all of this, and to work out a solution that will be best for all of them.

I understand, as well, that there was some concern about being housed on a longer-term basis in a facility as part of this issue. I just want to make the point, and I think it is one to appreciate, that we now have within our hospitals, in a number of cases, long-term care facilities where people are waiting for proper placements, and those wards, as the member knows, are staffed accordingly.

So that point, in itself, of a hospital versus personal care home is considerably different today than it was say 10 years ago because there are people who will be in a long-term position in a hospital because the ward they are in is a long-term care ward housed in one of those facilities. That gives us greater flexibility to meet the needs today and to best utilize space.

So that, as just a matter of principle, I do not think in itself is an advantage. I think that is progress. But the specifics of this case; it is a difficult case, as the member has outlined, and we have a case co-ordinator, as I have said, who is bringing all the parties, including the family and, of course, Kim, together to try to work out a resolution to her problem.

Mr. Chomiak: I thank the minister for that response. I agree, normally this would take place in the form of a letter from myself to the minister outlining this, but

circumstances being such, I appreciate the minister's response.

Yesterday, I gave notice to the minister of a couple of questions in this area under 3.(m)(1), and I am wondering if the minister might deal with the issues of the meat inspection, harmonized food inspection system and the tobacco issue.

* (1450)

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Chair, with respect to the meat issue, I do not think we have all the information that the member has requested. What I will endeavour on the record to do is provide him that relatively shortly by way of writing, and should he have any questions, we would be pleased to provide that.

With respect to the sale of tobacco to minors issue, the following is an update with respect to activities targeted at reducing tobacco use. Firstly, on October 1, 1996, Manitoba Health entered into a one-year enforcement agreement with the Ministry of Finance to hire two officers to develop an enforcement program to monitor retail sale of tobacco to minors.

As of May 31 of this year, 827 retailer checks have been made in 19 communities in Manitoba, and 74 retailers have been charged with selling to minors. A request to remove the tobacco sales licence from two retailers charged with repeated sale of tobacco to minors is under consideration now by the Ministry of Finance. The enforcement officers have contacted local enforcement officers in rural areas and made presentations to community police in Winnipeg to elicit their support in the program.

Negotiations are currently proceeding with Health and Welfare Canada to provide funding to extend a joint enforcement program for the provincial and federal legislation to March 31, 1998.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, I am sorry. Did the minister indicate—with respect to the meat inspection program, he will be providing me with information. How about the national harmonized food inspection system issue? Is that, as well, pending?

Mr. Praznik: Yes, we will provide that to the member by way of letter.

Mr. Chomiak: Insofar as the issue of diabetes was touched on in the House today, and the former minister proposed a policy paper in the fall of '96 with respect to diabetes, I wonder if the minister might give us an update with respect to the Diabetes Education Program.

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Chair, we have arranged with the president of the University of Manitoba and Mr. George Muswagan who is Grand Chief of MKO, for both to co-chair a steering committee which is attempting to bring together the appropriate people to develop a list of proposals and options for us in addressing this issue primarily in First Nations communities where we have a really severe problem that is growing. As the member knows, many of these issues relate to diet which has an association with lifestyle and life choices, and this is only going to be successful, I believe, if the people in those communities and the leadership of those communities are able to take a very active role in promoting these health issues.

Today, we have a crisis and we have a growing number of cases in the treatment area. A long-term solution is to deal, obviously, with the prevention side of it, and that is going to take a huge community effort.

It is very easy for many—and I know the member's colleagues, some of the member's colleagues have said what are you doing about it today, but my question to him, to the member for The Pas (Mr. Lathlin) and others in their leadership role in communities, they have to take a role with their community because we do not have enough public health nurses who are going to be sensitive and understanding in enough communities, I think, if we put them all into them.

To be able to achieve the result, to be effective in terms of long-term prevention has to come within the community and be appropriate to those communities, so a lot of people have to find a role in this. We have struck that committee currently, and I am looking forward to seeing what their practical recommendations can be.

Mr. Chairperson: 21.3 Community and Mental Health Services (m) Public Health (1) Public Health

and Epidemiology (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$1,402,600—pass; 3.(m)(1)(b) Other Expenditures \$4,885,500—pass; 3.(m)(1)(c) External Agencies \$326,500—pass.

21.3(m)(2) Laboratory and Imaging Services (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$12,928,300. Shall the item pass?

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, several months ago, in the move towards the regional health authorities, individuals were transferred or terminated from the Department of Health and transferred to the authority, the regional health authority. Is it under this section and this group of individuals that this termination and move took place?

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Chair, I believe we are referencing the laboratory side of the budget. One difficulty is that we are obviously looking at the betterment of our lab services across the province, although we do not have in place a plan where we want to go on rural labs. In fact, if anything, we have put that over to RHAs as one of the issues that they will have to address in the near future, not that we are expecting a decision today. Under our collective agreements, staff in those labs require a one-year notification, so that was provided to them in order to meet that requirement, and then they were transferred under the agreement to the RHA with that notice provision in place.

We may not be in a position to make a decision by next year. We do not know yet, but at least that was a preparatory step that was taken just to put people on notice that that, in fact, could happen and, again, that is part of the collective agreement.

At the current time, I understand there is a committee of the CEOs who are looking at these issues. Manitoba Health is working with them, because we do have some issues. I certainly do not want to be in a position where we have in any way risked our lab service or our ability to attract a good price for the providers of that service, so there are a lot of issues to work out. We are only beginning really to address them.

Mr. Chomiak: In the event that these individuals are transferred to the RHAs, will we see it in this appropriation? For example, will we see a reduction of

staff years in this appropriation from the 286 to theoretically 50 or 25 or 10 or whatever? Is this where we will see the movement?

Mr. Praznik: Yes. How much, we do not know yet.

Mr. Chairperson: 21.3. Community and Mental Health Services (m) Public Health (2) Laboratory and Imagine Services (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$12,928,300—pass; 3.(m)(2)(b) Other Expenditures \$7,778,900—pass.

21.3.(m)(3) Emergency Health and Ambulance Services (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$959,600.

Mr. Chomiak: This is clearly one of the areas where there will be some negotiation with respect to the devolution of these services to the regional health authorities. I wonder if the minister might update us as to what the status is with respect to Emergency Health and Ambulance Services from the provincial perspective and the provincial vision with respect to how these services will be applied and dealt with at the RHA level.

* (1500)

Mr. Praznik: Currently, the dollars which we used to flow to ambulance boards across the province or municipalities are now flowing to the regional health authority. So in rural Manitoba, that is very much part of the consolidation of services. An ambulance service really needs to be integrated in the whole delivery and emergency mechanisms for the health districts.

With respect to Winnipeg—I just want to flag this for a moment—in the statute that we have introduced, we do have provision to end the authority for Winnipeg to provide ambulance services. I indicated yesterday, that is should we be able to reach an agreement with the City of Winnipeg, and the regional health authority believes the best place for Winnipeg's ambulance is to be housed within the regional health authority, the Winnipeg regional hospital authority. If that does not happen, we will not proclaim that section of the act.

So the story in Winnipeg is yet to be written. We have just prepared the table for those discussions. We had a very preliminary make-mention of this, I guess,

for lack of a better term, with some city representatives the other day in a meeting here. So we have said to them when the Winnipeg hospital authority is up and running with its staff for various programming, that is an issue we would like to discuss with the city.

The vision of this, of course, is an ambulance service in most centres which we would like to see as a fully integrated part of the health districts. In rural and northern Manitoba, ambulance, I cannot stress enough, I think is one of the critical mortars that hold the bricks of the building together. In rural Manitoba, I know where I live, if I had a heart attack or was injured, what is critical to me is not the local hospital I go to, because I am unlikely even to be taken to a local hospital, it is what are the qualifications and abilities of the people who get into my yard to stabilize me before they transfer me to a centre that can handle my case, and in most severe cases, my local rural hospital is not going to do that.

If you want to provide care for really important emergency situations in rural Manitoba, the ambulance service is aptly critical. So, having top, good machinery, good equipment, having it properly, strategically located in a district and, most importantly I believe, having very highly trained and skilled staff providing the personnel for that service are the ingredients of a topnotch ambulance service. That is ultimately what we would like to have in Manitoba.

Regional health authorities are going to have to work on all of those areas. Now, some of the trade-offs that make many of our ambulance services in rural Manitoba today are volunteer ambulance services. I know in some rural communities, Selkirk being one, I know my father was on the hospital board when they moved from a volunteer ambulance to bringing it under the hospital and were eventually able to create full-time ambulance attendant positions, a number of them in that facility so that they could have highly trained people who could make it a career and earn a sufficient living. In their off time, when they were not on call, they incorporated them into other jobs in the hospital to make it work economically.

We obviously are not suggesting that we are going to have salaried staff in every rural ambulance service in rural Manitoba, but regional health authorities will be

looking at these issues to get the right mix of staff with the right number of ambulances strategically located. It is going to take years to do this. It is an evolutionary process, but, ultimately, we want to have a rural ambulance service that is able to provide topnotch care the moment they get to the person who is in severe need in a rural area, and that is what we are trying to build.

Mr. Chomiak: Is the minister suggesting that it is the provincial preference that the ambulance authority in Winnipeg become the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority and not the City of Winnipeg?

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Chair, as the member can appreciate, travel times are very different in Winnipeg versus rural Manitoba—unless, I guess, you consider rush hour sometimes; that is why they have sirens.

But in rural Manitoba, given the nature of the structure, the fact that ambulances now are usually governed by separate ambulance committees in many cases, there is a different history. The sponsoring facilities that have run them have often in many cases been involved in—the municipalities were getting out of their health care roles. So there is just a different structure, different dynamic, and the natural flow of events have had that amalgamation.

In Winnipeg, the City of Winnipeg is a very large municipality. It has operated ambulances directly for a number of years through their own City Council and their own budget, so there is a different history here. They, as a city, were looking at a plan to amalgamate their ambulance service with their firefighting unit. They have not embarked on that exercise yet. What we have suggested to them is officials from the Winnipeg hospital authority, Manitoba Health and the City of Winnipeg have to sit down and look at that system and say: What is the best way to operate the ambulance service?

Obviously, the city has some concerns now. That is why they were considering looking at amalgamation with the fire department. We obviously want an integrated, central-dispatched system that can move people quickly to where there is the appropriate space for them to meet their need. So we do not get into these kinds of turn-back situations and other things that there

are no need for. Exactly what that will look like, I say very sincerely to the member, I do not know. Today, I might have some personal thoughts on it, but I am going to leave it to those who run the system to sit down, study the issue and make a decision.

I would hope that common sense is going to dictate the result, and you will probably see those three parties in agreement, in which case then we can make whatever necessary changes, whether it is amalgamated in the fire department or move it into the regional health authority.

But that is a conclusion that should be reached after a careful analysis and the use of some common sense, and I am not going to judge that process because, quite frankly, I may be surprised with the result as may be the public, and there might be a better idea than one I might have. I want those who have to run the system to be the ones to make that decision.

Mr. Chomiak: Who is going to be operating the Northern Patient Transportation Program?

Mr. Praznik: That will continue to be a provincial program, and it will be housed within the internal operation side of the department—[interjection] Pardon me, I am thinking of something else. I am thinking of the Life Flight Program which is going to still be housed within the department. The Northern Transportation Program will be moving to the regions.

Mr. Chairperson: Item 21.3.(m)(3) Emergency Health and Ambulance Services (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$959,600—pass; (b) Other Expenditures \$3,681,300—pass.

21.3.(n) Medical Officers of Health (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$1,001,800—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$76,300—pass.

Resolution 21.3: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$231,401,900 for Health, Community and Mental Health Services, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March 1998.

21.4. Health Services Insurance Fund (a) Manitoba Health Board \$62,000—pass.

Mr. Chomiak: Is it possible to have a look at some statistical breakdowns in terms of the kinds of appeals and the numbers? Do we have that information that goes to the Manitoba Health Board? If it is a major problem, that is not necessary, but if the data is available, I would not mind seeing it just for information purposes.

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Chair, if that data exists, I would be prepared to provide it to the member by way of letter. We are recording that. But I think he has flagged one of the things that I would like to accomplish, if we do an amalgamation, is to have a consistent appeal process. The member has suggested a reporting mechanism as perhaps an addendum to our annual report. I think that would give a picture of how well the system is working and the kinds of complaints and things that are coming and put them into a proper perspective as we often need to have done from time to time.

Mr. Chairperson: Item 21.4.(a) Manitoba Health Board \$62,000—pass; (b) Healthy Communities Development \$10,000,000.

Mr. Chomiak: I apologize if the information has been forwarded, but we were not provided with a list of grants under the Healthy Communities Development.

* (1510)

Mr. Praznik: I am prepared to table a list of the Healthy Communities Development fund projects that have been committed for '97-98. I do not believe we have attached dollars to these, and that is because we are still working out some of them or we have committed.

Mr. Chair, we have the projects. I am going to table these here. What I do not have is the dollar attached to them. Some of these are public programs that have already been announced with dollars. I am going to endeavour for next year to be able to attach, you know, where appropriate, where a project is not necessarily in progress or there are some other issues, the kind of dollars with them.

Mr. Chomiak: There is reference in the subappropriation to the \$8-million decline from

preceding years with respect to Healthy Communities and the fact that some of the projects have gone to other appropriations. I wonder if the minister might comment on that insofar as, for example, in 1995-96, the expenditure was \$15 million, last year was \$18 million, and it has been declining.

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Chair, there has been a significant amount, I think, somewhere near \$8 million—about \$6 million, pardon me. I do not have an exact number here but a significant portion of these dollars were on long ongoing projects, long-term life projects, so they have been moved into operating. What we are trying to use this fund for is obviously for bridge financing, start up, those types of things, and then move them into regular programming where they should be housed.

Mr. Chomiak: Pending my review of this document, I do not think I have any other questions at this point.

Mr. Chairperson: Item 21.4.(b) Healthy Communities Development \$10,000,000—pass; (c) Hospitals and Community Services, Hospitals \$817,537,400.

Mr. Chomiak: Generally, Mr. Chairperson, this is the area of the appropriations that actually eats up the bulk of the Estimates time for obvious reasons, insofar as it is the single biggest chunk of expenditure under the Health appropriations.

Can the minister outline for us what the funding levels are for the—now the minister has given us figures for the rural hospitals. I wonder if he might give us figures with respect to the urban hospitals this year and next year.

Mr. Praznik: I am very glad that Mr. Chair caught himself on the difference between \$817,000 and \$817 million; otherwise, we would have found our hospitals in a wee bit of difficulty, if our appropriation had only been one-tenth of our request. I am sure there would have been a few people in St. Anne and Whitemouth who would have been calling both of us, but I must admit my surprise on that number. It has more to do with the way in which these are written in the books than the Chairman, and it is a warm day here.

Mr. Chair, I understand that we have not traditionally provided the specific lines for each of the Winnipeg hospitals in past years. I gather part of the reason why

that is is because if we were to budget for our facilities—we can estimate, but if we were to budget exactly by facility, then the next question is: what is each line in each facility? The ability to make adjustments, the ability to see changes, during a year would be much more difficult and, I think, would reinforce again facility-based funding and the emphasis on a facility as a delivery agent as opposed to looking at the overall system.

We do at the end of the year, as the member is well aware, publish what we have spent on each side, and I believe that this has been past practice. So today I am not in a position to table that. I appreciate that the member would make his life somewhat easier if he had those kinds of numbers, but there are good administrative reasons why those are not public. Not that I have a problem with the honourable member or members of this committee knowing that, but obviously when they are in the matter of the public realm, the ability to operate the program with flexibility throughout the year is somewhat more difficult.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, can we just briefly touch upon the \$37 million again and try to determine where that funding from last year, the \$37 million in transition funding, has gone?

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Chair, I know we have discussed this before, and I have attempted to convey what is a rather complicated set of administrative and financial arrangements. With the committee's indulgence, I am going to ask Ms. Murphy to explain it to members of the committee and let her take their specific questions on how this arrangement works. I think it would be more productive than having me, with my limited accounting abilities, attempt to convey that information.

Mr. Chairperson: Is it the will of the committee that Ms. Murphy answers some questions on Healthy Communities Development? [agreed]

Ms. Susan Murphy (Director, Finance and Administration, Department of Health): Mr. Chairperson, the question was specific to the Hospital and Community Services line 21.4.(c), and the member's question was with respect to the—I think it was \$38 million in transition funding which was shown as a separate line in the 1996-97 Estimates. That

transition funding was, in fact, spent in 1996-97 and has been included in the Hospital component in '97-98 with the adjustments that were discussed at an earlier point in the debate.

Mr. Chairperson: The honourable member for Kildonan, and I would just like to correct myself once more. It seems that I said 21.4.(b) and it is 21.4.(c).

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, was any of that money allocated to capital or was it all operational?

Ms. Murphy: Mr. Chairperson, no, it is all operating.

* (1520)

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, part of the funding was spent last year, and the rest was subsumed this year within the Estimates? I guess I still do not understand it.

Ms. Murphy: Mr. Chairperson, in 1996-97, that \$38 million was shown as a separate line. It was, in fact, spent in '96-97, has not been removed from the budget in '97-98, but it has been included instead in the Hospital line rather than a separate line. However, when we spoke earlier in the debate, we referred to an expectation of savings of approximately \$10 million in this year related to the Pathways document or urban plan offset against some community initiatives, and that is what has been removed from the '97-98 budget.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, again, so that I understand, the \$37 million was spent last year in '96-97; \$37 million minus some savings of approximately \$10 million have been included this year within the appropriation line item '97-98. Is that correct?

Ms. Murphy: Mr. Chairperson, that is correct.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, I am really pleased with myself so far. So that means roughly there is \$27 million in this year's budget, or in that neighbourhood, that is available for expenditure along the same lines as was appropriated last year in a separate line item. Is that correct?

Ms. Murphy: Mr. Chairperson, for that specific item, the answer is yes. There are some other adjustments, of

course, within the overall subappropriation; but, specific to what we are talking about, the answer is yes.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, those are expenditures aimed at improving efficiencies and consolidation and co-ordination within the acute care sector?

Ms. Murphy: Mr. Chairperson, the answer is yes.

Mr. Chomiak: Do we have a list of those projects?

Ms. Murphy: Mr. Chairperson, they are all related to the implementation of the urban plan that has been discussed before, the obstetrics, et cetera; lab, et cetera.

Mr. Chomiak: So something like the STEP projects would or would not come out of that line item?

Ms. Murphy: Mr. Chairperson, no, the STEP projects were, in fact, funded out of Healthy Communities and showed specifically in other lines such as Home Care and Mental Health, back in 21.3.

Mr. Chomiak: But the expenditures on items like the MDS contract and items like that—no, it would not. Well, it would or would not come out. That is an interesting question. Would it come out of this item?

Ms. Murphy: Mr. Chairperson, the lab savings are, in fact, included in that \$10 million, so what in 1997-98 is saved relative either to the MDS contract or whatever contract is entered into would, in fact, be part of that \$10 million.

Mr. Chomiak: Do we have a breakdown of what comprises the \$10 million in savings?

Ms. Murphy: Mr. Chairperson, at the present time, the planning is still going on; the costing is going on; and those have not been finalized. But there is expectation that savings will be obtained in this fiscal year.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, so we are anticipating savings of \$10 million this fiscal year, and we are spending an additional \$27 million to make savings this year and, presumably, next year.

That is interesting. Last year, the minister indicated to me that the plan was a one-time expenditure and was a one-time program. I wonder if perhaps we might have an update or explain to me the difference this year.

Ms. Murphy: Mr. Chairperson, the \$37 million or \$38 million was, in fact, described as transition funding in the Hospitals Program and was anticipated to be required only for a one-year period. It is, in fact, shown to be required for a longer period of time, and that is why there is still \$27 million in the Hospitals Program this year.

Mr. Chomiak: Great. So I have got myself confused again. Does that mean that \$37 million was not expended last year?

Ms. Murphy: No, Mr. Chairperson, the \$37 million was spent last year; \$27 million of it remains in this year's budget. It will be required in order to manage the hospital system, and there is expectation over time that a component of that will continue to be taken out of the acute care sector. It is going to take a longer period of time than was originally intended.

Mr. Chomiak: I apologize for my inability to digest this, but can I then assume that \$27 million was carried over? Would that be a correct way of stating it, that \$27 million was carried over from last budgetary year to this budgetary year in order to work on the ongoing projects, or was \$37 million spent last year and \$27 million is being spent this year for a total of \$64 million over two years?

Ms. Murphy: Mr. Chairperson, you could look at it that the \$37 million in 1996-97 was required for the ongoing operations of the hospitals due to the slower pace of change that was taking place and that, in fact, \$27 million is required in this year's budget.

You could say that in both cases they are part of the base funding, and 1996-97 the \$37 million was part of the base. There was a \$10-million reduction, and in the base of '97-98 in the Hospital line rather than a separate line, there remains that \$27 million as part of the total.

Mr. Chomiak: In my next to final question, is it possible to show—and you may have answered this

previously—a listing of what the \$37 million was spent on last year?

Ms. Murphy: Mr. Chairperson, it would be a better explanation to say that the \$37 million or \$38 million was required for the ongoing operation of the hospitals in that they were not able to save that amount of money at an earlier point. So it would not be fair to describe it as project-oriented; rather ongoing operations in the acute sector to maintain the level of operations that existed in '96-97.

Mr. Chomiak: Were there any savings realized last year?

Ms. Murphy: Mr. Chairperson, it would be fair to say that there were some savings, but they were offset by other expenditures, and the net result was none.

Mr. Chomiak: My colleague from Inkster has explored the issue of community health centres, so I do not want to go over that territory, except can the minister outline for 1997-98 what additional services are going to be offered through community health centres both within the city of Winnipeg and outside of the city of Winnipeg in terms of additional programming?

* (1530)

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Chair, in rural Manitoba, as we have discussed before, those regional health authorities start working towards making decisions on the best delivery mechanisms for services, how best to use space, how to make facilities relevant, their needs assessment being completed. I would suspect that we are going to see an expansion of community clinics within facilities throughout the province. Again, we have prepared for that by having our \$10-million conversion fund available. The second, within Winnipeg, the Long Term Care board will be appointed very shortly and, as they go through this transition year, they are likely to be making some decisions as to expanding or other ways of expanding the role of community clinics.

I do not want to, for a moment, jump in with decisions that I am asking them to make over the next while, but that would be about the trend over the next year.

Mr. Chomiak: Have the community clinics been approached by government and asked to put together proposals for expanded and enhanced services?

Mr. Praznik: We understand that the boards of the various community clinics now have done some work in preparation for the Winnipeg Long Term Care board, and they will probably be making some proposals to them about potential expansion of services. They will have to be sorted out and assessed and moved through the process. We understand that is currently happening.

Mr. Chomiak: This is a hypothetical but just to help clarify my understanding, if X clinic, say, in the city of Winnipeg has a proposal that says, we can offer primary care on the basis of employing X number of nurses and perhaps a doctor on call and we can operate 24 hours a day and we think we can take a load off some of the emergency wards in the city of Winnipeg, or something to that end, what is the process?

Presumably, they have made a proposal to the Winnipeg Long Term Care board. Where does it go from the Winnipeg Long Term Care board and under what appropriation? Where would that enhanced funding come in order to permit them and allow them to do that insofar as the funding is set for this year?

Mr. Praznik: On that hypothetical, first of all there is another piece to that that has to come into play in the next year, and that is physician remuneration. I was very interested today in the comments in the House of the member's colleague from Thompson constituency. Although in the House it appears we are engaging in a huge debate over this issue, I very sincerely am interested in knowing the thoughts of the member for Kildonan and his colleagues on physician remuneration.

I do not want to get down that particular avenue right now, but the reason why I say it is important is, that is going to be a major undertaking in the next year. If the New Democratic Party is prepared to share with me their view in policy and model, it is helpful, because there is going to be quite a community debate about where we should go, and I think it is helpful for us to know where his party is coming from, because this debate I believe goes beyond partisan politics. There are issues here that are larger.

So that is a conversation we will want to have maybe later in the Estimates today or at another time, but that has to tie in. A group just could not come forward and say, we want to do this today. We have some work to do on that model because, inevitably, we want to be moving toward more and more of that model.

Now, at this current time we are in a transition year. The hypothetical the member raises would have to have a pretty detailed discussion between the two boards. Obviously the Winnipeg hospital authority, with the ministry sort of working with the two boards, will have to be involved, because if there is a flow of service delivery from the hospital sector to the long-term care sector—because these two still will not be integrated here—we will have to co-ordinate through Ms. Hicks to make sure there are appropriate adjustments.

There is not always a lot of flexibility in annual budgets, and that is part of our budgeting limitations. Unless we have some special fund to use it on Healthy Communities or another to get something like that going on a year, a bridge year or a pilot year, it is hard to do in a single year.

But we suspect that given changes in physician remuneration that are coming, and the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton)—pardon me for coming back to this—when the member for Thompson spoke today about a fundamental change in the structure of not only paying physicians but assigning them, in essence, to where they were going, whether one does that by dicta, by legislation, by control of billing numbers or by a new funding model that makes it very attractive for physicians to move where you want them, or more attractive than today, obviously we are moving towards that. So in that sense seeing a greater growth in clinics and those clinics being located—I can even envision some of these clinics being located in community hospitals today to make that facility more relevant to the community. If there is underutilized space, why not? It makes really good sense.

So there is going to be plenty of opportunity for those things to happen. The member flags the emergency issue that maybe, in fact, a clinic located in a hospital may be a very good way of taking some pressure off emergency. Those are things we have to work out.

The member's question is really not about that but about process. The group or board who would want to do that would have to work with the long-term community board. The ministry will be involved if it crosses into the jurisdiction of the hospital authority, but what we are really talking about are a minimum number of players who, surely to goodness with their expertise, can make something like that happen. I suspect we are going to see more of it happening in the next while. So the member's question is maybe not quite as hypothetical as he says it is.

Mr. Chomiak: Just a couple of points. I believe Moe Lerner's report with respect to emergency service actually anticipates and recommends the movement of clinics within the hospital setting, acute care sector in Winnipeg, to deal with the emergency shortage. There is merit in the suggestion, although there are several arguments to this. It is more complex than simply putting a clinic into a community hospital. [interjection] That has been suggested.

There was a fairly lengthy discussion in last year's Estimates, more so from my colleague Mr. Sale and the previous minister, concerning physician remuneration. Finally, there is no doubt that the resolution has been passed by the family physicians association of Canada on numerous occasions with respect to a change in remuneration, as well as, certainly, the preponderance and the majority of family practitioners have agreed year in and year out in the form of resolution to a change in forms of remuneration to physicians.

One area I never quite understand is the funding for blood transfusion services. Last year we saw an additional \$2 million that was allocated, I believe, for capital, I thought, over previous years in relation to some changes in recommendation. Do we have any kind of breakdown of the \$17.7 million that is spent on blood transfusion services?

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Chair, I am going to ask if Ms. Murphy and Mr. Cook perhaps could answer this directly to the committee, with their indulgence.

Ms. Murphy: Mr. Chairperson, we do not have a breakdown here but the way that the funding works, the blood transfusion services consist of total funding provided to the Canadian Blood Agency on behalf of

Manitoba for our share of the national blood system. This year, within the capital line there is, in fact, an additional sum of money there for capital upgrade of some of their computer systems at the national Red Cross. There should not be a mix of capital and operating in this particular amount.

* (1540)

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

Mr. Chomiak: So the \$17-million expenditure is basically operating, and it is based on the formula that is provided to us by the Canadian Blood Agency. Do we have any kind of a breakdown from CBA since we are part of CBA with respect to how those funds are expended? Is it possible without too much difficulty to have information on that?

Ms. Murphy: Mr. Chairperson, that information can be provided. We can get it for the member.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, I can hardly believe I am moving on. It does not even seem right to pass this item without digging my heels in and getting into a debate or discussion, but, again, given time constraints, and I appreciate the fact that the minister has provided a fair amount of information.

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Chair, I know in this whole area of blood, just for the information of the member—I do not mean to set off another series of questions—but, as he knows, we have had—I think, in fact, this was an area he flagged for some discussion between us. As he knows, we provincial ministers met in Montreal to discuss our strategy in discussing things with the federal government. I obviously do not want to get all our internal discussion on the record because we are in a negotiating perspective, but we do know there are a number of things that have to happen.

Obviously, one question is are we going to create a Canadian blood agency or an interprovincial blood agency or whatever one wants to call it, because we the provinces are the administrators of the system and the federal government is the regulator? I think there is a very strong interest in doing that, and that is the way we would like to be able to go, with as many provinces

who wish to participate as possible, but recognizing some may not, Quebec being one that I think to date has not indicated a willingness to participate. That is fine. We will go on with those who do. So that is a place where we are today, very seriously wanting to move. I think there was an indication we are going to move in that direction.

The second question is what role will the Canadian Red Cross, if any, have in that system? We would love to have had the benefit of the Krever report now. We will not have it till later because of a decision by the Canadian Red Cross and others to proceed to court. I think they are ending up in the Supreme Court of Canada on the scope of that, the inquiry. But we as provincial ministers have a great deal of questions and concerns about the Red Cross that we will want to put to them, and, I say this very clearly: if they are unable to give the satisfaction in having a major role on that system, we cannot wait for them; we need to move on. What role, if any, they will have is one that is still there for discussion, but we as provincial ministers recognize that we have an obligation to the consumers of blood and blood products, not to the Canadian Red Cross specifically. They have done wonderful work in the past in certain areas, but our obligation is not to any one organization, but to the consumers of product. So that has to be first and foremost in our minds.

The other issue I share with him is an interesting one, and it ties into areas of better use of blood and blood products. Currently we fund the system by paying for the provision of the service, and we do not pay for the product in essence, by and large. There are some exceptions to that mix. It may very well be that one option for a new Canadian blood agency is for us as provinces to set that up, be the shareholders of it, and pay for it based on the units of product or service that we receive from it as opposed to a direct grant.

That is an option that is one of the options for funding the agency. The advantage to that kind of system, and this would lead into some of the budget issues that he, in fact, has raised, would mean that hospitals—and I am not suggesting that individual consumers pay for their blood, not at all, but the system then would pay for the blood that is purchased. It would do a couple of things. Number one, for the blood agency or the collector and processor of that

blood, it would allow them to make speedier decisions on things that they need to do to test blood, knowing that if that increases the cost that they will pass that on, obviously, to the consumer of the product as opposed to waiting for funding increases for expensive testing.

One concern that has come out loud and clear is the Canadian hemophiliac association, and I have spent some time with them, make the point that they want a blood system that can make a speedy decision to test or not to test and not have to be dependent on, do we have the budget, do we have to go back to seven, eight, nine provincial governments to obtain middle-of-the-year additional information? So they are looking for an ability to be able to have a quick turnaround in decision making and an independence in decision making. So the model we talk about gives them that.

The second part of that model is the consumers' side, that it does then—because there is a price attached to that product, I think naturally what comes from that is facilities then look at are there other ways to reduce that cost line? Bloodless surgery is one of them. Recycling of blood during operation becomes one of them. All of these things are happening today, because they are being driven by consumer choice and science, but they do not have the motivation of what is good and sound economics within health care behind it. So provincial ministers, that was one option that is there for further debate and fleshing out and consideration within the system, but it does then affect some of these issues that the member has raised in his question.

Mr. Chomiak: I appreciate the update by the minister providing us with some insight into some of the issues relating to this area. Is there any development in terms of the blood fractionation?

Mr. Praznik: The Nova Scotia plant?

Mr. Chomiak: Yes.

Mr. Praznik: There are a host of issues around that plant. One of them that has been brought to our attention is whether or not there is enough plasma, in fact, available in Canada that would be able to supply that facility, or never mind in Canada, I guess within the collection region, with sufficient plasma to make that plant ultimately economical. There are a lot of

issues surrounding it and a lot of questions. We understand that this was really an economic initiative of the Province of Nova Scotia.

At our last meeting, many of those concerns were expressed by provincial ministers to Mr. Boudreau, their then Health minister. I think he is now resigned from that portfolio as he contests the leadership of the Nova Scotia Liberal Party, and we asked at our next meeting to have answers back from them.

But I would suggest today that unless someone can satisfactorily answer all those questions that are there, this plant is not likely to be proceeded with with the support of provincial ministers.

Mr. Chomiak: Just briefly again, back on the hospital side, can the minister give us an update as to the status of speech therapy services in Manitoba?

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Chair, in the interests of time, I would ask if I could have Ms. Hicks, who is intimately familiar with the detail of our expansion in this area, to put the information rather than provide it to me to convey to the committee.

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Tweed): Is there leave to do that? [agreed]

Ms. Sue Hicks (Associate Deputy Minister, External Programs and Operations, Department of Health): Mr. Chair, the major initiative that we have had in speech therapy this year has been the introduction of a program that we have initiated in the Westman area or the Westman Region to look at putting more money into a joint program between the Health department and the school board where we are looking at parents and the therapist and the children working as a group to begin to address the needs of the preschool children prior to their entry into school and increase the volume of children that will be able to be involved in that kind of program.

If, in fact, this pilot proves to be a viable program, then I would see this model being used throughout the regional health authorities, if they so wished to introduce it, but it is being tested in the south Westman right at the moment.

* (1550)

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, that is a very interesting pilot. How does that relate to the change in the audiology program of several years ago when the department went exactly the opposite direction and moved it out of schools and into hospitals?

Ms. Hicks: Mr. Chairperson, the speech therapy program is focusing in on the preschool children, and because—at least my understanding is because of the involvement of the parents and the need for the parents to be involved and for the therapist to work both in the home and in the community, it was felt that it was more appropriately a community-based program for both the children and the parents and the therapist to have it work as a group, as opposed to having it in the hospital where the client of the program would actually go to the hospital.

This is seen as a program that can be carried on in the community, and the parents will be doing a great deal of the program in addition to the therapist doing a lot of the teaching. The therapists will be teaching not only the children, but the parents, and they will continue the program with the child on an individual basis.

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Tweed): Item 21.4. Health Services Insurance Fund (c) Hospital and Community Services, Hospitals \$817,537,400—pass; Community Health Centres \$22,140,900—pass; Out-of-Province \$18,574,600—pass; Blood Transfusion Services \$17,717,500—pass; Other \$2,179,300—pass; Less: Third Party Recoveries - Hospitals (\$5,029,400)—pass; Less: Reciprocal Recoveries - Hospitals (\$27,584,000)—pass.

21.4.(d) Personal Care Home Services.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, we have dealt a fair bit with the Personal Care Home Services previously. I have some questions in this regard, though, regarding some of the programing and some of the issues. Last fiscal year it was indicated additional funding was provided for staffing as well as—and the minister provided me with information in that regard. I wonder if we can have similar information provided as to developments in this fiscal year.

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Chair, as we discussed yesterday, we have increased staffing levels to be reflective of increased patient requirements. I think the total is about \$1.858 million for those increased staffing levels, but as we discussed yesterday, obviously there are issues around getting more hands in those facilities, and they are going to be in greater demand for staff as those levels increase, care needs required over the next number of years.

Mr. Chomiak: Would it be possible to have an explanation of where the \$1.8 million is going to be allocated with respect to the funding?

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Chair, I believe there was \$400,000 in proprietary homes, freestanding nonproprietary homes, \$920,000, and juxtaposed nonproprietary facilities, approximately \$530 million. This would be based again on the changing needs and levels of adjustments within those facilities. That is the breakdown between the categories of facilities. It is reflective of the changing needs within them.

Mr. Chomiak: Now, there is an audit done by the Department of Health with respect to personal care homes in terms of their needs and requirements. Will this funding be based on that review?

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Chair, I am advised that at the beginning of each calendar year, we monitor the levels of care in each facility. It is not an audit process but a monitoring process. As a result of those, those adjustments are made.

Mr. Chomiak: We had a description yesterday of the capital program with respect to personal care homes. Now, I recognize from comments the minister made with respect to rural facilities that the recommendations in terms of capital ultimately are going to be coming from the RHAs, presumably or perhaps from conversations, et cetera, with respect to rural Manitoba. Within the city of Winnipeg, a couple of projects have been approved. Can the minister outline what the capital plan is or what the strategy is with respect to personal care home beds in Winnipeg?

Mr. Praznik: In the immediate future, as we outlined under discussions in our capital program, we have the bed replacements and new bed program that he is aware

of. In rural Manitoba, we will be expecting those recommendations from RHAs as we develop with them criteria and the completion of their needs assessment. The same will be true in Winnipeg with the community and Long Term Care board as they conduct their needs assessment and how we wish to provide those services, so they will be falling into our capital project program with their recommendations.

Mr. Chomiak: Is it anticipated that some of the acute care sectors will continue to be sited for long-term care beds, acute care hospitals?

Mr. Praznik: If I understand the member correctly, what he is asking, are we going to continue to, where we have underutilized or unused acute care beds or improperly used acute care beds, create long-term care facilities within Winnipeg hospitals. I think what we have done to date is use them for basically holding for long-term care, so that we would have a suitable place to house people, kind of a temporary long-term care facility until beds were available in others. I see that continuing.

We all know that our need for beds is declining, very much technology driven. If we have space available, we want to make sure it is properly utilized, so I see that continuing to happen if space is available and the need is there.

Mr. Chomiak: Do we have a breakdown of the type of beds that are available and specifically a breakdown of the psychogeriatric beds that are available in the system?

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Chair, I am going to have my staff get the exact number of psychogeriatric beds and I will respond by way of letter to the member, if that is acceptable. I would also like to table, coming out of yesterday's discussion, the capital program list. I think there were some numbers that we wanted to just check in terms of bed numbers, out of issues raised, so I table that with the committee.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, I can assume, therefore, that if there is a service, a community or other organization that wishes to have a personal care home constructed, the normal—or the process is basically off at this point. Or is that not correct?

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Chair, no, we are still very much interested in having sponsoring organizations for personal care homes, and, as I have expressed, many of the faith-based facilities—and I certainly agree with the point they make that for many people, as they require that care, being in a facility that has linguistic, cultural, faith services that are important to them become very important in one's latter stage of life or when one is in a very chronic condition.

So we want to see that happen. The only thing is that those will be made to the regional health authorities rurally or to the Winnipeg Long Term and Continuing Care Authority in Winnipeg so that there is a rational planning process around them, which is very much what happens now with the Ministry of Health, and then within the Winnipeg area those proposals will come forward to the ministry's capital program.

* (1600)

So I guess what we have introduced is one step in Winnipeg, or in rural Manitoba as well, where they will deal with the regional health authority and their needs assessment and capital proposals as opposed to directly to the ministry. What we are trying to achieve in that—and make sure we have some rational programming and some consistency on a citywide and, ultimately, a regional basis in rural Manitoba.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, one of the areas that I canvassed yesterday with respect to capital was the funding of the health and safety in some of the—from the \$10-million fund for conversions, et cetera. Is it possible to get a list of what homes are going to receive what funds in that regard?

Mr. Praznik: Yes, Mr. Chair, we do not yet have either of those lists finalized. Work is ongoing on them. With respect to the conversion fund, we have not yet had the regional health authorities make their proposals. They are still doing their needs assessment, which is the basis then of their proposals.

What I would like to do as well, Mr. Chair, is table—I think the member asked yesterday for the capital paydown on the \$150-million debt, and I would like to table this information.

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Tweed): Item 21.4.(d) Personal Care Home Services.

Mr. Praznik: Before we move on, my staff just asked me to provide—yes, I think the member asked for some information with respect to the Program Development branch, including an update on the Manitoba Breast Cancer Screening Program, and I would like to provide that to the member.

I would just like to add with respect to the mobile unit. I know there are petitions in the Legislature today. If, in fact, it is determined that that is needed to deliver service in our program, then we certainly would proceed with that. We are looking at it now. The question is Manitoba is a very different province than Saskatchewan. Saskatchewan has two large urban centres that are only a fifth or a quarter of the size of Winnipeg. It has a number of smaller rural centres and a lot of small rural centres. So it is very uneconomical and also not a very efficient service delivery model to have centres all over the place, so a mobile breast screening unit made good sense.

In Manitoba, we are a very different province. Over half of our population lives in the city. You add the people who live within an hour's drive of the city and you are getting somewhere at probably 70 percent of our population. We have some other centres that are large. We do not have the driving distances that are the same. There are some issues in northern Manitoba. That is why we did use the mobile unit in parts of the North from Saskatchewan. We were able to secure that.

(Mr. Chairperson in the Chair)

So, although those petitions come forward, it is a very different province in how our population is distributed and their commuting times for service, certainly very different from Saskatchewan. If it is needed and it makes sense, we are certainly going to want to do it, but it may not make sense because we are different from Saskatchewan. So I just wanted to put that on the table because I know those petitions have been coming. As the member would appreciate, it has to make sense in the Manitoba scenario.

Mr. Chairperson: Item 21.4. Health Services Insurance Fund (d) Personal Care Home Services, Personal Care Homes \$238,265,900—pass; Drug Program \$7,567,600—pass; Adult Day Care \$3,312,600—pass; Other \$2,647,700—pass.

21.4.(e) Medical \$327,190,700.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, last year, services of optometric visits as well as chiropractic visits in the summertime were reduced, if that is one way of putting it. Is it anticipated that any other services this year will be reduced?

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Chair, there are no changes that I am aware of coming in those two areas.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, the chiropractic fees are up approximately half a million dollars from last year. Can the minister attribute what that is?

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Chair, the \$9.6 million is the cap under our agreement. I think last year we printed \$9 million as our estimate, but we spent over that amount. That was an area where we did spend more money than we had allocated.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, so under the agreement the minister is saying the cap is \$9 million.

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Chair, the cap under the agreement is \$9.6 million.

Mr. Chomiak: And that agreement will continue for how long?

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Chair, it is a five-year agreement, and that is a firm cap.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, what portion of the sessional fees and medical salaries will be devoted to medical salaries?

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Chair, this is a rather complex accounting issue. I am going to ask Ms. Murphy to respond.

Ms. Murphy: Mr. Chairperson, the description refers to sessional fees and medical salaries. The combination

of a sessional rate payment to individuals, such as psychiatrists and others, and "salaried" referring to those who were paid on a salaried rate. We do not normally have a breakdown among those or between those two categories, but we can attempt to get it for the member.

Mr. Chomiak: I stand to be corrected, but I was under the impression that last year we moved up from \$54 million to \$64 million, which was an increase of about \$10 million. I was under the impression last year that there was an additional \$10 million put into this appropriation in order to deal with salaries. Am I wrong in that assumption?

Ms. Murphy: Mr. Chairperson, there was a \$10-million transfer from the fee-for-service component to the sessional fees in medical salaries component. It would be incorrect to think that that \$10 million was the only amount attributable to salaries. There is, in fact, a greater amount than that, and that \$10 million is still included in there.

* (1610)

Mr. Chairperson: Item 21.4. Health Services Insurance Fund (e) Medical \$327,190,700—pass; Less: Third Party Recoveries (\$2,827,400)—pass; Reciprocal Recoveries (\$6,430,200)—pass; (f) Pharmacare \$54,757,600—pass.

Mr. Chomiak: I am just on administrivia. As I understand it, we have about 15 or 17 minutes, something along those lines, so I am moving through. I am just looking for direction. We normally do the Addictions Foundation, as well, under this appropriation, do we not? [interjection]

Mr. Chairperson, I do not think we are going to get to specific questions on that and I apologize. I did not realize earlier that we are keeping staff on that basis, but I have enough to go through and want to complete in this 15 to 17 minutes, so I do not think we will be going through the Addictions Foundation. I apologize for not recognizing that earlier.

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Chair, no need to apologize. At the end of Estimates there are many things, opportunities cover for questions. I thank the member for letting us

know at this time. I thank our staff and the executive director of the Addictions Foundation for joining us here today. Thank you.

Mr. Chomiak: That is not to say that it may not come up at concurrence, which may be, in fact, the vehicle.

Pharmacare, there have been some changes to the Pharmacare program. It is very interesting that the expenditures for Pharmacare are up quite dramatically from the proposed savings that had been announced as a result of the government's change in the program. I wonder if the minister could give us a breakdown of the \$54.7-million expenditures that are proposed, particularly in relation to last year's expenditures of \$37.5 million.

Mr. Praznik: This is an area that I think all of us as provincial and territorial Health ministers have concerns about because it is one of the fastest growing areas for our budget. The changes that we made a year or so ago in increasing deductible levels, changing deductible levels because some of those in society who were least able to pay had a benefit from that change, others have to have a higher deductible, but the area of growth in this area has been so significant, in fact, that it has been putting pressure on everyone's budget. The response has been to try to get a handle on this in a variety of ways.

The member does flag the increase in this budget. If we had not changed the system, this line would be about \$18 million more than it is today. We have been monitoring this internally with our Pharmacare people because, as I said, it is one area of our department's budget that is most likely to get away on us very quickly. The member is aware of some of the requests that we have had to insure new drugs, some of them very expensive. Betaseron is one. You can just see that if you are not getting value for what you are purchasing, you could see this budget line increase so dramatically that it becomes very, very difficult to deal with and obviously puts at risk other programming within the department. I am not saying we do not want to spend dollars in Pharmacare where we get value, but we have to make sure we are, in fact, getting value for dollar in this line of expenditure.

So the quick answer to his question is that in monitoring this over the year, had we not made those changes, this budget line would be \$18 million more, and that obviously would have had to come out of other areas of programs somewhere in government or in this department. So we do have some concerns.

As provincial Minister of Health, I can tell you we want to meet with the new federal Minister of Health when he is appointed. This will be an item no doubt on our agenda in the fall when we meet together as a group, because there have to be ways of getting some of our price lines better on some of the products we are buying now and using the power of joint-buy. But it is an area that is going to require a great deal of work to keep at a liveable level of support in this program area.

Mr. Chomiak: Does the minister have a list? Can he give us a breakdown of individuals who accessed the program last year, and how many are potentially anticipated to access the program this year?

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Chair, I do not think we have that with us, but I will endeavour to get that information and provide it by way of letter to the member.

Mr. Chomiak: Can the minister update us as to the status of the various drug programs operated by the facilities and what the policy decision is with respect to those drug programs and the Pharmacare program?

Mr. Praznik: There is a fair bit of administrative detail to this. I am going to ask Mr. DeCock, with the permission of the committee, to provide the answer.

Mr. Chairperson: Is it the will of the committee that Mr. DeCock gives some answers on Pharmacare? [agreed]

Mr. Frank DeCock (Deputy Minister of Health): The Personal Care Home Program, the drug program in the Personal Care Home has remained the same. The Life Saving Drug Program has been rolled in under the Pharmacare program, and the programs within the hospitals have not changed.

Mr. Chomiak: Is it anticipated that the programs will change in the hospitals?

Mr. Praznik: No, we do not envision any change in the current structure between Pharmacare and hospitals. The one change, though, we do see administratively is that the oncology portion of it is likely to be transferred from St. Boniface and the Health Sciences Centre to the Cancer Treatment and Research Foundation with no change in policy for what is covered, but administratively be moved over there. We understand there is some potential for some administrative savings and, I think, better delivery of service.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, just so I understand correctly, the various drug programs being offered by various groups and agencies under the auspices of the acute care centres will not be changing.

Mr. Praznik: At this time, we have no plans for that change and so the answer is, no, they will not be changing.

Mr. Chomiak: Recognizing that the lifesaving drug program is grandfathered, do we know what figure under the \$54,757,600, how much is allocated to the lifesaving drug program?

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Chair, we only have that information for past years. We have not yet compiled it for last year specifically, so when we do that I am prepared to provide that to the member by way of a letter.

* (1620)

Mr. Chomiak: I thank the minister for that response. Can we be provided with statistics in terms of breakdowns of the number of individuals who are sort of a mean or an average in terms of recovery, of those individuals who receive benefits, what that average or mean recovery might be? Is there that kind of data available? As I understand it, the department is internally monitoring it fairly extensively, so I assume that there is that kind of data available to share.

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Chair, that type of data is just now in the process of being collected this year, so we hope to have that for next year's Estimates review process.

Mr. Chomiak: The institutional drug programs that we spoke of earlier, I assume that the budget allocations for

those institutional drug programs come out of this allocation. Is that a correct assumption?

Mr. Praznik: No, it is under the line for drugs and medical surgical supplies of the hospitals.

Mr. Chomiak: Is there any change to that line?

Mr. Praznik: In the Personal Care Homes line, I believe it increased.

Mr. Chomiak: And how about the other institutional sectors, the hospitals per se.

Mr. Praznik: That is in their own line that we provide but, for the purposes of Estimates, is included in the global budget for Estimates, so that would vary with their usage of their facility, et cetera, be a very individual number.

Mr. Chomiak: Insofar as the minister has indicated that there has been a substantial increase with respect to the cost of drugs for the provincial program, has there been a commensurate increase provided to the hospitals and other institutions in order to meet their requirements under their global budgets for the funding of their drug programs?

Mr. Praznik: We have not provided an increase, but we have asked them to look for other efficiencies that they can find, one of which has been in the area of oxygen.

The member and I have debated that issue in the House regularly, but the benefits of Rimer Alco and their oxygen concentrator program has resulted in some significant savings to facilities over the years and, ultimately, a benefit to Manitoba patients and taxpayers.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, the minister indicated there was not a global increase. Can the minister indicate whether there is a status quo or whether there has been a decrease?

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Chair, I understand there has been a decrease which is reflective of the declining use of hospital facilities.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, the minister said there has been a decrease to reflect the declining use of the hospital facilities. Is the minister suggesting that the volume of use of drugs in the various facilities has decreased and, as a result, the global grant from the province has decreased to deal with that?

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Chair, I just want to correct something I may have said on the record. The global budget was for that of the facility. They are funded on a global fashion, so the global budget facilities have declined. But within that global budget, we have taken into account both declining use of facility and increase in drug costs in our calculation of those budgets, and the facilities also have some flexibility in moving their budgets around.

So no facility in the province should go for want of ability to purchase the necessary drugs to meet their patient needs.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, where was a decision made with respect to whether or not the individuals would be required to provide notice of their assessments in terms of making the application for Pharmacare, and did that go to the privacy commission or any other government body?

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Chair, I believe in the first year of the operation of the plan it was—we were not in a position at that time of the year to have that happen. As in many income-tested programs, it is not unusual to request people's income tax information. I know when one applies for various pension plans, various publicly funded income-tested programs, it is not unusual. If the member is somehow trying to suggest that it is an infringement, a terrible infringement on an individual to be able to have to prove their income level on an income-tested program, there are many out there that require the same thing. So, administratively, it was felt an easy way of ensuring that people were getting the right amount of benefits.

I know from some of the review we did on some spot checks, that we found in some cases people were underestimating or providing income levels that were less than their actual income level and, in essence, getting a greater benefit out of the program than they were entitled to. In some cases, I am told, we found

individuals who had understated or overstated, in fact, their income and so were not getting the full benefit of it.

So this was an accurate way of our program people being able to make that determination. We do recognize that in itself is not a foolproof system, because there are some extraordinary things sometimes that come into income—people sell off assets, have an auction, et cetera, because they are moving into town, and I have had some cases brought to my attention. It was my understanding that these are accommodated in the process, but if the gist of the member's question is to propose that somehow this is a terrible infraction on people's privacy to have to prove their income level, to have an income-tested program, I do not know how else one would do it.

There are so many other programs out there. I know as an MLA working with individuals to access various programs, supplement to pension, many of these things do require the filing of income tax forms because it is one of the most accurate ways of determining people's income.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, what I was getting at was the fact that (a) at some level in the department, a policy decision was made to determine that this was required, and I was trying to determine where that decision was made, and because (b) in the implementation of the program, the Pharmacare forms went out to recipients requesting the previous year's assessment forms, and then subsequently the forms went out requesting this year's assessment forms, and there was a great deal of confusion. I was trying to determine where and how that policy decision was made.

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Chair, I appreciate now the question from the member, and he asked a very, in my opinion, legitimate question in the confusion that was created, and I would expect that is not going to happen next year. Under the terms of the program, if I remember correctly, Pharmacare does have the right to check that information against Revenue Canada. Having people provide that information up front makes a significant difference.

* (1630)

I think, if I recall, the situation was that the administrators of the program were looking initially for last year's assessment, and, of course, as people prepared their income tax later in the year, for many there could be a significant change and then took the new income tax information. We obviously are going to have to sort some out of this administratively, and after the confusion that became apparent I have asked staff to do that, those who administer the program. What we are trying to do is get an accurate read as possible. Obviously, when you have two years' income tax forms, there is an opportunity to have a difference. We have still a little work to do, but I would commit to him we will have that problem solved for next year well in advance of the required time to provide the information.

Mr. Chairperson: 21.4.(f) Pharmacare \$54,757,600—pass; 4.(g) Ambulance \$6,000,200—pass; 4.(h) Northern Patient Transportation \$3,068,400—pass; Less: Third Party Recoveries (\$755,400)—pass.

Resolution 21.4: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$1,488,396,000 for Health, Health Services Insurance Fund, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1998.

21.5. Addictions Foundation of Manitoba, Board of Governors and Executive \$170,500—pass; Finance and Personnel \$317,100—pass; Drug and Alcohol Awareness and Information \$512,700—pass; Program Delivery \$8,958,900—pass; Gambling Addictions Program \$966,500—pass; Funded Agencies \$1,614,400—pass.

Resolution 21.5: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$10,401,800 for Health, Addictions Foundation of Manitoba, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1998.

Order, please. I am interrupting the proceedings in this section of the Committee of Supply because the total time allowed for Estimates consideration has now expired.

Rule 64.1(1) provides in part that not more than 240 hours shall be allowed for the consideration in Committee of the Whole of Ways and Means and

Supply resolutions respecting all types of Estimates and relevant Supply bills.

Rule 64.1(3) provides that where the time limit has expired, the Chairperson shall forthwith put all remaining questions necessary, dispose of the matter, and such questions shall not be subject to debate, amendment or adjournment.

I am therefore going to call in sequence the questions on the following matters: For the Department of Health, Resolutions Nos. 21.6, 21.7 and 21.1. Shall these resolutions pass—pass.

This concludes our consideration of the Estimates in this section of the Committee of Supply. I would like to thank the minister and his critics for their co-operation.

Committee rise.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Mr. Chairperson (Marcel Laurendeau): Would the Committee of Supply come to order, please. This section of the Committee of Supply has been dealing with the Estimates of the Department of Education and Training. Would the minister's staff please enter the Chamber at this time.

We are on Resolution 16.2. School Programs (c) Assessment and Evaluation (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$2,988,400, on page 34 of the Estimates book.

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): I think at the end of last time we had been looking at the issues surrounding Brandon's concerns with notification of school exams and what actually had been sent to teachers. The minister had read into the record, amongst other things, a paragraph from a letter which she had copied to me, which she had also sent, I believe, to Crocus Plains Regional school. It does say in that letter that the written response questions and the approximate ratio of 40 to 60 percent, respectively, will be the examination of multiple choice and written response for the 40S exam.

Mr. Chairman, it seems to me that I am not clear whether that letter was sent to divisions or whether it

was sent to teachers. I thought I heard the minister at the end of last session saying that it was sent to teachers directly; whether that was meant or whether it was intended that the division send that to the teachers, I am not sure. It also seems to me there could have been additional clarity in that, and I am raising this for next year.

It seems to me that to be absolutely certain, for greater certainty, as we say in the Legislature, a note could have been made that said this reverses the proportions of previous years. This would have underlined the change that had taken place. So, in the interests of absolute clarity for next year, those kinds of changes should be noted as changes, changes in emphasis, changes in proportion, changes in percentages, changes in the nature of questions. It seems to me, and I have heard from teachers outside of the Brandon division, that this change in emphasis was not clear to them. I am suggesting it to the minister for future reference that absolute clarity be something that is given attention. It seems to me from what I heard that this was the major issue.

Some people have talked about the nature of the exam. I am not sure that is something that was widely represented in the discussions with me. Some people have said the exam was more difficult. Some said it was less difficult. I think you tend to get that kind of discussion around any exam, so the proportions and the nature of the questions seem to me to be the most important. Indeed, Canada's Principles for Fair Student Assessment is very clear on that as well.

I have tried now on a couple of occasions in the last dealings in Estimates to ascertain from the minister what exactly was sent. I understand that this letter was sent, and the minister will explain in a minute, I hope, how it was sent. I am advising that there be greater clarity next time and that changes be specifically noted. I understand that the department also sent manuals. They were not big manuals, but they did perform the function of manuals, describing what the examination room would look like, what the teachers should do, what they were responsible for, what the schools were responsible for.

* (1450)

The Canada's fair assessment guide also, however, suggests representative samples, complete copies of questions or tasks, directions, answer sheets and score reports, and I have asked the minister on a couple of occasions whether this in fact has been done and if she could provide evidence of how that had been done. I understand that this is a very firm practice in Alberta. It is one that classroom teachers welcome. They are very used to it. They have been doing it for a number of years, and they do get very specific directions every year in the fall long before the examinations are taken.

I also wanted to ask the minister about her comments in the paper. She indicated that—and I may be reading more into her comments than she intended—but she seemed to indicate last time that the only reason that she released the marks school by school was because of Brandon. I find that a little difficult to believe.

It seems to me that the minister, in Bill 33 and other discussions of New Directions, clearly had an idea that the release of school marks was part of a market-based system of education whereby choice across divisions, the recognition of schools by a straight-number factor, were exactly the kinds of things this government was looking for.

In her comments I am concerned about a number of things. One, again, goes back to the Fair Student Assessment Practices where it indicates that those who are doing the examining should investigate the performance of students from different backgrounds. "Investigate," to me, seems to indicate research, evaluation and a thoughtful report. I do not get the sense from the minister that she believes that is the department's responsibility. In previous discussion, she said this was the division's responsibility. My response was, the divisions do not have the comparative material that would be required for a responsible evaluation of that area, and it is something which Fair Student Assessment Practices indicate as required.

The minister, in her comments in the newspaper—and I think we have all had the experience of being misquoted in the newspaper, so I am not going to suggest that the minister said that; I will leave it to her—I am quoting from the March 22 Free Press where she makes comments upon the relative pass rates in particular schools. I do not know whether she was

quoted correctly or not, but the paper says that, quote, McIntosh was amazed that Gordon Bell beat out other Winnipeg School Division institutions such as Kelvin and Grant Park, which are in much more affluent areas.

It is that kind of comment which, I think, is not part of the process of fair assessment practices. Were you misquoted? [interjection] While I am pleased that the minister recognized Gordon Bell, if she was in fact quoted appropriately, I do not think it is appropriate, and if the minister was misquoted, I am sure she will—this is a good opportunity in fact to put that straight that other institutions, for example, such as Kelvin and Grant Park, are in much more affluent areas. First of all, both of those schools take students in different programs from areas which are not as affluent as they might appear at first glance from the catchment area. I think the minister might have found on closer examination that the Kelvin students who took the 40S exam this year were people who in fact had been in the class the previous year, and they had studied on their own. So it was not a fair comparison. These were, I believe, International Baccalaureate students who had then studied on their own for this exam.

The bulk of Kelvin students, as I understand it—and it may be the same for Grant Park as well—will be taking this in the spring. So there are those kinds of comparisons of who is taking it in the spring; who is taking it in the fall; what the conditions are around the taking of the exam. It is also, I think, in some of those areas, Gordon Bell, Kelvin and Grant Park, and probably in other schools too, that at the January exam you are going to have very small numbers, and I think it is quite inappropriate for anyone to generalize from a very small sample. The issue here is that we need larger samples of the kind of investigation of performance and evaluation of examination results as are indicated in the Fair Student Assessment Practices, I think, would make much more sense.

So, Mr. Chairman, my questions really are based upon two things: One is the department's purpose in releasing these results, the nature of investigation and evaluation that they intend to provide, and some questions for the minister on comments which she was quoted as having made in the Free Press on this, which I think caused some dismay in some quarters. I think it

will be fair for the minister to tell us exactly what she did say. I will leave it now.

Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Education and Training): When we closed yesterday I was in the process of providing the information on the letter to the member. So if I may just conclude with that response, because she has come back to say that I provided her with a quote from a paragraph from a letter. I had been reading that letter into the record when our time was up yesterday. I will absolutely clarify the comments in the paper, why they were said, and in fact, ironically enough, they were sparked by something that the member opposite had said to me that caused me to respond with tongue-in-cheek response to a quote attributed to the member opposite, but that was not reported. It will be interesting. I will go through it.

Perhaps what I can do to speed things up is I have brought a package, a sample of the types of material that go out to people for exams. This one happens to be language arts, but that does not matter. It is the same kind of thing. This is the material sent to teachers in schools. It is sent to the schools to be given to the teachers. The member had asked: How was it sent? Was it just sent to the division? It is sent to the schools for the teachers in those schools to use. The package is here. This particular package, as you can see, Mr. Chairman, is about two inches thick. It has containing in it copies of correspondence beginning in August, copies of the information on dates, on marking, all kinds of information, sample student registration forms, information bulletins, a sample demographic data form, provincial examination process. It contains security procedures, the administration manual for the supervising teachers, et cetera, et cetera, the policies and procedures for provincial examinations and standards tests.

Maybe just to give you an indication for the record, this package of material sent to schools for teachers to prepare them for exams is about two inches thick and the document on top that says what is in the package is two 8 1/2 x 11 pieces of paper, single-spaced typing, just to say what is in it. So to say what schools get is a skimpy, unclear package of material, if this is skimpy and unclear, I really would not want to be the recipient of a lot more than this, because this is a lot of material.

So I have three packages like this, Mr. Chairperson, for tabling so the record can show that ample information is sent to the field in advance of examinations. It is very heavy. That is the one package. Here are two more. Can you manage it? There we go. So that is what is sent to schools to be given to teachers in advance of exams.

The member says that, yes, we did say in our letter that there would be 40 percent multiple choice and 60 percent respectively, that is 60 percent written response respectively on the exams. But she said that was not clear enough for teachers. Well, I will read you the statement again, Mr. Chairperson. It says—

Mr. Chairperson: Order, please. Before the minister continues, I just wanted to clarify one thing. You were just sharing this with the members. You did not actually want to put this in the record?

Mrs. McIntosh: Yes.

Mr. Chairperson: You were going to share it?

* (1500)

Mrs. McIntosh: No, I am tabling it. We have accusations that we do not send out enough material. I am tabling the whole darn thing. That is what they get before exams. As I say, that particular example, what I asked for is for a sample—it was before exams of the department—to provide me with the language arts, but it is the same kind of package that is given for the other subjects as well. In this letter to teachers of mathematics giving them specific direction as to what is going to be on the exam, the letter states: The exam, you are reminded that—and then there is a colon and these items are set off separately, so they stand out and they are bullets.

The first bullet is: You are reminded that the examination is based on the mathematics 40S curriculum and information contained in the examination specifications enclosed with this package.

The second bullet says: The examination consists of multiple choice, select and written response, supply questions in the approximate ratio of 40 to 60 percent, respectively. Experience has shown that students tend

not to perform as well on the written response sections of assessments and examinations as they do on the multiple choice section. Students should be encouraged to answer written response questions in a complete and concise manner.

Now the member said that that is not clear enough for teachers. I am looking at it saying 40 percent multiple choice, 60 percent, respectively, experience has shown multiple choice does better than written response. They have trouble with written response. I asked them to do a written response clearly and concisely. How much more clear can that be made?

The member says that perhaps it can be made more clear by pointing out that last year it was 60 and 40 percent. That has been pointed out to staff. That has been pointed out in press releases. That was sent out in a press release that we were going to shift onto heavier emphasis on problem solving because—[interjection] All right, so the member is saying that the reason the students did not do well in the exam was because teachers could not figure out that this year's 60 percent problem solving was more than the 40 percent last year.

I think she does a great disservice to teachers. We certainly can take that advice under consideration and spell it out. We can add to that pile of papers and make it much thicker by adding in detail that says last year it was—we can certainly put—[interjection] Excuse me. We can certainly put into the directions next year when we send out the things. How would the member like us to word it? Would she like us to say it will be 40 percent multiple choice and 60 percent written response? That is the same as the exam in June '97 and different from the exam in June '96, which was different from the pilot in June 1994, and here is what it was in June 1992. Perhaps that would be clearer for the member.

What we are saying here is that it is very clearly indicted what the exam is going to be. Most teachers—I mean, this curriculum has been there for nine years—would be familiar with all of the conversations and publicity we have had about emphasizing problem solving this go-around. Nonetheless, if she feels that teachers cannot figure that out, we can certainly add a

sentence saying: This is the same as last year and different from the year before and different from the year before that. If she thinks that will help them, then we would be pleased to do it. It takes no trouble to put that extra sentence in.

We did, however, feel by saying that it was 40 percent multiple choice, 60 percent, respectively, an emphasis on written problem solving this year because they had trouble in it and asked for extra work on problem solving, we thought most teachers would understand that. I am surprised the member feels that they were not able to, but nonetheless in recognition of her concern that teachers could not figure that out, we will put it in next time.

The letter was sent to, as I indicated, the teachers in October. At that time they were told the relative waiting—even though I appreciate what the member says, they probably would not know what that meant because they could not compare it to the year before. We felt it was clear. We also attached the table of specifications which accompanied the letter. That went to teachers, principals, with copies to superintendents and boards. I have greater confidence in the teachers of this province to be able to read and understand the material sent out, but I understand from the member that she says teachers themselves could not figure out what that meant. So we will take her word for it, and we will do that—

Point of Order

Mr. Chairperson: Order, please. The honourable member for Wolseley, on a point of order.

Ms. Friesen: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman. The minister is deliberately twisting words, putting words into my mouth on what teachers did or did not understand from this. I wanted to point out to the minister that what I offered to her was a suggestion, a sentence, a clarification for next year and it does her no service, I believe, to continue in this manner.

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

* * *

Mr. Chairperson: The honourable minister, to continue.

Mrs. McIntosh: Mr. Chairman, I would invite the member to check Hansard because she did, very definitely, say that it was not clear for teachers, that some teachers had indicated that was not clear for them. I think if she reads it, she will see that she did actually say that was not clear for teachers because it did not point out that even though it did tell them exactly how the exam was going to be broken down, it did not point out it was different from last year. The member clearly said check Hansard, that that was not clear for teachers and therefore we need to include it so that it would be clear for teachers. She can end the commentary from her desk by just checking Hansard and clarifying that for her own comfort.

The member also indicated back here, she had asked the question on releasing results. She asked why I released the results. Well, there were two reasons and these reasons were under consideration. The member is quite right that the department had always wanted to be accountable to the public in terms of letting the public know what was happening in terms of knowledge gained in the divisions. We had, as the member knows, sent out press releases indicating that on testing done to the students in Manitoba—I have named a few examples—the science test for 13-year-olds, we released the generic information about that. The school-by-school breakdown, Brandon School Division was definitely a catalyst for a school-by-school release of marks which to date we had not done. We had been talking in generic terms about 13-year-olds performed this well.

The year before, we had put out our math test results saying average mark in the province is 61 percent. Students did well in calculation but not in problem solving. Hence, next year we will emphasize problem solving. That was in a press release put out to the public, but we did not give the school-by-school breakdown. We gave the overall average mark and a few other interesting pieces of information such as did well in calculations but not in problem solving. Brandon definitely by not wanting the marks to be recognized, sparked calls for people saying: Could we have our marks. We suggested, call your school divisions. They are at complete liberty to provide you

with the marks and some school divisions said, no, we do not want to.

The end result was, finally, in order to stop the controversy due to great public demand—and I mean great public demand—we just released the marks. You know, the acceptance with which that was received made us recognize that was the right thing to do, because it got people talking about learning and education and what was going on, et cetera, to inform the public about the outcomes of schooling, and people have a desire to know and they have the right to know. They pay for the system, after all.

* (1510)

To assist schools to be able to set goals for improvement once they have seen their results and become aware of how those compare to others, they can analyze results, including context because we do not release contextual information. They can decide what are the factors that showed our school having different results.

Tests are thoroughly screened, in answer to another question the member made, for racial and cultural bias. They are well prepared in that regard, and we expect all students to meet the expectations of the curriculum regardless of their background. Students with special needs are either exempted or have a special adaptation granted. With the process that we use for curriculum development, with the sensitivity to issues such as bias, aboriginal perspectives and the other integratables in the Foundations for Excellence, we believe that the curriculum base that we use for the standards testing is in fact comprehensive. We do believe that every child in our process deserves the very best of instruction so that they can work towards the achievement of the provincial standard.

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

Here is where the member and I deviate, and ironically enough, she asks me about the comments attributed to me in the Winnipeg Free Press. I find it really interesting because in part my response, which was a tongue-in-cheek, sarcastic response in response to questions about the types of things the member is

often raising to me—you cannot expect children in certain programs to measure up to the standard, you cannot expect children in poor schools to be able to do as well, you have to dummy down the standards or make exceptions or do something different for children whose socioeconomic background is different or who have English as a second language. You cannot expect students who have these so-called disadvantages to be able to perform to a standard, therefore standards tests are unfair, and many, many, many, many, many, many, many times members of the NDP have stated to me standards tests are grossly unfair because they do not take into account students' socioeconomic background, the fact that they may be new Canadians, the fact that they may be aboriginal, the fact that they may be poor, the fact that they may come from large families, the fact that they may be hungry in the morning. It is not fair to make them take the standards test and expect them to do as well as others.

I have heard that song given to me and sung to me in so many different ways, in so many different harmonies, in so many different keys, and I have always believed that where a student has potential and is willing to be in a school with a teacher that is willing to work, no student deserves to have dummy-down standards given to them because we have low expectations for them. When I hear members opposite in the New Democratic Party say to me, as they say so often, you cannot expect these children to meet the standards, and then they do not say dummy down the standards but they say adjust the standards, take into account these various factors, they are poor, they do not have money, they do not speak English at home, so therefore do not make them try the test, do not have them reach the standard because they will not be able to because we have low expectations for them.

When I got that question, are you surprised that Gordon Bell, low economic socioconditions, did so well, I was being extremely sarcastic when I said, yes, isn't it amazing, isn't it amazing that these students did so extremely well. They not only met the standard, they set the standard, and I was being very sarcastic when I said "isn't it amazing."

In answer to charges that the NDP have made so often that you cannot expect students from that background to do as well as students from the elite

schools, and there are many people in Winnipeg and Manitoba who believe that Kelvin school is an elite school, and the member has often talked with great scorn about elite schools, and so I was being very sarcastic when I said, isn't it amazing that these students who do not go to an elite school, many of whom have English for a second language, many of whom are aboriginal, many of whom are poor, many of whom are not registered in the IB program, isn't it amazing that they got the highest marks in Manitoba?

Well, of course, I do not find it the least bit amazing. I was being sarcastic in response to a question. Of course, appearing in print, you do not hear the tone, because I am not the least bit amazed that Gordon Bell did as well as it did because, obviously, in that school, students and teachers are teaching and learning well together, and they have done well.

There is no reason they cannot, and I think that puts a lie to all the hypothesis and the theorizing about—I mean, Winnipeg I wrote me a letter, and if I can get it to table it I will table it to you on the same question saying: You should not say you are amazed that Gordon Bell did well. Do you know what they said in their letter to me? They said: You should not be amazed that Gordon Bell did well because—and I think this is the exact quote—even though there are people in this area who are poor and disadvantaged, there are also some students who are very bright and capable.

I wrote back to Winnipeg I, and I said, listen and look at what you have written and tell me that you do not have low expectations for these students, because they wrote in their letter, even though there are students in the area who are poor and disadvantaged, there are also others who are capable and bright. The connection they made was that those who were poor and disadvantaged were not capable and bright. It may have been their phraseology, but I mean that was a carefully written letter to me on that topic. It was on that very topic, and that was the most revealing sentence. I wrote back and said: Read what you have written and please have higher expectations for your students than that, than to clearly make a distinction between while there are some who are poor and disadvantaged, there are also some who are bright and capable.

Poor and disadvantaged children have every bit as much potential to be bright and capable as those who are not poor and disadvantaged. I am not saying that we should not have extra supports in terms of early intervention or things of that nature for children at risk. That is a different issue. But to imply that, because they are poor and disadvantaged they are not bright and capable, is the kind of attitude that I was trying to break down when I said: Is it not amazing that they did the very best in the province? My sarcasm was addressed exactly toward that attitude exemplified so horribly in that letter and repeated to me ad infinitum by the members of the official opposition in Manitoba.

I will not dummy down standards for students whose ability and potential need only to be brought forward in a good educational setting by a knowledgeable and dedicated teacher, as has happened. If the member read on in that article, she will read me saying there was no pattern that was discernible in terms of where the excellence was and where the areas of nonexcellence occurred. Small schools that did not have department heads, where the teacher had to teach history and English as well as math, and they had no backup support, no resource teachers, no fancy equipment did extremely well.

Big inner city schools such as Gordon Bell, that the member and others in her party are always telling me are full of disadvantaged children who cannot survive without standards being dummed down or all kinds of extra things to make them like those in the elite schools such as Kelvin, there was no discernible pattern. Schools did well in every circumstance. Schools did poorly in every circumstance.

Schools that were well funded, had all kinds of equipment, high specialists, schools with award-winning teachers, all kinds of advantages, money, et cetera, did not do as well as some disadvantaged schools and vice versa. There was no pattern. I had a person phone me and say, well, Mrs. McIntosh, how can you say that there was no pattern. If you went into the schools, I think you would find a pattern. I think you would find the one thing that all those classes had in common, and you and I know what it is but you do not want to say what it is because you are afraid of the union. I said: I am not afraid of the union. Do not be ridiculous. That was said to me—

Ms. Friesen: Madam Chairwoman, would you bring this minister to order? This is just the most ridiculous diatribe I have heard in a long time.

Mrs. McIntosh: Oh, really, well I have to listen to you do this all day long. My chance to answer.

Ms. Friesen: It is your chance to invent.

Point of Order

The Acting Chairperson (Mrs. Render): Excuse me. Does the member for Wolseley have a point of order?

* (1520)

Ms. Friesen: Yes. Madam Chair, I have a point of order. My point of order is that the questions that were asked dealt with evaluation and interpretation. They also dealt with the issues of what was distributed to schools in Brandon and elsewhere in the province before the exam. The minister is putting on record a lot of invention, shall we say, and I would suggest that the minister stick to answering the questions, rather than inventing the responses of anonymous people or people that she is not naming. She is putting words into my mouth. It really seems to me that it is wasting the time of the committee. The minister was given some specific questions, and I think she should answer them.

The Acting Chairperson (Mrs. Render): The honourable minister, on the same point of order.

Mrs. McIntosh: Madam Chair, on the same point of order, I am answering a question the member put forward. She said, why were you quoted in the paper saying that you were amazed, and then she gave me a little lecture on how I should not have said that, if I said it. She asks me to clarify it, and I am now clarifying it.

Ms. Friesen: On a point of order, Madam Chairman.

Mrs. McIntosh: I am speaking on the point of order, and she is interrupting.

I am answering the question she put as to why those comments appeared in the paper, and she wanted the story behind those comments. I am providing it to her. I am telling her that I had a phone call, and I can get

permission to give the name, I am sure it is no problem, saying that we would find one thing in common.

That is in direct answer to her question about why those comments appeared in the paper and her chastisement of me for them. I am explaining to her that those comments were in a certain context, and I am giving her the context. Now, if she does not want the answers, maybe she should not ask the questions. Because if she does not want me to answer the questions, then maybe she should not ask any more.

The Acting Chairperson (Mrs. Render): The honourable member for Wolseley I do not believe has a strict point of order. I would also caution the minister to try to make sure that her answers are as close as possible to the question that was asked, but I would say that this is a dispute over the facts.

* * *

The Acting Chairperson (Mrs. Render): The honourable minister now, to finish her response.

Mrs. McIntosh: Thank you, Madam Speaker. In response to the member's question about my comments in the paper about the performance of students and why students in certain areas, why it appeared that I had said students in certain areas with certain demographics would do differently than others, I have given most of the answer to that, concluding with the summation that indeed there is no discernable pattern to students doing better or worse in any particular sociodemographic area.

As I indicate to the member, I believe wherever students have the potential and the ability and the willingness to learn, coupled with a dedicated teacher who is working to teach that good things can happen regardless of socioeconomic circumstances, and that, while I have said publicly I have seen no discernible pattern, I did receive a call from a taxpayer of Manitoba who said that I do know what the pattern is, I am just not willing to admit it publicly, because the pattern has to do with teaching and I am afraid of the union.

That is not what I have ever said. I am not afraid of the union. Clearly, clearly I agree with that taxpayer that one of the factors and probably a prime one would be good teaching. We have a lot of good teachers out

there. Witness the good performance that we saw in so many of these exams. Witness not just that but the ongoing learning that takes place. We have tons and tons of excellent teachers, so if the member wants to read anything into comments that might have been made—and that comment was made on the radio, by the way, by the taxpayer phoning into the Peter Warren show. If that member wants to read anything into comments made around that by others or by me, what I am saying to you is that I am not at all amazed that the students at Gordon Bell did well. I was being sarcastic, in response to the kind of ongoing low expectations that certain trustees and members of the opposition have for people who are in particular circumstances.

We know that children who are in Grade 1 who are receiving instruction in the Reading Recovery Program—that is when we identify them early, get them into Reading Recovery or other programs—they are succeeding in the development of their reading skills. We have dedicated skilled teachers working with struggling learners, and they are achieving and they are achieving very well. We do not want to create a philosophy of dependency or to expect less of certain children because of where they live. To do that creates a vicious circle—expect less, get less, expect less, get less. We have lived through that for the last 25 years. We have seen what building dependency and low expectations has done to our students in not just the inner city but other places in Manitoba as well. We wish to reverse that. So I hope that clarifies the answer.

I do not think it was ridiculous to respond in detail to the allegations that were implied that she put down. I do not think it was ridiculous to answer not fully and completely because I still left out a lot of detail in that answer, but when she asks a question and wants to know the detail around it and I provide the detail within the time allowed, I do not think that is ridiculous, and I do not think it was fair or kind or right or good of her to say that I invented my answers. That is wrong. That is implying that I am lying, and if she wants to call me a liar, I invite her to have the courtesy and the guts and the courage to come right out and say it rather than say that I am inventing answers. I am not inventing answers. I do not invent answers here, in the House or any place. She can judge by her own standards, but those are not mine. I do not invent answers and I will not accept that.

Ms. Friesen: Madam Chair, well, I will not respond to any of those personal issues. The minister will stand and live by the kinds of comments that she makes on the record.

I will say on the Gordon Bell issue that one of the best letters I saw in the paper on this was that people should have known that Gordon Bell had a long history of success in mathematics, and indeed it has going back to the 1970s.

Mrs. McIntosh: Including its own school board.

Ms. Friesen: Does the minister wish to speak?

Mrs. McIntosh: Oh, sure, okay. Can I have the chance?

Ms. Friesen: The minister, I think, can wait her turn.

Mrs. McIntosh: Well, then why did you ask me if I wanted to speak?

Ms. Friesen: Madam Chair, would you like to take a five-minute recess? I really find this quite intolerable.

Mrs. McIntosh: Well, you interrupted me.

The Acting Chairperson (Mrs. Render): Is it in agreement that we take a five-minute recess?

Mrs. McIntosh: No.

Ms. Friesen: Madam Chair, again, the minister will be judged by the kinds of things that she puts on the record.

As I said, I thought the best letter about Gordon Bell indicated its record and that perhaps her discussion of surprise might have been connected to that, as well, that there is not any surprise because it has always had a good record in mathematics. If you have ever been to any of the graduations at Gordon Bell, the maths before, during and after standard exams have been quite breathtaking.

I think the minister was getting close to some of the answers I am looking for when she said that there was no discernible pattern. What I am interested in finding

out is what kind of evaluation—this is what I have been asking the questions on—based on the principles laid down in Fair Student Assessment, and that is the principles of the evaluation of exams and the kind of information which is provided around them.

The minister seems only to be able to suggest that there are low expectations when people actually want to talk about evaluation. How do we look at what has succeeded and how do we look at what has not succeeded? The minister only wants to talk in expectations and that is not the issue at all. The issue we have been talking about is evaluation. How do you evaluate the exams?

That was why I was giving her the opportunity, and she called it allegations. It was not. It was framed very carefully. I asked the minister—I said we have both been misquoted. This is the opportunity to put it correctly, and I have some concerns about the kinds of things that have been said. She has indicated that it came from sarcasm which does not translate well into the written word all the time. From that she went on to some very unpleasant suggestions and quite unnecessary in her answer.

The issue was evaluation of the exams indicating where there are strengths, where there are weaknesses in the Manitoba system, what kinds of things we should be building on, what kinds of things need to be developed, what kind of professional development will emerge from this, what kind of best practices might emerge from this. Yet the minister says there is no discernible pattern, and that I find quite puzzling.

I can understand that in response to a newspaper interview at the time, it is difficult to discern the pattern, but what kind of evaluation has the department done? We have now had a series of exams in English and mathematics.

* (1530)

(Mr. Chairperson in the Chair)

What kind of research, investigation and evaluation is prepared to look at what patterns are emerging? For example, the minister said there were no discernible patterns for example in award-winning teachers; there

were no discernible patterns vis-a-vis the finance. Well, perhaps the minister did not understand what I said. She said that schools where there were award-winning teachers perhaps might not have done as expected. There was a reference to that being a criterion for the evaluation of the province-wide results and exams.

Secondly, she talked about finance, the financing of schools. It was not always the best financed schools which did the best, I think was what she was saying, and similarly socioeconomic conditions. There were not the kind of expectations that perhaps people might commonly have seen in the results.

So my sense is that some evaluation has been done and those are the criteria that have been used. I wondered if the minister had considered other criteria, for example, the size of class, the streaming into 40G or 40S. What proportion of students in each of our divisions are taking the more general course as opposed to the higher level course, and how is that having an impact on the kind of results that we have seen? So that is one area.

The other area that I had been discussing was the information provided to teachers before exams. The minister tabled the two inches of material that was provided in the English exams, but my questions were directed specifically towards the math exams. That was where the problem has arisen. That is where there has been discussion from around the province.

I went back again to the material that the minister says are part of the principles that she believes in, and those are the Principles for Fair Student Assessment Practices. I think I am now asking this for the third or fourth time, so maybe I should be very precise about this. This is page 16. It is item 6 in the Principles for Fair Student Assessment Practices. It says that users should be provided with (1) representative samples or complete copies of questions or tasks; (2) directions; (3) answer sheets; (4) score reports; (5) guidelines for interpretation and manuals.

In my discussion of this I said I understood that the minister had sent forth manuals. I was not clear that anything else had been sent forth. So I am asking very specifically now, for the math exams, and I am basing

this upon the kinds of things that I understand to be the case in Alberta, where exams have been dealt with over a long period of time, where there are very clear, precise expectations of students and teachers, and they have had long experience of that. I know that in each case those things are sent out in the math and the science exams. So I am asking for comparable information from the minister for Manitoba.

Mrs. McIntosh: I do not want to prolong the sarcasm that is flowing back and forth across the room, but let us get one thing clear, and that is this, that when the member says things like, the minister is giving answers that I do not accept, she is inventing answers, and so on, that is really unpleasant also. And she can expect that she will get from me in kind what she delivers. It is not like others who might just sit back and take the tone and the implications about ministers inventing answers. That is a terrible charge to make in the middle of Estimates, to tell a minister she is inventing answers in the middle of Estimates.

I think she can expect that she will hear back from me on it, because I do not think that I should have to accept that. If she feels it is unpleasant to have her allegations called, well, I am sorry, I am not doing it to be unpleasant, I am doing it to make sure the record does not allow those kinds of allegations to stand as correct. But I also wish to indicate in terms of—maybe she is just mixing it up and not consciously doing this—but I never said that award-winning teachers were a criterion. The member said, quote, the minister has said that award-winning teachers were a criterion for evaluation. I never said that. What I said was, we could not see any discernible pattern when we first got all the marks. We could not see any discernible pattern. It did not seem to matter if it was a school with award-winning teachers, lots of money, whatever those things were. I did not say that those were criteria against which a school would be judged, which is what you came back and said that I had said. I had said in looking at them, we could not see a pattern.

We are currently exploring, looking for patterns. We have looked at things like class size. It did not seem to matter at first glance. I mean, we still are delving in because we have asked each division to present us with factors for why they think their division did the way they did, to put it in context of some of the

circumstances—their building. For their division, I am saying, it could be the building; maybe the building was fiery hot, icy cold. We do not know those things, so we are asking for contextual information to help us examine. But we do not have criteria to say: this is a school with award-winning teachers; therefore, we expect this kind of result. We do not have that. We just said, we took our glance. It did not seem to matter whether it was a big class, because there were big classes that did extremely well. There were small classes that did not. There was not any one thing that we could look at that we would say in every school where students did well, this particular item was a common factor.

Now I have had it suggested to me that the quality of teaching could be the common factor. I am not discounting that. It is just that we have not seen that in terms of going out to ask divisions what they thought it was that caused their students to do well or poorly, and those we will get back.

The member would like to know what we are judging our evaluation on, and the member has asked what kind of evaluation the exams had. That is a really good question. That is a good question. It is a pertinent one. It is relevant and it is a responsible question.

What kind of evaluation? First of all, we asked all boards, and this was part of our press release too and it was public, and it has been something that I have said on the radio, wherever. We are asking school divisions to identify for us what they believe the factors were in their students' success or lack of success or regular performance, whatever factors they can identify. We have asked for the vehicle of inclusion in the process, introspective review. We can see school plans being used to incorporate addressing some of the weaknesses or strengths that were perceived as a result of the school division's own analysis of those marks for diagnostic purposes.

At the department level we are responding by providing professional development where there is a need. There are some things that are clear. All schools had the same curriculum and the same opportunity to learn and use it. All had the same backup material, and I will provide for the member. As I indicated, I had

asked for a sample of the material before marks get sent out, before exams. I tabled what today happens to be the language arts. The math consultants are busy yesterday and today, but I can get the same material for the math for her. I would be pleased to do that, but I do not have it here today.

But there appears to be no causal effect even at this point that we have been able to spot between money spent and outcomes, between results and geography, between results and neighbourhoods, but we will be studying those. We are in the process of doing that in more depth to assess if there are other patterns. We will also be looking for the information sent to us by school divisions.

* (1540)

The member has two or three times implied we had not distributed sufficient or clear information in a timely fashion, but we have given good information in clear ways in a timely manner. There are some schools that may believe otherwise, one or two, that is their right but not all agree and not all school divisions wish to be included as ones that did not feel they were well prepared for the exam.

I have received several letters. The member, I hope, will not say I am inventing this because I do not think, to me, telling the minister in Estimates that she is inventing answers is the same as saying she lied. At any rate, the member does not want to use those words because they are unparliamentary, but I think telling a cabinet minister she is inventing answers in Estimates is an extremely serious allegation. Extremely serious. However, I have received letters—that is not an invention—from school divisions that were concerned that they might be seen as not wanting exams or not feeling they were well prepared for not having done well.

So I have received letters saying, we felt we were adequately informed. We felt we were given the information we required. Our students did well because we prepared them well and they were receptive to learning, and we welcome the exams. Please do not give up the initiative because some other divisions feel differently.

The member I think may have gotten those same letters also. Maybe not, but I think she probably did get copies of at least some of them. I have to indicate that with Brandon School Division, for example, we have already received some feedback from them. They indicated they felt one of the factors why their students did not do so well was because they allow any student that they think can make it take the 40S exam. Therefore, they do not have a prerequisite that they have to take 30S before 40S, so we checked into that.

I mean they put that as a factor, and indeed we looked back at the students who took 40S in Brandon. That indeed did not make a difference because their students registered in 40S. Those who had taken 30S did extremely well on the 30S, and there were only two who had not taken it. There were a whole lot of other factors. I will not go into the details, but they pointed out that they felt the reason their students did not do well was because they do not set prerequisites. Yet when we explored that in depth, and we did, we took a long time to go through that in detail, and that did not prove to hold water when the final analysis was in.

We found, exploring it in detail, that that argument did not stand, but nonetheless that whole business of how many students have taken prerequisites in 30S will certainly be a factor that we are looking at. Also, some divisions will tell you—well, the member mentioned an example of IB students who took the standards exam, who she indicated I believe and I am not sure if I heard her correctly and perhaps she can correct me if I have misheard her, I thought she said that the IB students in one of the schools had not taken the 40S but were writing from the information, the knowledge gained in the IB math. I believe that is what she said.

The International Baccalaureate math, of course, is recognized on an international standard, a more rigorous standard even than our Manitoba math. I think it would be fair to say that under the circumstances I think I heard the member describe that International Baccalaureate students writing at a Senior 4 level should not have any trouble with our own Senior 4 standards exam, because the international standards are at the post-secondary stage in terms of rigour.

That is another factor, of course, that we are looking at that, with the AP and the IB and those other factors

entering into it, what impact did those have on the writing of the math exam? I come back to my sense that any student with potential, well motivated, with good curricula and dedicated teacher, will be able to reach the standard that we put forward in our Math 40S exam. So, if you have a well-motivated student with good potential working with a dedicated teacher and a good curriculum, I have high expectations for that student that there would be no need to dummy-down the standard for that student under any circumstances, because that student has every right to have expectations placed upon him or her to excel. That is what New Directions is all about.

The member made several references to Alberta. I indicate that we are always looking for ways to grow and evolve in pursuit of excellence, so we make a habit of reviewing practices of other jurisdictions where they have exams, such as Alberta. We will borrow notions and practices that fit. In fact, the whole underpinning of the western protocol embodies this. So we see North America moving in this direction. We see Canada moving in this direction. We see the western provinces and the two territories moving in concert in this direction, and it is something that we believe in as ministers, as provinces, as departments of Education, as deputies in Manitoba, Alberta, Saskatchewan, British Columbia, the Yukon and Northwest Territories.

We may be ahead of the others in some respects; they may be ahead of us in other respects. But, ultimately, we have a goal, and in the very early years of the new millennium we will be doing things the same way. So it is not an ideological thing. It is not a partisan thing. It is an educational thing, because when educators look into the research—and I indicated to the member the great volumes of research that we have that supports proper assessment at the end of a learning experience. I think the member would have to agree with those writings. I did not submit the whole list that I had here the other day, but I could if the member would like it.

I just would like to conclude this question. I am hoping I have not left anything out in terms of what was asked, but I do believe, Mr. Chairman, that, just as a final indication of the types of information we have gathered, 63 percent of the students writing were enrolled in 40S. In Brandon, the comparable figure

was 65 percent. So it is just a two percentage point difference between the number writing.

It is a very small difference, in fact, in light of Brandon's claim that their results were so low because they did not exclude any students from taking 40S, and if they did not exclude any students from taking 40S, the number writing was comparable within two percentage points of the entire rest of the province. So it is, again, very statistically small, and I think that is an interesting aspect.

Those are the kinds of comparisons we do when school divisions provide us with their own reasons for having done well or not done well. We will take a look and put it in the broader context and analyze it, and some, I think, will evaluate themselves very well indeed and others may not. We believe in local autonomy. We are there to help. We have offered our assistance in any way, shape, or form that we can offer it to divisions that require or feel they would like some additional help. Our math consultants for example are busy today helping divisions, helping students, making sure that the standards for math are being reached and understood and are able to be applied by students in Manitoba as we reach for world-class standards without dumming down for students because of circumstances that some might think should merit a lessening of the standard or a lowering of expectation.

* (1550)

Ms. Friesen: Part of that answered the question: What kind of evaluation is being conducted and what criteria are being used and what is the follow-up? So I would like this time the minister to tell us when that report is going to be available on the English exams and the math exams as they have been conducted so far and perhaps to suggest to her also that the use of the IB example related to the whole tenor of my remarks, which has been that care has to be exercised in the evaluation of these results and that following the principles of the fair assessment guide that this has to be done very carefully and based upon research and not upon small samples, not upon issues where there might be particular issues that are relevant only to one or two schools.

I should draw attention to the fact that the only person who talks about the dumming-down of

standards is the minister. This is not the tenor of the discussion. It is not the direction of the questions that I have been asking. I do however repeat my question on what was provided as I think now is the fourth or fifth time of asking. The minister has said that she would table it, but I am puzzled as to why, with the staff that the minister has here today, there could not be a yes or no answer, and I will try again, to item 6 on page 16 of the Principles for Fair Student Assessment Practices.

My question is: In the math exams, are potential users provided with representative samples or complete copies of questions or tasks, directions, answer sheets, score reports, guidelines for interpretation?

I understand the minister cannot table them today, but my question has been quite specific in a number of areas. Again I am drawing the comparison to one of the jurisdictions which has had considerable experience and where I know that teachers find that very helpful.

Mrs. McIntosh: The staff is getting me the answer now as we talk, but I wish to indicate that we have in terms of a report of our analysis—I did not think I said we would be publishing a report. I think I said that we would be interpreting the results. We will be interpreting those results, and they will be available by early September for school divisions for Math Senior 4, English Language Arts Senior 4, French Language Arts Senior 4, and Grade 3 math. I do not think I said there would be a report released to the public. I believe I said we would interpret the results and provide them to school divisions so that they could work on building on their strengths, improving their weaknesses, et cetera. So that should be ready by early September for divisions' use, and as we do our analysis of the exam, the analysis is being done for several reasons, one for our purposes as well to make sure that the curriculum has been understood, absorbed and is able to be applied by students in Manitoba. Where we see areas of weakness we will endeavour to point that out to schools divisions so that they can take corrective measures. Where they have done well we will ask them to continue building on strengths, to continue whatever they are doing in their classroom that is right in order to help students understand some of these issues.

In terms of No. 6, to provide the potential users with representative samples or complete copies of questions

or tasks, directions, answer sheets, score reports, guidelines for interpretation and manuals. As I indicate, the math consultants are in the field this week. They are not here.

Just because you said with the staff I have here, the math consultants are not here, I have the head of the Assessment and Evaluation branch, but the math consultants are not with us these two days. They might have been earlier or later, but they are not in town. They are not with us right now. However, in answer to the question, we do give teachers complete sets of answers. We give the complete set of answer keys. We give them the complete set of scoring rubrics after every test. They have the information on that at each sitting, like, as they go into it and as they prepare for the marking.

We get more years of data. As we get more years of data, we will be in a position to do a comparative analysis. We do not have a lot of old exams as I indicated to the member because exams are still relatively new. We did provide, in our pilot years, detailed sample questions which we had indicated would still be the right questions to use, like sample questions had been provided to teachers in earlier years, and the tests that had been written become immediately public domain. The exemplar papers, the interpretive comments on test results and the administration manuals are all made available to teachers prior to examinations and on this exam as well. Through the Manitoba Textbook Bureau you can get the old exams that do exist, even though there are not that many right now, and the sample questions that we provided them and we likened it to the pilot exam providing detailed sample questions for the piloting years with an indication that those were the kinds of sample questions that could continue to be used in subsequent years once it came off status. Those sample questions are all there and available and many teachers used them.

Many teachers using the sample questions from earlier years devised new and innovative questions of their own based upon the way in which they were teaching. We do give the answers and questions. We give the answer keys. We have provided representative samples in earlier years, and they have been told at the time those could continue to be used—our newest developed based on that. Many teachers did that—

many. The previous exams, et cetera, et cetera, were available to teachers and sources easily available to them, known to them and in fact this is written right down in our Fair Assessment criteria—the member says she has this. If she has it, she will see that in point 6, right beside it, you have that very wording, that all this material is in the Manitoba Textbook Bureau, easily accessible. It is available. It is readily available and teachers know that. It is provided to them through the government of Manitoba, through that SOA.

I do not know what more I could say to that except to say I will get her the information she has asked for which is—I believe you want to see a package similar to what we have given for the LA exam that we sent out before the LA exam for mathematics, for the mathematics exam. We can get that for the member, but we cannot give it right now. Can we enter it into the record after the fact, Mr. Chairman, in terms of procedure? If we have material that we would like to table and Estimates are complete, can we indicate that it will be sent in or brought forward for the record? We will provide it for both 40S and 40G and Grade 3.

* (1600)

Mr. Chairperson: Is it the will of the committee that this be tabled at a later time and be put in Hansard. Agreed? [agreed]

Mrs. McIntosh: I think that concludes my response to that question, Mr. Chairman. We will provide that. We will not be able to today, but we can have it here tomorrow and will table that information for the member and for the record.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Chairman, I would like to ask about the special education review. The minister and I have exchanged discussion on this in private members' hour—and I do not want to repeat that—but I would like to ask when the work plan will be available for the special needs review.

Mrs. McIntosh: Mr. Chairman, the work plan went out to school divisions on May 29.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Chairman, would the minister table that work plan?

Mrs. McIntosh: I would be pleased to table it. I have a copy here that I can table, and I am pleased to do that. I will just check for scribbles, if I may, to make sure I have a clean copy for you. I think it is clean.

Ms. Friesen: I would like to ask about the relationship of the ADAP which has been done for the last number of years and which the minister tabled last year to the special needs review. I have not seen the work plan so I cannot say what is on the paper there, but it seems to me that the material that the minister tabled last year was a compilation of the ADAP material from each school division, and it was unclear from those submissions as to what action was taken by the department.

(Mr. Jack Penner, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair)

I would say, and I do not have them in front of me, unfortunately, but I would say that the summary, ADAP, that had taken place in the past year, the most immediate one was extremely general and differed from earlier ones. There seemed to be much more specific information in earlier ones than in the more recent one, and I wondered if the department had some new plan for collecting that kind of information and whether there was something that was in transition here. There did seem to be a marked difference to me.

The second part of that really is where does this fit into the special needs review? Not the compilation which really is very much of a brief bird's eye view of what is happening over the province, but the next stage from that which presumably have been an evaluation—here are the strengths, here are the weaknesses, here are places where people are having problems, here are areas where we might need professional development. Those kinds of things were not submitted last year. Now, does such an evaluation report on the state of the province's special needs issues exist, or is it merely the compilation that the minister presented last time?

Mrs. McIntosh: In the last two years, the divisions have only been asked to provide updates on program changes and not a whole new plan. So what we are getting is essentially still the existing plan which we do not get, but the existing plan is in place with updates being presented, so we are only getting the updates. We are only seeing the changes.

Ms. Friesen: What has been the practice on the receipt of the information and the preparation of that tabular form that the minister tabled last time? Is there a next step that has said X and Y are doing fine, A and B need assistance, is the best practice emerging here? What has the province done with those five years—I think it is five years now—of information on special needs across the province?

Mrs. McIntosh: Mr. Chairman, what we do is we acknowledge each division's ADAP, and then we will take note of any areas of difficulty or problems or any place where we think people might require some help, and we will send people out in the field to work with them to help improve those areas. We have had a very positive response to the articulation of programming from the field, and this year we will be asking for additional information on the ADAP because of the special needs review so that we can better inform them on the Special Education Review Committee in terms of detail. What we have been doing is just simply acknowledging the ADAP, identifying areas where we are needed and then by our presence providing the support that divisions might need to provide the best service for these students.

The Annual Division Action Plans will be reviewed in order to determine the provincial picture, as well as if further information is required from divisions, it may be possible to revise the ADAP to accommodate additional data collection. If it cannot be collected in this manner, a follow-up survey to school divisions will be conducted. We will be getting more detail, we require more detail on the divisional picture to finalize the provincial sampling frame. We hope to, as I say, accommodate that additional data through the ADAP, or if not through that, then a follow-up survey.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Chair, I notice in the work plan that the minister has tabled that it says the review will be conducted over an 18- to 24-month period, and I am not clear from the context of when that 18-month-24-month period began, so I am concerned about that. It was mentioned in the throne speech, and I think the minister has reiterated this on more than one occasion that the final report will be in her hands by the end of the year.

I guess as a subset of that I am interested by the relationship between all the information that has been

collected over the years, the ADAP material that we have been talking about, which has identified special education programs and services across the province, which I understand from what the minister has been saying has looked at effectiveness and student outcomes, may not have looked at cost-effectiveness, but much of the basic information that is identified as the first area of inquiry for this review would seem to be contained in that ADAP material. So it is timing. Is this repeating something that has already been done or is it materials that are going to feed into what is to be done?

* (1610)

(Mr. Chairperson in the Chair)

Mrs. McIntosh: The ADAP has been a program description, so no outcomes are reported or dollars expended reported by program. It is a program description.

In terms of the progress of the special needs review, we expect to have a progress report by the end of this year, but it will not be a final report. It will be a progress report. I know I have said 18 to 24 months, and I am still utilizing that figure. I cannot say whether it will be 18 or 24 because we have consciously tried to leave the end date as open as we could, simply because we do not know how long it is going to take the people to complete their task. We have said to them 18 to 24 months to try to give them a sense of the time period in which we think it can be accomplished.

We want to avoid two things. We do not want to leave it so open-ended that they could study for 10 years, never giving us a report. We want to hear back from them within 18 to 24 months from when they started their work. At the same time we do not want to be so constrictive and so constraining that they have got six to eight months and they have to be done by a certain deadline, so they rush through it and do not do as thorough a job as we would like or they might like to be able to do. So we are getting an interim report at the end of 1997. At that time I should be able to give a much better prediction as to how much more time is required.

The committee has been at it now for six, seven months, I am not sure, looking back on the calendar,

but let us say half a year to be approximately correct. They have been at it for about half a year, so we are looking at another, possibly, year and a half, or a little less, before we finally have final recommendations. I know I would love to be able to say this date or the end of a certain month, but I am so conscious of not wanting to tie the hands of the people doing this work because to me it is amongst the most important initiative we have taken.

I will just indicate the areas of inquiry. I think the member will probably get a sense of how difficult it is to project how long it might take to do this type of work. The identification portion probably is not as time consuming because the information is there, but as they begin to explore some of the nuances of it, it could become a more time-consuming task.

We asked them to identify first what special programs and services are currently being provided throughout the province. If it is just a simple listing that is one thing, but if they probe, that could be a much more detailed kind of response which could add a month or two to their deliberations. What delivery models are being used? How do these respond to the needs and strengths of students, are the programs and service models compatible with provincial policies, how do programs and service delivery models correspond to best practices as described by current research, how appropriate and effective are the current provincial service delivery requirements and expectations? That would include the ADAPs the member referred to in her question.

In what areas and to what degree should schools and districts and divisions have flexibility in programming and service delivery? What are the implications for setting public policy? Just a whole series of questions, they go on. I will not read them all, because then I will be taking extra time, too. There are a whole series for areas of inquiry and for the examination of special education policies, practices and procedures. If the member takes a look in the Special Ed Report or in that work plan, rather, that I provided her, she may see some of these things listed.

Each of those can be expanded to take longer or constrained to take less time, so that is what I mean when I say, I am not sure. About a year and a half is

the amount of time that could be left. Maybe it will be done sooner. I have also indicated to them that if at any point along the way they are able to come up with a recommendation and there is sort of a stand-alone recommendation that could be made before the final review is complete that they could give that to me as a final recommendation in their interim reports.

For example, it could be that at the end of this year, 1997, we get our progress report, that we might also get a final recommendation on certain items that could be dealt with in a short time frame. So if you have got some final early recommendations, let us know them and we will begin to work on them right away. Where they are implementable, we will begin to do that even before the review is complete if it is something that is able to stand alone, independent of the bigger picture.

As far as the ADAPs, they were never meant to achieve all of that. They are only a piece of background data. We have asked them to look at how appropriate and effective they are in terms of the role that they play.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Chair, I notice in the detailed work plan that the final report completed is promised for September 30, 1998. This does not seem to accord with the discussion in the throne speech or the indication that the minister has given beforehand. I understand the need for some flexibility, but my experience of reports from any government is that the chance that they are later than usual is quite high. When you get a committee of people together, you have always got difficulties. You have got problems of translation, you have got problems of meetings, unexpected weather issues, all those kinds of things.

September 30, 1998, is a lot later I think than people had anticipated this review would be completed. I wonder if the minister could give us a sense of whether that is an absolute extended deadline. Does she really anticipate that it will be in in January or February and that this is sort of giving as much rope as possible? I am, quite frankly, surprised that it is that late.

* (1620)

Mrs. McIntosh: Mr. Chairman, I indicate that the time line that the government has given the steering

committee has been 18 to 24 months. We have said 18 to 24 months is the amount of time that we are saying that we think it may take you to do this review, but we have also said repeatedly, both publicly and to the people doing the review, that while we can suggest time lines and we can say, take 18 to 24 months, we have also said more important than any time line is that we get a good report. So, if in your deliberations you set a target date, as they have done—they have set a target date for themselves of September 30, 1998, which is their target date for their work plan, and it is really not that far off in terms of 18 to 24 months from the beginning of the work that we identified.

We have said that, if you need extra time or if you could have it done sooner, that is great. You know, if it comes together quickly for you and you have got the relevant information and it is there, then by all means give it to us as soon as it is ready. Do not hold off because somebody expected you to have to take longer and might want to take longer. Similarly, if you think you are going to need extra months to complete it, take the time, if you think you are going to need it. Do not push it just to meet a date.

We have asked for interim reports, and they will be presenting us interim reports, with final recommendations that we can implement along the way if they are stand-alone recommendations. With each interim report we will have a clearer understanding as to when the final report will be ready. I would imagine that, as with a lot of things, you may see adjustments in time lines as they go through. They have presented their target dates, their own expectations as to how long they expect things to take, but they may be able to do it faster or they may need a little bit longer. That is all right with us. Our goal is to have a good, good review.

It is still within a framework of time. We are talking about something we hope will stand the test of time for decades to come, and it has been about 20 years that the province has waited for this review. We hope it will stand the test of time in terms of principles that are laid down for many years to come hereafter. So, if their date is September '98, and that is the date they think that they need, then I can accept that.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Chair, I notice that the draft plan, the work plan, has been sent to the Federation of

Independent Schools. Could the minister tell us how they will be involved in this review?

Mrs. McIntosh: In the same way that all other schools will be involved—special needs students in all schools. I mean, we send it all schools. Not all public schools have special needs students, but they have still got the report. Many of our independent schools have special needs students. Some have a higher percentage of special needs students than they do of nonspecial needs students. In fact, one is completely special needs students. The Laureate Academy is completely special needs students. So they are being sent it because they have special needs students, and those special needs students require services and so on in the separate system as they do in the public system. The funding they receive for their special needs students is the same funding that the public schools receive, and they will participate as any schools do.

Ms. Friesen: The work plan indicates that there is going to be some case studies and provincial sampling. When samples are used, they may not include independent schools depending upon the basis upon which the sample is taken. It is talking here about divisions, districts and communities—urban, rural and northern communities.

It does not exclude the independent schools, but there is no guarantee in sampling that they are going to be included, and presumably once sampling has taken place, there are no names and no identifiers attached. How is the minister intending to assure us that independent schools are included in the review?

Mrs. McIntosh: I think, Mr. Chairman, to do proper sampling you cannot take out a—unless you are going to sample the two systems. The fact is there are the same number of Level I students in independent schools as there are in public schools. There are handicapped children in wheelchairs. There are mentally disabled students in both systems. There are many public schools that are free from Level II and Level III students. There are many independent schools that include Level II and Level III students. So I do not think it is going to make that much difference.

First of all, on a percentage basis, we have some 12,000 students in independent schools versus 180,000

students in public schools. Most of our urban school divisions are bigger than the total population of independent school students in the entire province, and they are scattered all about. The independent schools are in remote settings. They are in small country towns. They are in the city. They are pretty evenly dispersed in terms of being there. I think to do a proper sampling we have to assume that students and schools are not that much different from one school to another.

There is a stratified sampling process that can be used to ensure representative grouping, so that it may be that some independent schools will be sampled, but even if that is not the case, they will be included with other data gatherings. I mean, a review of the work plan, if you take a look at it, shows a number of data collection methodologies and opportunities for consultation. This will not be the only way in which information is gathered.

* (1630)

So while you could exclude them or do a separate sampling using a stratified sampling process and all of the other data collection methodologies, I think we will get a pretty clear picture of what is happening in Manitoba. I mean, we could take a look at the Laureate Academy, for example, and this may be something the member is referring to, where all students in the school—it is an independent school—are special needs students, and that school sampled would certainly show a much higher percentage of special needs. Well, the whole population in that school is special needs. So it would certainly show up differently than, say, the neighbouring public school, which has mostly nonspecial needs students. But still those students are all in the system. They are all requiring service. Wherever they are, they exist.

I do not know if that answers the member's question. It is a good question, but I am just curious if maybe she could indicate the relevance. Why would the independent schools need to be sampled out? I am not quite sure I understand why they would have to be separated out when they are, after all, a school.

Point of Order

Ms. Friesen: On a point of order. My question was not sampling out. But in fact the question was very specifically: How are they to be sampled in?

Mr. Chairperson: Order, please. The honourable member did not have a point of order. It is clearly a dispute over the facts.

* * *

Mr. Chairperson: Order, please. I am interrupting the proceedings of this section of the Committee of Supply because the total time allowed for Estimates consideration is now expired. Our Rule 64.1 (1) provides in part that not more than 240 hours shall be allowed for the consideration in Committee of the Whole, Committee of Ways and Means and Committee of Supply resolutions respecting all types of Estimates and of relevant supply bills.

Our Rule 64.1 (3) provides that where the time limit has expired, the Chairperson shall forthwith put all remaining questions necessary to dispose of the matter and such questions shall not be subject to debate, amendment or adjournment.

I am, therefore, going to call in sequence the questions on the following matters: Department of Education and Training, Resolution 16.1 to 16.7 and capital supply resolutions. I would remind members that the questions may not be debated, amended or adjourned according to the Rules of the House.

Resolution 16.1: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$3,639,100 for Education and Training, Administration and Finance, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1998.

Resolution 16.2: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$24,076,500 for Education and Training, School Programs, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1998.

Resolution 16.3: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$5,388,300 for Education and Training, Bureau de l'éducation française, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1998.

Resolution 16.4: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$643,696,800 for

Education and Training, Support to Schools, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1998.

Resolution 16.5: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$24,330,100 for Education and Training, Training and Continuing Education, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1998.

Resolution 16.6: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$294,664,400 for Education and Training, Support for Post-Secondary Education, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1998.

Resolution 16.7: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$34,742,300 for Education and Training, Expenditures Related to Capital, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1998.

Supply Resolution: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$3,267,000 for Capital Supply for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1998.

This concludes our consideration of the Estimates in this section of the Committee of Supply. I would like to thank the minister and the critics for their cooperation. Committee rise.

Call in the Speaker.

IN SESSION

SECOND READINGS

Bill 50—The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy and Consequential Amendments Act

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship): I move, seconded by the Minister of Urban Affairs (Mr. Reimer), that Bill 50, The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy and Consequential Amendments Act; Loi sur l'accès à l'information et la protection de la vie privée et

modifications corrélatives, be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Mrs. Vodrey: It is my pleasure to introduce the new Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act for second reading in this House.

This new legislation has been introduced to replace the existing Freedom of Information Act which we believe is no longer adequate to address the serious concerns Manitobans have about the privacy and protection of personal information held by government or other public bodies.

In this bill, we provide a balance between the right of the individual to have their privacy respected and the right of access information held by public bodies. We have extended the scope of this act beyond that of government and Crown corporations. Public bodies now covered by this legislation include municipal governments, school divisions, universities, regional health authorities, hospitals and nonprofit personal care homes. The provisions governing access to publicly held information remains similar to those in the existing act with some clarifications and a couple of new additions.

There is now, for example, a specific requirement for notifying third parties when access to records is being considered, and third parties have the right to appeal a decision to permit access. For reasons of individual or public safety, law enforcement requirements or third party privacy infringements, a public body has the authority to refuse to confirm or deny the existence of a record. Public bodies may also refuse access to information if these requests are deemed to be repetitive or an abuse of the right of access. Any such refusal of this nature will be subject to an appeal to the Ombudsman.

Recognizing a need to be flexible in communicating with the public, this legislation permits an individual to make an oral request as opposed to a written one; for example, if there is a disability or a language barrier.

The most significant change, Madam Speaker, is the new privacy section. We have added specific provisions to assure all Manitobans that their individual privacy is respected and protected by law. We have clearly defined what constitutes personal information and outlined how it must be collected to ensure the highest possible degree of privacy. Specifically, personal information should be collected directly from the individual, and they must be informed of the purpose behind this collection. This new act does, in specific circumstances, permit the collection of personal information through other channels. These circumstances may include assisting law enforcement agencies, enforcing a maintenance order under The Family Maintenance Act, or the auditing, monitoring, or evaluation of government or other public bodies.

However, Madam Speaker, this legislation ensures that personal information may only be used for the purpose for which it was collected, or for a consistent purpose, or with the consent of the individual, or as authorized by law. Any proposed use or disclosure of personal information not provided by law will be subject to a review. This review will begin with the department or public body receiving the request. Any request for bulk disclosures of personal information or proposals to use or disclose personal information for data-matching purposes will be referred to a privacy assessment review committee for advice in making a decision.

Decisions on such proposals would be made by the head of the public body holding the information. The new privacy provisions of this legislation will require public bodies holding personal information to take reasonable security precautions to prevent unauthorized access use, disclosure or destruction of this data. Individuals will have the right to access their personal information and to correct any errors. There is also an onus on the public body to take reasonable steps to keep personal information in their possession accurate.

The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act has expanded and strengthened the powers of the provincial Ombudsman. The Ombudsman will continue to review complaints and negotiate and/or make recommendations on access requests. However, under the new act where there is a significant matter of legal principle or public interest in question, the

Ombudsman will have the authority to go to court on behalf of an applicant denied access. This will also include the ability to intervene in a court case involving an access complaint.

Provisions of this legislation permit the Ombudsman to engage in, or commission, research, undertake audits on information and privacy issues and, if necessary, recommend changes in practices concerning the collection, use and disclosure of personal information. Third parties who must be notified of a potential disclosure of information concerning them may appeal to the Ombudsman, if they feel its release would be an unreasonable invasion of their privacy. There will be an annual report tabled each year in the Manitoba Legislature concerning the work of the Ombudsman's office under this act. My department will also continue to publish an annual report under this act.

We have, Madam Speaker, developed The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act through public consultations and the distribution of a discussion paper on access and privacy issues. We incorporated the thoughtful input from this process, our experience in administering the FOI Act, and our research conducted in the drafting of this bill to prepare this act. This legislation along with a companion act covering personal health information concerns will provide clear standards for all parties involved in the collection, handling and use of personal information. It is the responsibility of government and other public bodies, as trustees of this vast collection of information, to enact legislation which will adequately protect and secure these rights for its citizenry. That is what this act represents, our government's acknowledgment of that responsibility to all Manitobans.

I am confident that The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act will effectively address the concerns of Manitobans on issues of privacy and information access.

So, Madam Speaker, in bringing forward this bill for second reading, it is the product of actually a great deal of work which has been done with the community over the period of a little more than a year. As I said, it began with the distribution of a discussion paper, which provided input, and based on the information that we received—and in fact it was very thoughtful information,

some of it presented in writing, some of it presented orally, very thoughtful information to us on these two very separate issues. I think that is one of the most important parts in explaining to the people of Manitoba what this new act does, that it contains two very important principles or sections, the section on access and the section on privacy protection. So we appreciated the information we received during the period of our distribution of the access of that paper and used that information, along with information which we found in doing research, to prepare for this act.

In doing research, we looked at what other provinces across this country had in fact put forward, if they had anything which dealt with the access side—most did—and whether or not they had any bills dealing with the privacy side as well, and we examined the concepts and the principles which they had incorporated. But, Madam Speaker, we also did a lot of research ourselves, and we based our work on the fair information practices, principles which are well acknowledged in all jurisdictions, to my knowledge, which sets forward how information should be collected and should be stored and should be corrected. So it was the fair information practices, it was an ability to review the acts of other provinces, and it was information which was collected through our opportunity to speak to the public which formed the basis of the act which we have put forward in Manitoba. Again, I believe that that was really a very substantial way to go about developing the act.

Just to restate briefly, there are again, within the access side, very few changes from our FOI act. Because in fact the FOI act, on the access side, really worked quite well, and the changes that are on the access side of the act deal primarily with clarifications where there may not have been a clear direction when we were looking at the principles of access against which to measure a request, and also some clarifications and some additions.

The major addition, as I mentioned earlier, was the protection for the third party, where in this act it is clearly put forward that a third party must not be notified where there is an access request for information, and that third party may in fact be incidentally included in the information required under

the access request. In the past, that was not in the legislation, and this is in fact, I believe, a very important protection now for the third party, and allows that third party a period of time in which to consider any concerns and then to report that back. So the third party being included again on the access side becomes very important.

* (1650)

On the privacy side, as I said, this is really brand new, based on fair information practices, and as the bill shows, it deals in the very first instance with how information is to be collected, that that information needs to be collected with the consent of the person from whom the information is being received. That consent is again determined by how the information should be collected. So I think that the people of Manitoba, who have every right to believe that their privacy is respected by law, can be confident that their consent is required, and then, Madam Speaker, again, we have every right to expect that that information will be held securely, and not only held securely, but then in addition that people have the right to believe that the information which is being held, that personal information, is correct. If they believe that it is not correct, there is a process within this bill which allows for the correction of information, or if there is any dispute about whether or not that information is correct. So I believe on the privacy side that provides an excellent foundation.

Madam Speaker, the bill then is very specific on, I believe it is, 29 reasons or 29 opportunities in which there may be a disclosure of personal information. So the bill on the privacy side is very explicit. What our government has provided in this bill, which is not in any other bill across the country, is to say that, if a request for information that is considered under the privacy side is not part of any one of those 29 reasons for disclosure of information, we have set up then this privacy access review committee. This is the only one in the country, which I believe makes our legislation very significant. With this PARC committee, they will then be able to examine the request for information, again, measure it to see if in fact it may fit any of the categories and otherwise provide some advice to the head of a public body.

As you will see in the legislation, Madam Speaker, it is mandatory for government to make referrals to this privacy review committee. But it will also be open to all the other public bodies who are covered by this legislation to use that committee also if they wish. They are entitled or permitted to set up their own review committee. If they do not wish to, for whatever reasons they may have, they may, in fact, use the one which will be set up by government. That is our effort to provide some assistance to the very wide scope of this legislation.

I would just like to take a moment as well to speak about the scope of this legislation, which is, in fact, much broader than the previous FOI which dealt basically with simply governments and Crown corporations. The scope of this legislation on both the access side and the privacy side has now been extended through this bill, and the extension now includes municipalities. It includes educational groups including universities. It includes now hospital authorities, by way of example. Madam Speaker, my department will be working with all of these additional public bodies to ensure that they have a very good understanding of the legislation. They did participate in the development of the legislation, but now, as we look at how it will apply to their individual public body groups, we will be working with them and have made this commitment to them that we will be wanting to make sure that they fully understand and understand very well exactly what has been covered in this legislation.

So, Madam Speaker, with those remarks, then I thank you very much for the opportunity to speak on behalf of our government on this bill.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Madam Speaker, I, too, have a number of words that I would like to put on the record with respect to Bill 50, The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy and Consequential Amendments Act. This is a very important piece of legislation, as I am sure many members of the Chamber rely on the Freedom of Information in order to get the type of information that we are unable to get when we ask the government of the day on a wide variety of different issues, questions of detail in particular. I could come up with endless examples. In fact, our research person has filed and used through the Freedom of Information on numerous

occasions the opportunity to solicit more detailed information because, in part, we have been stonewalled from the government in trying to get responses directly from the ministry.

I will attempt to be brief on this legislation, but to point out a couple of specific examples, under the old act, the government department was required to respond to a freedom of information request in 30 days. If they did not, then this was considered refusal for access. Under the new act, the government now is only required to make reasonable effort to respond to a request in 30 days.

Well, Madam Speaker, would it surprise the opposition members of the House or all members of this House if I told you that the Department of Finance has asked for a 30-day extension because it considers a person on vacation and a person who calls in sick reasons for not answering an FOI request in 30 days. The term "reasonable" is subject to an arbitrary interpretation.

Madam Speaker, what we have seen in the amendments that are being brought forward or the replacement that is being brought forward are very strong actions that can be taken by the government to easily put aside information that not only the opposition parties or members might want to get from the government but also the average citizen as it tries to get a better understanding of something that has been requested. We cannot underestimate the importance of allowing individuals the opportunity, and what I am concerned with is that the government is putting in or making it too easy for the government to say no or the department heads to say no.

The minister responsible made reference to the appeal mechanism of the provincial Ombudsman's office. Well, Madam Speaker, we know how taxed that particular office is today and how resources are very scarce within that particular office, and now we see, again, a further reliance on that particular office.

I like the idea of the authority or the power that we are giving the office in terms of, ultimately, to take it to a court situation. I think that is very positive. There are some aspects of the legislation in terms of the expansion and trying to protect the individual private

rights, but far too often what we have seen is the government trying to use as excuses the protection of private rights to prevent us from being able to get valuable information that assists us in holding this government and the departments more accountable for their actions.

That is one of the primary reasons we have a great deal of concern and question the actions that the government is taking with respect to this particular piece of legislation. So even though we might see some positives in it, there are a number of strong reservations that we have with this legislation, and we will see what happens once it goes to the committee stage.

But we have those very strong reservations and are very reluctant in terms of giving any sort of endorsement to this particular piece of legislation, Madam Speaker, because we recognize the importance of allowing and having freedom of information access made available. We applauded the actions from the—actually, one could go back to the New Democratic government where they did, in fact, bring up the whole issue of trying to make the whole system a little bit more accountable, and we applaud the government— [interjection] Well, very rarely do I ever say nice things, and they should not take it in any way. Where one can give credit inside the Chamber, sometimes I like to think that I can give credit.

* (1700)

Madam Speaker, the idea and the concept is a very positive one. We have very strong reservations as to what degree this government has interpreted what sort of information can, in fact, be released. I have talked about the Mack truck clause that is currently in the legislation in which it allows the government virtually to say no to anything that is out there. I have seen whited out portions of information that have been provided which one must question, or the holding off or providing information, and unjustifiably in many cases not providing information in a timely fashion. The government needs to improve significantly on providing this sort of information. With those few words, I will leave my comments at that.

Mr. Gregory Dewar (Selkirk): I move, seconded by the member for Broadway (Mr. Santos), that debate be now adjourned.

Motion agreed to.**Bill 51—The Personal Health Information Act**

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, I would move, seconded by the honourable Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship (Mrs. Vodrey), that Bill No. 51, The Personal Health Information Act; Loi sur les renseignements médicaux personnels, be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Mr. Praznik: Madam Speaker, it gives me a great deal of pleasure today and an honour to introduce Bill No. 51, The Personal Health Information Act to this Legislature for second reading. With the passage of this bill, and I would anticipate, I would hope that the House in giving its consideration will pass it into law. Manitoba will be the first jurisdiction in Canada and one of the very few in North America to have legislation dealing exclusively with access to and confidentiality of personal health information.

This bill is the result of a consultation with the public and stakeholders through a discussion which began with the discussion paper circulated in May of 1996 and with other stakeholders since that time. Most recently, a presentation on the proposed bill was made involving the stakeholders. I had an opportunity as minister to spend an afternoon with them going through the various detail and having a discussion on concerns and issues. Many of the suggestions made by those stakeholders collectively, as a group, have found their way into this legislation and some of them in an ancillary way to that introduced earlier this afternoon by my colleague.

Madam Speaker, to put matters in perspective of where we are coming—and I think it is important to do this before we get into a description of the bill itself. The member for Osborne (Ms. McGifford), in Question Period on a number of days, has asked questions about this. She has in her remarks linked this piece of legislation with the health information network which we are attempting to build in Manitoba and, in some way, imply that this is putting the public at great risk

and that this legislation is inadequate to meet need and some terrible adventure on which we are embarking.

First of all, I want to deal with the issue of technology. Let me make clear that this bill is not to deal specifically with the electronic medium of moving information. It is to deal with personal health information however it is transmitted, however it is stored, however it is collected. It is there to govern a paper system as well as an electronic system, so let us not confuse the issue. Moving to a health information network on an electronic means is one issue. We will debate that in its appropriate time, and I look forward to that debate. This legislation is designed to protect all personal health information however collected, however stored, however moved, however used.

Now, just on that point of a health information network, I have said before that one of the reasons why this becomes important, obviously, whether it be for paper or electronic medium is we as a province are moving towards a health information network that does move information through electronic means.

Madam Speaker, if you look at the life in which most of us lead today, the vast majority of data collected about us or for us, or that we use in our daily lives is already on an electronic means. I want to touch upon this because the member for Osborne (Ms. McGifford) has made some statements in this House that I find very discouraging, but not surprising given the stance of her party on many issues. When you just think about it for a moment, our personal financial information, our mortgage, our banking cards are all dealt with electronically today. Very little, if any, is kept on a paper system or moved fundamentally on a paper system. Information about our land titles and mortgages is kept electronically. When we walk into the supermarket and order groceries, purchase groceries, often we pay electronically. The inventory system that keeps track of our groceries and the inventory in the store and what we are purchasing is electronic. When we go to a store, the wand is used to move over numbers that record what we have purchased. This is all handled electronically.

Madam Speaker, so much of our tax information is handled electronically. In fact, today you can file your taxes via your computer at home with e-file, with

Revenue Canada. Item after item after item in the way we live our lives, the information that flows from our daily activity in virtually all cases in our life is now moved through electronic medium, except, by and large, in the health sector. So moving health into the modern age as we end this century and begin a new one is not surprising; in fact, the question is really why this has not happened before. When I hear the remarks of the member for Osborne, what I hear, in essence, is a dinosaur. I hear someone who is saying we should not move to this medium when everything else in our life has moved to this medium because it is far more efficient.

If in fact we are moving to that medium, as in fact we are one of the leaders in Canada getting there, and inevitably within a few years I think everybody will be there, we need to ensure that protection is in place for health information. We also need to ensure that it is in place for other mediums because there still is a paper system there. Madam Speaker, let us not for one moment think we are moving backwards. I have tabled in this Legislature in response to my critic the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak), who made, I would consider, a very unthought-out statement that we were putting health information at risk to a greater degree than ever before in the history of this province. Yet I think that comment speaks loudly about someone who has not done his research because where did we start on personal health information?

In the journals of this very Assembly, going back into the 1800s, the information on the our public hospitals that was published in the journals and records of this Assembly for public view listed the names of patients in the hospital, their age, their sex, their religion, their country of birth, their present residence, the disease they suffered from, their date of admission, date of discharge, state of health when discharged and proposed residence upon leaving, and in many case, diseases like gonorrhoea, syphilis, diarrhoea, all of these, bronchitis, a host of illnesses were listed here. Some of them today would be extremely embarrassing for the individuals involved. So that is where we started—total public disclosure.

I remember the days in youth, growing up in Selkirk, where information about people in hospitals was published in the community newspaper so that you

could send flowers or visit an individual. Well, today that would not be acceptable. By our standards of public information and disclosure of private information, that would not be acceptable, and that is why in fact we are moving with this legislation.

* (1710)

What does this legislation do, Madam Speaker, in essence? I think that is very important to discuss. First of all, what is its purpose? The purpose of this proposed act is to incorporate the common law right, which already exists, into legislation, that right to examine and receive a copy of one's personal health information from the person who has custody and control of that information. We are establishing in law that that is a trust relationship, that the information is owned by the individual. That, I think, has been established already by the Supreme Court of Canada. We are reconfirming in this statute that the ownership of the actual information rests with the individual and the person who holds it, in whatever medium, whether it be paper or electronically, is the trustee of that information, Madam Speaker.

This bill also provides an individual with the right to request corrections to their personal health information and the right to control the manner in which personal health information can be collected. It also limits the use, disclosure or destruction of personal health information, and it provides for an independent review of the decisions of the trustees of that information.

What information is protected by this act, Madam Speaker? The information protected is personal health information about an identifiable individual. It does not apply to anonymous or statistical information. What is the scope of the bill? The scope of the proposed act extends into the health private sector. That is one of the reasons why we, in fact, have two pieces of legislation here because the bill introduced by my colleague deals with information in the public sector. We know that information in the health sector, in individual doctors' offices, clinic offices, private facility offices, Madam Speaker, is in the private sector, and we wanted to ensure that was covered as well.

It also covers persons who collect or maintain personal health information, and these include health

professionals regulated by an act of the Legislature and others who are designated in the regulations. It includes health care facilities such as hospitals, personal care homes, laboratories. It includes public bodies such as government departments, Crown agencies, municipalities and educational bodies and also those private agencies that provide health services, such as the Victorian Order of Nurses and We Care.

Madam Speaker, Part 2 of this act deals with access, and Part 2 deals with access issues and sets out the right to examine, receive a copy of and request a correction to one's personal health information. It includes the obligation of a trustee to respond promptly to one's request for access, to provide an individual with an explanation of the terms, codes or abbreviations and to otherwise assist that individual in accessing information. That makes it a requirement of the trustee.

It also sets out the limited circumstances in which a trustee can deny access to one's personal health information. These are very rare occasions. An example is where a trustee believes on reasonable grounds which are testable, Madam Speaker, with the Ombudsman and ultimately in court that knowledge of certain information could result in physical or emotional harm to the individual requesting it or another individual. In such circumstances, the trustee must only deny access to the information that may result in harm. All other information must be provided to the individual whom it is about. The bill also provides the right to appeal such a decision.

This bill also allows for fees in providing one with access, reasonable fees in order to cover the cost of that information, and those would be set out by regulation. As well, the bill provides a trustee with the discretion to correct personal health information. Where this occurs, the trustee must allow the individual to file a concise statement of disagreement, and that statement to one's health records must be filed with the health information and notification given to any person who has had access to that file for I believe up to a year before.

Madam Speaker, Part 3 of this act provides for the confidentiality of one's personal health information. It restricts the type and amount of information that can be collected. It requires that the information be collected

directly from the individual whom it is about except in prescribed circumstances, and it requires the trustee who collects the information to inform the individual of the purposes for collecting the information. It requires the trustee to ensure that personal health information is accurate and up to date before using or disclosing it. It requires the trustee to implement and comply with policies governing the retention and destruction of information. It requires the trustee to adopt reasonable administrative, technical and physical safeguards to ensure the confidentiality, security, accuracy and integrity of the information. It also limits the amount of information that a trustee can use or disclose. It limits the use of information to the purposes for which it was originally collected, for a purpose directly related to that purpose or for other limited purposes as set out in the act.

Madam Speaker, this legislation restricts the situations in which a trustee can disclose their personal health information to others without the individual's consent. It governs the disclosure of information for purposes of health research, including a requirement that a research proposal be approved by a health information privacy committee to be established by the minister to deal with requests for information held by government. Where the information is maintained by a trustee other than the government, the research proposal must be approved by an institutional research ethics review committee.

Madam Speaker, it also restricts the collection or use of one's personal health identification number, and I make this point very strongly for members of the opposition who have expressed a concern in this area. This legislation prohibits the sale of personal health information.

We have seen some debate in Question Period about the use of the Ombudsman's office as the supervising authority. Madam Speaker, I think when one examines the issue, you realize very quickly, whether one calls it a privacy commission or an Ombudsman, the real issues are what powers exist.

One of the concerns that was expressed to me as we went through this review process was that the Ombudsman must have the power to audit those trustees who hold information. Without audits there is

no ability obviously to check to see how the process is working, because we may never know if our individual information is not properly stored or has been released improperly. It may never come to our attention. We have no ability to file a complaint, because we would not know. If we rely solely on a complaint-driven system, it is inadequate. So we have included that in our legislation, and with the co-operation of the opposition and through LAMC, I trust that we are going to be able to properly staff the Office of the Ombudsman to deal with this role.

Madam Speaker, the two real issues that the member for Osborne (Ms. McGifford) has raised, when you boil away all the politics and all her comments that come with it, are really two. The name of the officer, whether by calling that person a privacy commissioner or an ombudsman, somehow does that change their stature? Well, in some jurisdictions they have a privacy commissioner who has exactly the powers that we are proposing for an ombudsman. So maybe there is some legitimacy to that argument, but we have opted to keep the role of the Ombudsman, use our Ombudsman and keep the title.

The other issue is one as to whether or not we should give the power to the Ombudsman to issue binding orders. Our Ombudsman in Manitoba has traditionally operated on the view of bringing parties together and trying to work a solution on whatever issue that respects people's rights and is workable. Madam Speaker, in using the Office of the Ombudsman, that makes eminently good sense, we believe, to continue with that mode. We have given the Ombudsman and this legislation the power to go to court on an issue if they feel that that is necessary. So we have expanded that role.

Madam Speaker, one administrative issue that arises out of this in setting up a separate Office of the Ombudsman is, we do not know today what workload will arise out of this. The member for Osborne (Ms. McGifford) makes it sound as if there is a huge workload there. None of us really know. So we felt administratively it was much better to place this work in the Office of the Ombudsman. We are a small province. We are not Ontario. We are not the federal government, who service much larger constituencies. We are a small province, so we felt it was best to go to

an existing office. We thought all the skills and talents could properly be housed there with sufficient staff to deal with this issue.

If over time it is felt at that office there is so much work related to this that a separate office is required, we have allowed for that in having a review of this legislation in five years. So if the member for Osborne is correct that there is an overwhelming workload here, in five years time this Legislature, through that review, can set up a separate office, and I would not oppose that, Madam Speaker, if it was warranted. But if we set up a separate office today and there was not a workload sufficient to warrant a separate office, investigators, and staff, and they had very little to do, it would be terribly difficult for this Legislature to reduce that function and amalgamate it into the Ombudsman's office.

* (1720)

So before we run, let us walk. Let us see if this will work with the Ombudsman's office with the expanded power that we have given, with added resources that we will have to provide to the Ombudsman and see where it is in five years.

So with that proposal and with the review as part of the statute, the statutory review requirement in the statute for review, many who attended that briefing with me found that that was an acceptable approach to work through that issue. I think the member for Osborne (Ms. McGifford) has made far more out of this issue than it actually is in reality.

We have included in this legislation, as well, a penalty section that provides for a penalty of some \$20,000 to an individual or corporation who breaches this. Madam Speaker, we have also provided that an employee of a trustee who does breach this legislation is also liable to be charged with a penalty. I think that is a very important point that gives a greater comfort level to individuals.

Madam Speaker, this is a very important step forward for Manitobans. I can remember on many occasions we have heard stories of individuals finding personal health information, left in garbage bins, not properly disposed of. That is unacceptable. That is

unacceptable. So today, we do not have statutory protection for that. This is one of the first bills in Canada of its kind to do that. It will provide that protection that I think is somewhat overdue. It also allows us to move forward into the 21st Century by giving the public the comfort level that they need in moving to the electronic medium for moving and storing information about their personal health and have all of the efficiencies that come with that for them in the delivery of health care that they now enjoy with their finances, with their shopping, with many other aspects of their lives. This bill prepares us for the next century. I bring it to the House for your thoughtful consideration.

Mr. Gregory Dewar (Selkirk): I move, seconded by the member for Broadway (Mr. Santos), that debate be now adjourned.

Motion agreed to.

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS

Bill 2—The Arbitration and Consequential Amendments Act

Madam Speaker: To resume second reading debate on Bill 2, (The Arbitration and Consequential Amendments Act; Loi sur l'arbitrage et modifications corrélatives) on the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Justice (Mr. Toews), standing in the name of the honourable member for Transcona (Mr. Reid).

Is there leave to permit the bill to remain standing? Leave has been granted.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): I did want to put a few words on the record with respect to Bill 2. I have always, Madam Speaker, and will continue to argue and articulate as to the benefits of arbitration as opposed to ultimately having to go to a court. Where we can provide an alternative to a courtroom setting, I think it is a very positive thing. From what I understand, what Bill 2 attempts to do is to make arbitration that much more accessible as opposed to some individuals who otherwise would have to go through the court process. To that degree, the concept of anything that allows a larger role for arbitration over the court process is

something I do not have any problem in terms of being relatively supportive of.

I think that there is a responsibility for the government to take a look at the way in which individuals will enter into conflict and how the government might play a role at trying to provide tools that will allow those individuals, with minimal apprehension being built up, with minimal hard feelings, if you like, towards each other being built up. The ultimate tool, one would argue, is in fact the court. I think far too often we underestimate the importance of arbitration and mediation as a viable positive alternative to the court system. That is in essence, as I say, the reason why, when I have looked at this particular piece of legislation, Madam Speaker, that I think it is a very positive move towards bringing more of a reliance on arbitration. In the long run, I believe that will provide for more harmony where you have the individuals going before an arbitrator as opposed to a judge, and also, I guess, the potential for savings. I imagine lawyers might not necessarily be the biggest fan of the arbitrators or the increased roles of arbitration, but there still is a role that can be played for lawyers even in this area.

Having said those very few words, Madam Speaker, we would like to see this bill go into the committee stage. Thank you very much for allowing me the opportunity.

An Honourable Member: You are voting with us, Kevin, on this one? You are voting with us?

Mr. Lamoureux: Yes, on this one.

Madam Speaker: As previously agreed, this bill remains standing in the name of the honourable member for Transcona (Mr. Reid).

Bill 5—The Mineral Exploration Incentive Program Repeal Act

Madam Speaker: To resume second reading debate on the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Energy and Mines (Mr. Newman), Bill 5 (The Mineral Exploration Incentive Program Repeal Act; Loi abrogeant la Loi sur le programme d'encouragement à

l'exploration minière), standing in the name of the honourable member for Transcona (Mr. Reid).

An Honourable Member: Stand.

Madam Speaker: Is there leave to permit the bill to remain standing? Leave has been granted.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Madam Speaker, it is again my pleasure to stand and speak to Bill 5, The Mineral Exploration Incentive Program Repeal Act. The mining industry is an important economic industry, as we all know, for Manitobans, not only northern Manitoba, but the province as a whole. Its success impacts not only on the North, but influences southern Manitoba's economy significantly as well. In all, it appears that for every dollar we spend on the fostering of mining industry, we can expect another two dollars of economic activity, many would say.

The bill before this House deals with the repeal of the number of mining incentive programs that have been replaced. The Liberal Party is proud to support this particular bill, and will continue the support to Manitoba's mining industry, which plays such a pivotal role in our economy.

Madam Speaker, what we have seen is some fairly positive things that the government has done. There are sectors of the economy in which this government has had abysmal performance. The most significant one is, in fact, in the manufacturing industry in which the Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson) knows full well that the government has not excelled in that area. In fact, when the member for Brandon had raised the question the other day on that particular issue, I thought it is always interesting the way in which the Minister of Finance tries to make it look better than it actually is.

Having said that, Madam Speaker, there are some areas in the economy in which the province is doing relatively well, and in the mining area, we have seen some fairly significant efforts. In fact, some of us were interested when they had the one cabinet shuffle in which Mr. Orchard was taken out of Health and put into Energy and Mines, and he was thinking of diamonds and how many diamond mines that there could be in the province of Manitoba. I do not believe that he found any. I could be wrong. Maybe there

were some diamond mines that were found, but I do recognize that this is one of the areas in which the government has done a relatively decent job. Mind you, many would attribute some of the successes, such as the Fiscal Stabilization Fund, to some of the revenues that were generated from mining, some of the mining taxes that even the former NDP administration had put into place.

So it is good to see in so many ways that mining as a whole in the province is doing relatively well. We hope, and it is somewhat cynical—not cynical—

An Honourable Member: Cyclical.

Mr. Lamoureux: “Cyclical” is the word I am looking for. Thank you very much.

We all hope that the price of nickel, in particular—and I look at the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton)—remains at a relatively decent price that allows for the community of Thompson to continue to grow. So many northern communities rely on, and all of us in the province benefit by, this particular industry.

* (1730)

With those very few words, Madam Speaker, we are prepared to see this particular bill go to committee.

Madam Speaker: As previously agreed, this bill will remain standing in the name of the honourable member for Transcona (Mr. Reid).

Bill 7—The Midwifery and Consequential Amendments Act

Madam Speaker: To resume second reading debate on Bill 7 (The Midwifery and Consequential Amendments Act; Loi sur les sages-femmes et modifications corrélatives), on the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Health (Mr. Praznik), standing in the name of the honourable member for Transcona (Mr. Reid).

Is there leave to permit the bill to remain standing?

An Honourable Member: No.

Madam Speaker: No? Leave has been denied.

Mr. Conrad Santos (Broadway): Madam Speaker, the—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member for Broadway has been recognized to put comments on the record at second reading stage on Bill 7.

Mr. Santos: Thank you, Madam Speaker. This bill provided for the resumption of midwifery in the province of Manitoba after they had been adopted in the provinces of Ontario, in British Columbia and in Alberta. I noted when I was reading Exodus that the traditional type of midwives had already been in existence since antiquity.

An Honourable Member: That is a long time ago.

Mr. Santos: A long, long time ago, that is beyond almost memory, because after the death of Joseph, the son of Jacob, the Egyptians who were enslaving the children of Israel, they noticed that the children of Israel were multiplying abundantly and they almost filled the land of Egypt. There was a new Pharaoh who ascended to the throne, and he saw all this multiplication of the slaves, and he was afraid. So he called the two midwives whose name was Shiphrah and the other name was Puah. The Pharaoh commanded the midwives and said, when you do your office of midwifery, when you deliver the children of the women of Israel, if the child is a male, you kill the male, and if it is a female, you let them live.

But these two midwives were God-fearing people and so they owed their allegiance more to God than to the Pharaoh, and so they disobeyed the Pharaoh and let the children of Israel live. The Pharaoh noticed this and so he called the two midwives and asked them, why are you not following my commandment? The midwife said, well, the women of Israel are not like the Egyptian women; before we arrived as midwife, they already had delivered, so we have no way of knowing and/or executing your command. That was the excuse they gave. In other words, they can self-deliver themselves

earlier in time before the midwives arrived, so they cannot follow the Pharaoh's command.

There was now a man who married a daughter of Levi, and the woman bore a child—[interjection] This is the story. So she hid the child for three months because the Pharaoh had a new law passed saying we do not rely any more on midwives. All you Egyptians, as soon you see that a child is born of a woman of Israel, if they are male, you just kill them, you throw them into the river, you drown them if they are boys, but if they are girls you let them live. That was the new law, edict of the Pharaoh, given to all his people. So what happened then? After she could no longer hide the little baby, she devised a small ark of bulrushes, put some slime in it to strengthen the bottom and then let it float into the river among the flags. It so happened that the daughter of the Pharaoh was about to wash herself in the river, and as she does so, descended into the river, and all her ladies were walking down the bank. She saw this little ark and she opened it, and there was a baby. She recognized the baby and said this is a child of a Hebrew woman. In the meantime, she had compassion on the baby. Although she is the daughter of the Pharaoh, and although the Pharaoh's command is to kill every boy and to throw them into the river, she had compassion.

Then the sister of the man who was watching all this happening approached the daughter of the Pharaoh and said, would you like me to call a Hebrew woman to nurse the child? The Pharaoh's daughter said, yes, I would like you to do that. So she called the baby's mother herself to nurse the child, and the daughter of the Pharaoh said to the mother of the child, I am going to pay you your wages, you take this child away and nurse him. So the baby's mother, the natural mother of the child, took the child away and nursed him, then, under the direction of the daughter of the Pharaoh and protection. So despite the command and the edict of the Pharaoh himself, his own daughter is violating the command of the Pharaoh in order to save the life of this little child.

So the boy grew up, and she called him her son. He became an adopted son of the daughter of the Pharaoh, and she named him Moses because, she said, I drew him out of the water. So you could see that even in those days of antiquity, the traditional midwives had already been performing their function. There was no

College of Physicians then. There were no nursing schools. There were no regulatory bodies that governed the activities, but they had been performing this function.

An Honourable Member: No medicare.

Mr. Santos: No medicare. Now we have gone full circle. Now we are returning to the traditional way of caring for the children at birth. So how true it is, the saying of King Solomon, and he said: One generation passeth, another generation cometh; but the earth abideth for ever. The sun also ariseth, and the sun goeth down, and then hasteth back where it arises. The wind bloweth towards the south, then returneth towards the north, then whirleth about continually according to its circuit. All the rivers flow into the sea, but the sea is never full, and the water returneth where the water ariseth. That which has been, it shall be, and that which has been done, it shall be done; there is nothing new under the sun.

* (1740)

So midwifery is nothing new. It has been there all the time. It is an act of returning where we came from. We have come full circle according to the activities of society in the caring of a child and children. This bill recognizes a midwife as a primary health care provider, such that when this midwife does something about the birth of a child, it will not be considered by the government or the medical association as practising medicine without a licence, that it will be exempted from the medical art. They will also be able to provide certain pharmaceutical drugs despite The Pharmaceutical Act, because they are now recognized as a health care professional. This is now a regulated profession, and the practiser of midwifery will be insured under the health care act.

There is still some debate going on whether they should be allowing nurses alone to do the birthing of children, but I tell you in other countries this is the common practice, that the traditional midwives do all this function in society. In fact, I hate to refer to myself, but during a storm, that was the date of my birth, and there was a midwife who came to my mother's home. I was delivered by a midwife, and so was Gerard here. It is a very common thing. So

traditionally we have come where we came from. We returned, and this is a good thing. I therefore agree that this bill is a good bill. If it was good enough for Moses, it should be good enough for us. He is waving his hand and he is watching us and looking at us. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): Madam Speaker, I want to put my own comments on the record on the midwifery bill, and I want to indicate my support for it. I want to commend the member for Broadway for his extensive historical research. I think his point is well taken, that this is something that—actually quite amazes me, that we are now in 1997 actually getting back to what has been a tradition in many parts of the world, in many parts of Canada, and in fact rural Manitoba for many years, and still effectively takes place if you look at it, in many isolated communities, when a doctor cannot attend to a birth.

I know in my own family, my brother was born with the assistance of a midwife at home. I must admit that it was a very satisfactory experience for the entire family. I know it has been a concern to many women, many people generally, but particularly amongst women to get different birthing environments to move away from the sterility of hospitals, Madam Speaker, and to include the possibility of having delivery with midwives. I think that is absolutely critical.

I know in the case of our two children in Thompson, they received very good care at the Thompson General Hospital from the medical staff there. But, you know, that was one option. There were many other options that are out there.

I particularly want to commend all those who fought throughout the years to have this issue dealt with. It has been a long time coming. It has been discussed by various ministers. It is finally in place. I particularly want to commend the many women who spoke out on this issue. I know the Action Committee on the Status of Women, for example, has been raising this for many years, many individual women, and I look forward to discussions in the committee.

I recognize there will be still some complications, some questions between the medical profession and midwives in terms of jurisdiction, in terms of the kind

of deliveries that are essentially legitimately done through midwives and where you have other risk factors involved that may need the assistance of a physician or may need to be done in a medical facility. But I do want to say that notwithstanding the fact some of those issues have to be dealt with and will be dealt with on an ongoing basis because of this bill, I think it is a very significant event for Manitoba and ironic in many ways. What was standard practice only a few decades ago will now be put in place. I hope it is the beginning of a growing recognition of the need for many different kinds of medical professionals to be involved in our health care system. I believe that physicians have a key role to play, but I also believe in an expanded role for nurses and other health care professionals, midwives being one aspect of the health care system.

I think we have an opportunity for a broader model. I want to put this on the record on the same day that I raised the question earlier about the shortage of physicians and surgeons in Manitoba, because one of the long-term solutions to this, I believe, is to develop the medical team concept whereby one can take doctors, give them the opportunity to work, in many cases, on salary, something, for example, that the previous Minister of Health did allocate in terms of Thompson, allow them to spend more time with patients. That is one of the concerns of many doctors now is not being able to spend enough time with patients. I would say that by then combining that with an enhanced role for nurses and other medical professionals, you will end up with a balance, because you will end up with the doctors seeing fewer patients perhaps, but nurses being able to see more and a blending even of costs, which even if it does not result in a cost saving to the system will not result in an increase.

So I think this bill, if it is taken in the true philosophical intent, will lead to what I feel is the route ahead for health care reform. Health care reform, I think, has to be based on a very general approach to who can provide care. I know it is ironic, in my own communities in northern Manitoba, that, for example, nurses can do all sorts of things when they work in a nursing station in remote communities. They have to do all sorts of things, but, of course, the same nurses are unable to practise in the same way when they hit an

urban community and hit the more normal way of functioning.

The bottom line, Madam Speaker, is there are a lot of medical professionals out there that have abilities and skills that can be put into place, and I think the more we broaden that, the scope of their activities, the more we will end up with real health care reform.

I want to indicate too that we are looking forward to the presentations. There are 23 presentations before the committee. We are hoping that will be scheduled this Thursday so that we can hear the many Manitobans who I am sure want to speak out on this bill. I know there will be some people there, some women, in particular, who will be saying, you know, it is about time, glad to see it. As much as when a bill is passed, the focus is on the legislative agenda, the fact that we are now on the verge of having midwifery passed in legislation in this province I think is a testimonial to the efforts of many Manitoba women and Manitobans in general. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Is the House ready for the question? The question before the House is second reading of Bill 7, The Midwifery and Consequential Amendments Act.

Is it the will of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Madam Speaker: Agreed and so ordered.

Bill 9—The Public Utilities Board Amendment Act

Madam Speaker: To resume second reading debate on the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mr. Radcliffe), Bill 9, The Public Utilities Board Amendment Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur la Régie des services publics), standing in the name of the honourable member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak). Is there leave to permit the bill to remain standing?

Some Honourable Members: Stand.

Madam Speaker: Stand. Leave has been granted.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Madam Speaker, I have a few words I want to express about Bill 9.

An Honourable Member: Did Ginny give you permission?

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Lamoureux: What is the member for St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau) trying to imply or say?

Madam Speaker, the Public Utilities Board has always been, to a certain degree, somewhat of a controversial issue primarily in one area, and that is the area in which this government and previous governments decide on who is going to be sitting on that particular board. There has been a heavy reliance on trying to have an independent group of individuals, if you like, that determine what sorts of rate increases are we going to see. We have seen some very positive things come out of the Manitoba utilities board. We also have seen, some would argue, some fairly negative things come out of the Public Utilities Board. We also have seen a government being very selective in terms of what goes on at the Public Utilities Board.

Madam Speaker, I wanted to maybe just comment on a couple of aspects of how I have seen the Public Utilities Board work and where we have seen some very strong recommendations come out of the Public Utilities Board in different areas. When I think, for example, of some of the things that they approve, such as hydro increases, I think that they have done a reasonably good job.

In fact, when I think of hydro, I automatically think of Winnipeg Hydro and Manitoba Hydro and the need to have two publicly owned Crown corporations providing a service, that maybe the government should be looking at rectifying that particular issue, keeping it government-owned, of course—that is very, very important, of course, and we hope that they will do just that—to, Madam Speaker, the MPIC and how often MPIC is used as a political football in order to try to garner votes or to prevent the seepage or loss of votes.

An Honourable Member: It worked for us in '88, did it not?

* (1750)

Mr. Lamoureux: That is right. The member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) said it worked for his political party in 1988, and the member is right. That is probably one of the most significant things that contributed to me being here today, is the fact of how MPIC is manipulated and even brings into question the Public Utilities Board, not directly, more so indirectly, but keeping in mind who actually makes the appointments to the Public Utilities Board.

Maybe I should just comment a little bit about what the member for Thompson brought up in that very positive gesture no doubt, and I can recall, Madam Speaker, when I questioned the government in terms of the requests that were coming in from MPIC to the Public Utilities Board. What we have seen is you see a bit of a cycle that has been created, and that cycle is based on the provincial election, when a potential provincial election might be.

We have seen, for example, the public—[interjection] Coincidence? I think not. I think it has, as I say, a lot more to do with the losing of votes more than anything else. [interjection] I see the Minister of Justice (Mr. Toews) is concerned. He finds it hard to believe, no doubt. [interjection] We will leave that bill for the House of Commons to debate.

If we take a look at it, what will happen is we will see that MPIC leading up to elections does not put in the request to the Public Utilities Board for increases. Rather, Madam Speaker, right after an election, you will see a significant change, and the Public Utilities Board recognizes in part that what MPIC should be doing is building up some sort of a reserve.

I think that there have been some very good recommendations that have come out of the Public Utilities Board, and those are some of the things that we should be looking at and how we can actually make changes that will, in fact, complement it. That is something which I look for when I see legislation that is going to be impacting this particular group, because the Public Utilities Board can be a valuable asset for all Manitobans if, in fact, the government of the day was prepared to put politics to the side.

We all know Jenny Hillard, or the Conservative candidate—[interjection] The Crescentwood candidate, her name escapes me, but from the by-election, the Conservative candidate in the by-election, Hillard, Hilliard—[interjection] Maybe Hansard will be able to get the actual proper spelling. Anyway, Madam Speaker, here is a candidate, a Tory candidate in 1993, who was appointed to the Public Utilities Board, and there was another candidate out from the Thompson area who was a Conservative, a well-known Conservative.

Madam Speaker, the public has a little bit higher in terms of expectations of the Public Utilities Board. They like to believe that it is not going to be political in its nature.

What we see is a board that this government has made more and more very political appointments to. That puts into question the integrity of the board. Perception is very important, and when we take a look at it, as I say, the role, and think about the potential role of a Public Utilities Board and what this government is doing to the integrity of that board when it becomes so apparent that the individuals whom they are appointing in some cases are being appointed because maybe they were a Conservative candidate, maybe they had a Conservative card for many, many years, that, as I say, does cause some concern.

That is why, when I see legislation of this nature coming before the House, Madam Speaker, I believe that what we should be doing, especially within the opposition benches, is bringing more of an emphasis on how that board is, in fact, appointed. Not only wanting to just criticize, I think that I can be at times somewhat creative and make some positive suggestions, that there is some merit in some areas in which appointments being made could be done in such a fashion where you get more co-operation from oppositions or at the very least have some sort of a committee that reviews some of these appointments that are being made.

One of the most important boards which I believe needs to be more depoliticized, Madam Speaker, because perception is so very important is, in fact, the Public Utilities Board. I guess when I stand here, what

I would appeal to the government to do is to take very seriously the suggestion that we need to find a better way in which to fill the vacancies of the Public Utilities Board, so it is more reflective of the population as a whole, so that the public as a whole and so opposition MLAs and government backbenchers and possibly even some ministers will acknowledge that it is not acceptable to give a perception that a board that is supposed to be neutral is perceived by so many as not being neutral because the government insists on putting individuals on the board who could call into question—and this is not to say that these people are bad people per se. It is just the question of the importance and the integrity of the system and the perception of the Public Utilities Board.

I think that if we were to address that particular issue, we could even get more out of our Public Utilities Board, and individuals such as myself would not be able to stand in my place to criticize it as freely as I do, and I have heard other members inside the Chamber criticize the Public Utilities Board, but if you look at the rationale that they use in terms of being able to criticize the board, it all stems from the way in which that particular board is appointed, Madam Speaker, and for good reason.

As I indicated, I made reference to MPIC and the way in which MPIC applies for its increases and some of the comments that come out of the Public Utilities Board, and many of us know, Madam Speaker, that there are some things which the government of the day could and should be acting on in terms of some of the thoughts that flow out of the Public Utilities Board.

That is the reason why what I am hoping we will see, Madam Speaker, once this bill goes into the committee stage is that we will get people from the public who will come forward—

Madam Speaker: Order, please. The hour being 6 p.m., when this matter is again before the House, the honourable member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) will have 28 minutes remaining.

The hour being 6 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. tomorrow (Wednesday).

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, June 10, 1997

CONTENTS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

Presenting Petitions

Mobile Screening Unit for Mammograms	
Wowchuk	4689
Chomiak	4689
McGifford	4689

Central Guaranty Trust Company--Transfer	
Laurendeau	4689

Reading and Receiving Petitions

Mobile Screening Unit for Mammograms	
Wowchuk	4689
Chomiak	4690
McGifford	4690

Obstetrics Closure--Grace General Hospital	
Martindale	4690

Presenting Reports by Standing and Special Committees

Committee of Supply	
Laurendeau	4691

Ministerial Statements

Pine Falls Paper Company Limited	
Downey	4691
Doer	4692

Oral Questions

Health Care System	
Doer; Praznik	4693
Chomiak; Praznik	4694

Physician Resources	
Lathlin; Praznik	4695
Ashton; Praznik	4696

Disaster Assistance	
Lamoureux; Pitura	4697

Queen versus Bauder Mackintosh; Toews	4698
--	------

Post-Secondary Education Friesen; McIntosh	4700
---	------

Health Records Privacy McGifford; Praznik	4700
--	------

Ombudsman McGifford; Praznik	4701
---------------------------------	------

Nonpolitical Statements

Transcona Seniors Centre Cerilli	4703
-------------------------------------	------

YM-YWCA Women of Distinction Awards Dyck	4703
---	------

Transcona Sports Weekend Reid	4704
----------------------------------	------

Kate Mooney Tweed	4704
----------------------	------

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Committee of Supply (Concurrent Sections)

Health	4705
Education and Training	4724

Second Readings

Bill 50, Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy and Consequential Amendments Act	
Vodrey	4741
Lamoureux	4745

Bill 51, Personal Health Information Act Praznik	4747
---	------

Debate on Second Readings

Bill 2, Arbitration and Consequential
Amendments Act
Lamoureux

4751

Bill 5, Mineral Exploration Incentive
Program Repeal Act
Lamoureux

4752

Bill 7, Midwifery and Consequential
Amendments Act
Santos
Ashton

4753
4754

Bill 9, Public Utilities Board
Amendment Act
Lamoureux

4756