



Fourth Session - Thirty-Sixth Legislature

of the

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

**Official Report
(Hansard)**

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Speaker*



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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Sixth Legislature

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, April 23, 1998

The House met at 10 a.m.

PRAYERS

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Hon. James Downey (Acting Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Cummings), 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.

* (1020)

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY
(Concurrent Sections)

ENERGY AND MINES

Mr. Chairperson (Gerry McAlpine): Order, please. Will the Committee of Supply please come to order. This morning this section of the Committee of Supply meeting in Room 254 will resume consideration of the Estimates of the Department of Energy and Mines. When the committee last sat it had been considering item 23.1.(c) Financial and Administrative Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits on page 47 of the Estimates book.

Ms. MaryAnn Mihychuk (St. James): Mr. Chairman, I believe we were in the midst of getting a response from the department on a question I had just presented.

Hon. David Newman (Minister of Energy and Mines): My Hansard for April 21 says the last question by you was: "Out of a total complement of how many? I am looking for a percentage." My answer was: "Seven out of 32."

Ms. Mihychuk: Yes, I have found the Hansard, and I was in the midst of asking a series of questions on affirmative action and goals and strategies that the

department may be making. Can the minister indicate what plans and initiatives are planned to increase the number of women geologists for the department?

Mr. Newman: The nature of the affirmative action strategy with respect to achieving a better proportion of affirmative action candidates, including women, is through summer employment programs, where the goal is to achieve a level of 50 percent affirmative action candidates being hired and through career symposia involvement of the department. For example, the Rotary career symposium at the Convention Centre focused on not just students but mature candidates for employment outside the school system. The department was there with a booth promoting jobs for affirmative action candidates.

The turnover rate in the geology functions in the department is not that great. Since April 1, 1996, there have been three new geologists hired in the department, and all three were affirmative action target group members. The chief geologist, sedimentary and industrial minerals, was female, the petroleum geologist was female, and the regional geologist, Thompson, was visible minority. So we have achieved a hundred percent over that period of time to illustrate the degree of commitment and the interest of capable candidates to fill the positions.

Ms. Mihychuk: How many female geologists has the department lost since 1995?

Mr. Newman: We have lost since April 1, 1995, subject to validation, my staff's best knowledge at this time—and we will, maybe over noon hour, confirm that—two male and two female geologists, and there is one geologist vacancy.

Mr. Peter Dyck, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair

Ms. Mihychuk: One of the pressures of geology, unfortunately, say probably more so intensely for the women geologists because of our social structure, is the separation from young children and families for extended periods of time. What provisions are being

made to accommodate geologists with young families in that what can be a very lengthy field season of up to four months away from the family? Are there considerations for providing accommodations for families in those situations? I think that really what you are looking at is a very unfavourable situation for a family and for that parent.

* (1030)

Mr. Newman: We have no policy as a department that precludes females or even males bringing a child who has a dependency need with the parent into the field, as long as they provide whatever support is necessary so that they can carry on their work function in a normal course.

Ms. Mihychuk: In situations in other departments, for example, Natural Resources, where the park rangers have living accommodations, I believe, in provincial parks, I think the practice is to include families. Are those employees required to somehow subsidize their family's expenses, or is that included in the field operation?

Mr. Newman: I do not want to answer for the Department of Natural Resources. Maybe you can go to Minister Cummings' Estimates process and put that question or have one of your colleagues get that information directly from his department.

Ms. Mihychuk: Would the minister be open to looking at what provisions are made for civil servants who give up their families for extended field seasons and look to providing similar supports for those families as is the practice in other departments?

Mr. Newman: Absolutely. We are looking for best practices that are consistent with being effective workers and effective parents. Whether they are within government or outside government, the department is interested in any of those kinds of arrangements that work and contribute in that sort of way, and because you have raised it specifically with respect to Natural Resources, the department through the deputy minister will make sure that that is examined and will determine whether there is anything relevant that is being done there that might be usefully imported into our department in a modified form or as it is.

Ms. Mihychuk: Well, Mr. Minister, I must congratulate you. Even the decision to look at that availability is a major step, in my opinion, to making the department more responsive for the needs of geologists and their families and other field support. I know on behalf of my colleagues, that they will appreciate that type of consideration. It is long overdue. I know that there have been circumstances where it has been extremely difficult leaving families and has caused severe problems in their home life. So if something like this—I do not know the circumstances in Natural Resources. I do know that they do field seasons. If the minister is willing to look at better practices, I think that would go a long way in increasing, boosting morale, providing better service for Manitobans and having a much stronger and unified department, so I do sincerely thank you for that measure. I sense a high degree of sincerity, so I think that deserves congratulations and I look forward to some changes there.

I am virtually ready to leave this section. I have one more question on the Mining Reserve Fund. Can the minister tell me, have in the past, let us say since '89 or maybe even since its inception if we had those records, have there been any other years where money has been withdrawn and put into general revenue, Consolidated Revenue Fund?

Mr. Newman: No.

Ms. Mihychuk: Thank you.

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Dyck): 23.1. Administration and Finance (c) Financial and Administrative Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$622,500—pass; 1.(c)(2) Other Expenditures \$158,100—pass.

23.2. Energy and Mineral Resources (a) Marketing (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$817,400.

Ms. Mihychuk: Mr. Chairman, just for clarification, we are now in the Marketing Branch, are we?

Mr. Newman: I am wondering, would this be the appropriate time, honourable member for St. James, to respond to unanswered questions which I now have the information for before you move onto the next section?

Ms. Mihychuk: That would be fine with me. Absolutely.

Mr. Newman: The question was under the new desktop management initiative, how many times has the department contacted the central system for assistance? The answer is that during the period January 1 to February 18, 1998, a total of 79 requests for assistance were made. The breakdown, and you have mentioned Gismo, the term here is breakdown of trouble tickets is: Administration and Finance 14; Marketing 8; Petroleum and Energy 23; Mines 14; Geological Services 20; for a total of 79.

The other question related to travel expenses, and you wanted an exact figure of the travel costs for the minister, including airfare, meals, hotel, taxi, registrations, membership, miscellaneous. The total expense is \$6,810.34.

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Dyck): Okay, before we proceed, because we went back to that line that had already been passed, I would just like to advise the members of the committee that the correct procedure for considering items in the Committee of Supply is in a line-by-line manner. In order to skip ahead or to revert back to lines already passed, unanimous consent of the committee is required. So do we have unanimous consent? [agreed]

*(1040)

Ms. Mihychuk: Is it appropriate now to ask a couple of questions leading from that statement?

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Dyck): We have unanimous consent. Yes. Certainly. Go ahead.

Ms. Mihychuk: The \$6,000 of travel expenses relates to the line under Executive Support where we had budgeted \$30,000. Is that correct?

Mr. Newman: Yes.

Ms. Mihychuk: Well, apparently it is significantly overfunded as a budget line. I am wondering if we are looking at some new initiatives this year or is the money redirected in some way, or it goes as a departmental surplus?

Mr. Newman: Maybe this will help and it might cause some other questions but, just to clarify, the breakdown of the transportation budget allotment of \$30,000, first of all, there is a breakdown between the minister's office and the deputy's office. The minister's office breakdown is \$17,600 and the deputy's office is \$12,400. It does not just include commercial or charter airline travel and associated expenses. It also involves government vehicles, mileage, the scheduled public air and charter air. But there is a government vehicle component which is spelled out for the minister's office, \$4,000; for the deputy's office, \$4,000, in itself; and, more specifically, the scheduled public air and charter air allotment of the \$17,600 is broken down: \$8,000 scheduled public air and \$5,000 charter air.

Ms. Mihychuk: Maybe for clarification it would be perhaps fair to say that this transportation allowance also includes travel for the minister's other duties including Hydro and Northern Affairs.

Mr. Newman: Hydro, yes, but not Northern Affairs.

Ms. Mihychuk: Then the allocation for the vehicle of \$4,000 annually is also a line item in the Northern Affairs budget or that is covered by the Department of Energy and Mines.

Mr. Newman: I am advised that represents half of the entire allotment of \$8,000; so it is \$4,000 for each department.

Ms. Mihychuk: Did the minister indicate that there was \$8,000 in public air transportation?

Mr. Newman: The breakdown was scheduled public air \$8,000, charter air \$5,000.

Ms. Mihychuk: That \$13,000 for air support for public and charter, that is for trips that the minister and deputy take related to energy and mine business alone?

Mr. Newman: That is correct.

Ms. Mihychuk: Well, if I remember correctly, Mr. Minister, it seems to me that there was, in the past year, a fairly limited number of trips that the minister took; four trips, I believe, were identified. My question would be: are there maybe other individuals using this

account or perhaps there were trips that were not identified previously?

Mr. Newman: What you are seeking is in addition to the trips, what happened to the difference between \$13,000 and \$6,810. The only trip that I did not mention to you previously, besides the Vancouver-Calgary-Toronto and Cambridge Bay trip, was from Calgary. I went to a Hydro symposium in Minneapolis, but that is the only additional one. The difference between \$13,000 and \$6,810, I will have to get further guidance on.

We would have to do some more work to get the detail, because really the original question was the portion which was spent on marketing activity. There is, for example, the Energy and Mines ministers' conference in St. John's, Newfoundland, last year, and that was in July. So that would have been an item of cost which would be part of the \$30,000, and the deputy would have gone to that, too.

Ms. Mihychuk: That does help bring things together a little bit, but I would ask the minister if it is possible for the department to just perhaps provide the information as to a full sort of accounting of that transportation allowance for the record, because right now it seems to be a hole, and I think it would be useful to clarify where that money is going.

Mr. Newman: We will try and get that for you for this afternoon—[interjection] It cannot be done for this afternoon. They have to go through the records of all the trips, so we will undertake to provide you with that information in a timely manner, and if the Estimates process concludes, we will, of course, undertake to provide it to you, in any event, promptly.

Ms. Mihychuk: Mr. Chairman, I am ready to move on to the Marketing section.

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Dyck): Okay then, under 23.2.(a) Marketing (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$817,400.

Ms. Mihychuk: This is a fairly large branch in the department, an initiative that the previous minister took a great deal of pride in. There was expansion in this section—we see 17.5 staff members, a considerably

large budget, \$1.25 million, so I will be asking a number of questions in this area. Can the minister indicate whether this expenditure, in his view, in a broad sense, has been a worthwhile endeavour or are there plans to review the Marketing Branch in the department?

Mr. Newman: The general answer is more of the same but better, and the enhancement that is being focused on this year is the aboriginal mining initiative, the effort to establish a protocol, a code of practice for effective positive relationships and understandings between the mining community and the aboriginal people of Manitoba who relate by geography, interest or otherwise to exploration and mining in the province.

* (1050)

Ms. Mihychuk: The aboriginal mining initiative, I did notice it, but I noticed it under the Mines Branch. I am very interested in this new initiative. Perhaps the minister can present what this program is all about.

Mr. Newman: I respond that it is part of Marketing, because Marketing is the author, the creator of what was the eight-point mining strategy which received considerable national and international attention as one of the best programs for Marketing, a jurisdiction for mining in the world, certainly in the country.

We have added a ninth point, which is the aboriginal component that I have just referred to and, yes, it is the Mines Branch that is going through the process, the workshop process, the partnering process of coming up with the content, the flesh of that ninth point.

Ms. Mihychuk: Does the minister wish to elaborate on this project then in the Mines Branch?

Mr. Newman: I think that is the appropriate place to address that.

Ms. Mihychuk: One of the issues that is always raised by the mining community and the exploration people as well is the uncertainty about land tenure, when, in the North there are several areas or several issues that have not been fully resolved, treaty land entitlement, and in our case, we have one Northern Flood Agreement. But we also have things called, I understand, community

interest zones and we have resource management areas. These other two initiatives provide some, I guess, uncertainty as to their status or their intention. Can the minister articulate what those other two provisions or land classifications mean to mining?

Mr. Newman: This is a big question in terms of the type of answer that it engenders. I could go on at such great length, it would do a disservice to this process to overburden it with details. So let me try and address it in a general kind of way and then, with subsequent questions, you can indicate whether or not I am hitting the mark in the relevant ways you expect. I will break it down into two components.

One is the process which is underway pursuant to treaty land entitlement and even, to a certain extent, the Northern Flood Agreement in 1977 and the comprehensive settlements. There are identifiable areas which, pursuant to the treaty land entitlement agreement which, pending the final land selection by the bands in the implementation of the treaty land entitlement agreement in principle are areas that mining explorationists have a degree of uncertainty about, and the certainty that does exist is that outside those zones which are known. We even have maps that show these zones for the benefit of mining communities even on the Internet, but to the extent that they are operating within those zones they do not have certainty as to which way ultimately the band, which has the right to select within that area, will make its decisions in terms of selection.

Mr. Chairperson in the Chair

From the First Nations perspective the good news is that they are looking at choosing the best lands with mineral potential, and from the mining company perspective they of course would like to maximize the richest opportunities that their geology tells them is available. The good news is that there is an obvious benefit from both groups to partner and try and maximize the advantages for both. We are going through that kind of learning exercise now by First Nations communities. Because we consider it so important, the theme of our last Mining and Minerals Convention in large measure, one of our major themes was the aboriginal content, and both Grand Chief Francis Flett of the MKO and Ron Evans of Norway

House were speakers, as you know, at that conference and shared their perspective, so the explorationists, mining companies and other community people involved in mining had an opportunity to get a better understanding of the perspectives. It is another reason why we have the ninth point to the strategy.

* (1100)

With respect to the Department of Natural Resources and the whole area of issues of co-management and issues of meeting the World Wildlife Fund targets, there was a protocol agreement that was signed involving the Department of Natural Resources, the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs and the MKO earlier, a month or so ago, at which I and Minister Cummings were present. It was in essence an agreement to work together to select protected areas which would affect aboriginal people in the North, to try and achieve in representative ways the ecosystems of the province under the initiative, to at least meet and exceed the 12 percent target for the province.

That was quite a landmark agreement because it is a very co-operative effort. I know that both the First Nations, our department and Mr. Cummings' department received accolades from the World Wildlife Fund for entering into that sort of relationship. I might say that was a product of a lot of discussion and meetings and what I think is a real statement about the enlightened approach to the mining industry in Manitoba. One of the members of the board of the World Wildlife Fund, because of his vast knowledge and very significant educational qualifications at the doctoral level, Ed Huebert, the executive vice-president of the Mining Association of Manitoba, is there on the national board of the World Wildlife Fund, so there is this comfort that the philosophy and the values that grew out of the Whitehorse mining accord, reflected by the incorporation of the principles of sustainable development in our mining act, are in good health in Manitoba and are working in the ways that are of mutual benefit of aboriginal people and the mining industry.

Ms. Mihychuk: Can the minister tell me which department is responsible for establishing resource management areas?

Mr. Newman: The Department of Natural Resources.

Ms. Mihychuk: Is it also true that these are areas where there is a collaborative or a multiparty committee which sits to deal with resource management issues, including mines?

Mr. Newman: We are consulted and we have input, but we are not directly involved in their creation.

Ms. Mihychuk: Is it the intent to have ongoing committees that meet to deal with resource management issues?

Mr. Newman: Maybe I should clarify. The department has a very great interest on behalf of mining exploration to make sure that there is an ability, a freedom to enter into areas after giving appropriate notice. So we are vigilant in relating to the role of Natural Resources in restricting in any way the capacity and freedom to do mining exploration. We are very much involved in monitoring what is happening in that area.

Ms. Mihychuk: Maybe I can indicate what I understand them to be. I understand them to be areas where there is a collaborative attempt between resource sectors as well as the First Nations community in that area in that there has been an attempt, as my understanding is, to establish a liaison or a committee with the local bands and representatives from the resource sectors that may impact in those resource management areas.

It is also my understanding that the department had a representative attend some of these meetings but has not attended for the past two years. Is that true?

Mr. Newman: Our interest in mining, our responsibility for mining, when it is on the agenda, would attract and invite the involvement of our department. I am advised that most of the focus has been on wildlife management and forestry issues which are not within the ambit of our department.

Ms. Mihychuk: Is the minister aware that there are two mining companies in a resource management area in the Cross Lake area?

Mr. Newman: You might have to share with me who might be there. As far as we are concerned, there is a freedom to do it because there is not even a co-management agreement there, let alone any agreed upon restriction on mining exploration or even a requirement to give notice as a courtesy. Our department has been attempting, using its best efforts, to encourage the mining explorationists to give notice in meaningful ways.

That is one of the reasons why, as we will discuss later, the ninth point in the mining strategy is so important, so that there will be a reciprocal sensitivity and understanding, and expectations will become known and generally accepted. That is why we want to go through that kind of process to achieve that kind of result, not an imposed thing but something that is done by the enlightened self-interest, good will, courtesy and application of values from both good corporate citizens on the one hand and their employees and the members of the aboriginal communities and their leadership as well.

Ms. Mihychuk: Is the minister aware that there are two exploration companies, to my understanding, that are exploring in resource management areas that have not consulted the appropriate First Nations communities, and, in fact, this is an issue that is causing some concern by the local community?

Mr. Newman: My staff advise me they do not know, and if you could maybe give some more specifics, maybe my department would be able to address the specific explorationists, but we do not have any knowledge of what you are talking about at the moment.

Ms. Mihychuk: I am very hesitant to actually name the companies because, of course, they are in the business to explore and, hopefully, find a potential deposit. That is their business. I do not wish to somehow impede on that activity. However, I am very concerned that there are two exploration companies within a resource management area. In fact, one of the companies has received a MEAP to assist in the exploration, and I would be glad to speak to the minister in confidence, provide him the names of the companies, but this is of serious concern. The minister talks about a sincere approach to reach out and work

co-operatively, collaboratively with First Nations people, and in this case I think that they have been betrayed. There are two exploration companies who are actively exploring in areas that are close to First Nations communities and have not consulted the communities, have not gone to the resource management committee, if such a thing exists, and are raising some serious questions about the sincerity of the minister's so-called reaching out, especially in this particular area, and it is of particular concern.

* (1110)

Mr. Newman: Well, just as you are reluctant to divulge the names of those companies going about their business, I am reluctant to get involved in telling companies how to go about doing their business as well.

However, I had the temerity and the commitment to aboriginal people in the North to the degree that I spoke in Toronto at the Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada's annual meeting at a breakfast I hosted at 7 a.m. on Monday, March 8, and I might say, to my delight, Chief Roland Robinson, Vice-Chief John Muswagon, and their mining consultant and band member—and well-respected band member—John Angus Thomas were at that event, as were certainly many of the major mining companies and exploration companies who were doing business in Manitoba.

As I indicated in my opening remarks, in that speech, by way of offering advice, I said: Before I conclude my remarks, I ask your indulgence to permit me to give you and the civil servants employed by the Energy and Mines department some advice about the changing expectations and indeed culture of the North. In listening to me, bear in mind that, just as I am your partner in being successful for the benefit of Manitobans, I am also a partner in a good faith relationship with the people and the ecosystems of northern Manitoba. I dare say those people and those ecosystems expect the following from civil servants in my government and those explorationists given the privilege of entering their traditional territories and communities: (1) humility, not arrogance; (2) respect, not intolerance or discourtesy; (3) honesty and good faith, not anything less; (4) genuine, ongoing communication, not just give notice, and also I said,

expect no surprises; (5) maximum opportunities to participate in the jobs, training, education, and wealth-generation potential associated with mining exploration and development.

I further went on to say: Is this a new culture to adjust to? You bet it is. Those civil servants and explorationists who adjust first and best will be the most successful for themselves and for the benefit of all Manitobans.

I have repeated that on more than one occasion and alluded to it in my opening remarks in this process. To the extent that individual explorationist operations, companies, individuals on the one hand and aboriginal people on the other hand are not accepting that advice, that is their right and privilege, but it would be with considerable disappointment that that would happen because it is simply not common sense, it not courtesy and it is not as principled as I would like it to be.

I am also reminded, and I was reminded by the official opposition and reminded by the band, that when I assert a principle-based or a value-driven approach to something, and I put that in writing to the chief and council and indicate that I share those beliefs myself and I practise them to the best of my capacity, I was accused by the honourable member for The Pas, Oscar Lathlin, and I was accused by the chief and council of somehow talking down to them or insulting them by doing that.

I had no such intentions, but that was how they chose to receive it to such a degree that when I attended in Cross Lake and met with the chief and council in a very carefully constructed process, a very controlled process, where what I could say was very restricted in accordance with the script that they wanted to follow, I was asked in the process to apologize for that letter. I explained the purpose of it and its intent, and I said that to the extent that I have hurt or insulted or shown discourtesy to anybody by that letter, it was not intended, and I unequivocally apologized for it. The band was asked by the chief whether they would accept that apology in the community hall, which was full, and they unanimously agreed to accept that apology, and that was a matter that was history.

* (1120)

So I just point that out to show how sensitive people are about the articulation of these kinds of things, and what I would say today about this kind of strategy and what I would say today in response to your questions related to this very specific thing, these are very sensitive kinds of things, and that is why we have this ninth point to the strategy. We have to have people, emphatically, from Cross Lake because they have a potential mine on their doorstep.

We have a great need as a province and the First Nations bands—and, again, I have to be careful because I was told in Cross Lake by Vice-Chief John Muswagon that I should not use the term First Nations in relation to the community. He preferred the term aboriginals to describe the people in the community. So that community wants it described that way, and other communities, many of them, most of them so far, have wanted First Nations, so I am trying to do things as perfectly as I can, but everyone has their different perspective on these things and sensitivity.

This is why we want a participatory process through workshops, interaction between mining explorations and the people from Cross Lake and other communities to contribute, to develop, to own the ninth point of our strategy, which would be a reciprocal set of expectations, each for the other.

Ms. Mihychuk: Well, Mr. Chairman, this is a very serious and important area that I wish to continue on, but I guess on a matter of personal business, I would ask the indulgence of the minister to move away from this subject and provide my honourable colleague an opportunity to move into Energy and ask some conservation and energy questions. I have a pressing constituency issue, and I know that the Chairman does as well.

So although we are in the midst of a very, very serious and important issue, I would ask the minister's leave that we be able to come back to this this afternoon in Estimates, and I may be able to provide the minister with more detail if he needs it and ask for the unanimous agreement of the committee to move to Energy.

Mr. Chairperson: Is there unanimous consent to move to 23.2.(b) Petroleum and Energy (1) Salaries and

Employee Benefits, with the understanding that we will revert sometime during the process? Is there unanimous consent?

Mr. Newman: I agree. The honourable member for Arthur-Virden (Mr. Downey) will speak for himself, though.

Mr. Chairperson: I take it that there is unanimous consent. [agreed]

Mr. Newman: I think the honourable member for Arthur-Virden's ears perked up, and he looks forward with great interest to hearing the discussion about energy and the wonderful benefits of the oil industry in southwestern Manitoba.

Mr. Stan Struthers (Dauphin): Thank you for allowing me the chance to come in and ask some questions and get some ideas from the minister on a topic that is of very much concern for me. I should also add that it is the concern of some of my constituents who approached me on the topic of, not so much energy, but energy conservation, energy efficiency and alternate sources of energy. The one constituent that approached me has just recently retired from his occupation. He told me that now that he has retired, he has lots of time to think of all kinds of ideas in terms of conservation and energy efficiency. So I hope he is a little bit of a source for all of us to think about and consider and mull over and, maybe at some point, actually implement some of the ideas that are out there in the public. I think he is one good example of, hopefully, a source for those of us who make decisions in public policy.

I consider any time and energies and dollars used towards alternative energy sources as an investment. I am hoping that is the way that the government is looking at alternative energy as well. I would be interested to know, just in a general way, what kind of projects the minister envisions his department moving towards in terms of alternative energy.

Mr. Newman: I take it that for the purposes of this discussion, you are treating renewable hydroelectricity as something other than alternative energy. Maybe I can get that clarification. If not, I can share some thoughts about the direction that we are going as a

province and Manitoba Hydro is going and the whole, really, climate change initiative, because we have a wonderful renewable power source which is amongst the cheapest in North America. That is certainly a major area which we have every desire through our department to encourage and expand for the benefit of Manitobans and the world. So if you could give me that clarification, then I could answer perhaps more directly to your question.

Mr. Struthers: Yes, I am quite excited about the kind of possibilities I see in terms of hydro. I was thinking of that separate—if it is easier for you to deal with that separately, that would be fine, or roll them together. It is fine by me.

Mr. Newman: I will then just be very brief about hydroelectricity and its future contributing to the whole effort to reduce the carbon emissions. That is clearly the most significant way a difference can be made on a world scale, certainly on a North American scale, certainly on a national scale. That is the major area of initiative.

That aside for a moment, the other two areas of focus by the department are on ethanol as a less environmentally negative fuel for motor vehicles. The other initiative we are focusing on is fleet vehicle conversion, a movement towards natural gas and propane as alternative fuels.

* (1130)

Mr. Struthers: Mr. Chairperson, what I am thinking about is how is your department looking at getting individuals themselves, what kind of encouragement can we give individuals to adopt conservation as a way to increase the resources that we have? Maybe this is particular to Hydro, I am thinking. What kind of measures on the part of this department are we taking towards encouraging people to conserve hydroelectric energy or natural gas or even ethanol? I mean, even though it is a cheaper, more efficient, more environmentally friendly method of going, how do we even encourage the conservation of ethanol? It is the conservation that I am particularly concerned about.

Mr. Newman: Through educational processes and tools like fact sheets, workshops, how-to booklets,

advisory service and things that are less direct but encourage awareness and habit development like the calendar that we, together with the federal Department of Natural Resources, put together and disseminate throughout Manitoba, thanks to the contributions made by students of our school system who offer their works of art and, in effect, the content of the calendar with captions with their works of art, that make a contribution to the education of their peers and other young people. There is an award process given to any Manitoba student in school for making that contribution.

I know that I unfortunately could not attend myself to make a presentation at the Riverton elementary school. The director, Bob Dubreuil, did attend and make the presentation on my behalf, as I understand it. So those kinds of things I do not undervalue, and you as a former principal and teacher know the power of that.

A thing that we are doing which I am very proud of is the Manitoba R-2000 home program that grew out of the federal R-2000 program and has evolved over time to include methods to improve the indoor air quality and to reduce overall environmental impacts. These regional R-2000 committees involving Natural Resources Canada, provincial governments, energy utilities, and home builders associations are in place across Canada.

The Manitoba R-2000 home program is operated by a committee composed of Energy and Mines, Natural Resources Canada, Manitoba Hydro, Centra Gas, and the construction association of rural Manitoba. In September of 1994 our department assumed the management and administration functions of the program. R-2000 houses are designed and built to a specific energy performance standard, and they can only be built by a builder who has undertaken R-2000 training. Each house is examined and tested before it can be certified as an R-2000 home.

Mr. Peter Dyck, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair

The kinds of ways that we promote this, we have that home outside the Convention Centre, which is a model for R-2000 and is a place that is visited by people from around the world and from parts of Manitoba. We encourage people to visit and see for themselves

through that. I know this weekend I will be out in Brandon on Sunday with staff showing my encouragement and support for an R-2000 housing complex which will be officially opened called the BrieCrest Estates.

Another initiative, the department met with representatives of the Lions Club of Winnipeg Housing Centres to discuss the role of the department in the revitalization of the west Broadway area. This got attention in the newspaper. I think that is all part of the solution and the awareness building. This involves renovations and new home construction programs and offered will be vocational training to the residents of west Broadway and the inner city areas while utilizing the products and business services in the area. Our department's interest in the project relates to the opportunities for both the energy efficiency aspects in both the renovations and new home construction.

We also see opportunities of providing marketing assistance to the project. Some specific things that have emerged is video service has been retained to compile footage of the renovations and new home construction to the area. The video will contain many before, during, and after shots of the project, as well as any new building techniques or new energy efficient products being used, the intent being to provide a documentary video which can be used in marketing the concept in other areas of the province or country. The video will also be used to develop the skills and train future trades people. That is another illustration of the way the department gets involved in these innovative opportunities, so that we can hopefully influence a new way of doing energy conservation and energy efficiency.

Another opportunity that we availed ourselves of was the flood of the century, in that given that there was so much rebuilding, it was going to be necessary through that, the staff in the department initiated the idea and this is the kind of thing they do. They are creative and they are expected to be creative. Initially the idea of holding workshops and seminars to help these people at their time of need right in the community and the result of that was not only an awareness, but they were given the educational tools to be able to incorporate energy efficient construction into their renovations.

Another initiative which is again taking advantage of an opportunity is the department playing a role of technical support to the eco-village project at The Forks, which is a project of the Eco-Village Foundation Inc., proposing to build 125 units sustainable urban village at The Forks and downtown Winnipeg. Specific targets are to reduce energy use by 30 percent, water use by 50 percent, and greenhouse gas CO2 emissions by 75 percent as compared to standard construction techniques. There have been many examples of individual new homes that are more energy efficient and environmentally responsible. This project, however, is one of the first where these concepts are to be applied on a community-wide basis in an urban setting. Energy and Mines is providing the monitoring and technical review of the project, and Environment is administering the project funding.

* (1140)

Mr. Struthers: One of the things that I really do enjoy about being an MLA over the last three years is that I have had all kinds of opportunities to read about those kind of advances that we have made in terms of conservation and energy efficiency. So any time that the minister comes across a particularly good one, I would look forward to having information on that. I think it is something that my constituents as well are very much interested in.

A couple of encouragements here: first of all, the minister mentioned some work that they are doing with the Lions Club. I think that that is a good thing. I think partnerships like that are what is going to spread the word about conservation and about energy efficiency, and it helps other people at least partially take ownership for these kind of programs and partially take responsibility for our place in the ecosystem. So I think the more that the minister can involve groups like that, the better it is for the program as a whole.

The minister also mentioned my background as a teacher and a principal. I do not think you can say enough for the contact that we as adults have in the classrooms, when we talk of whatever the subject is, but in particular, in this case, conservation and energy efficiency and all those sorts of things. I am reminded specifically about the effect that you as a minister had on a certain young fellow up at South Indian Lake,

when I was in that school with the minister, and the minister made a presentation to the student who had designed a logo that was being used by the minister. It is not the kind of thing you measure on a standardized test or those sorts of things, but they are the kind of things that show results down the road. Simple things that you do in the classroom stick with a child; they are never tested on it. Sometimes it is frustrating, when I was in the teaching world, to know just how much information is in there between the ears, because we can never understand how much there is actually in a child's brain that they have packed away in there that will be used down the road. I think that is positive for society as a whole. So I would encourage the minister to continue to think in terms of involving our young people in these kind of things.

The minister also mentioned R-2000 and home programs, and I think there is a vast field out there where we can really make some positive steps. I think one of the ways we can really go a long ways in conserving energy is thinking about the homes in which we live and designing those homes and making adjustments to, No. 1, cut down on the amount of energy that we use, cut down on the amount of energy that we waste, and also cut down on input costs for homeowners.

The natural gas people and oil people may not like what I am about to say and this may sound like an advertisement for one method over another, but one method of heating a home and cooling a home that I have done quite a bit of reading on is geothermal heating. I think it is an area in which there could be a big market out there. I think it is an environmentally friendly way to heat and cool our homes, not just our homes, but bigger facilities as well. I think we can do a lot in terms of heat recovery when it comes to these geothermal systems. I know in other provinces there have been rebate systems set up for people; it may not just be geothermal heating they go into, but any other kind of environmentally friendly system for energy use has been rewarded through a rebate program of one sort or another.

I was wondering if the minister has given any contemplation at all towards geothermal as a way to heat buildings in this province and whether a rebate system of one form or another would not be advisable

to encourage people off the usual ways that we heat our homes to a geothermal method, which is much more environmentally friendly.

Mr. Newman: Because of the very significant Manitoba Hydro advantage, these alternative ways of providing energy are not relatively as attractive here as they may be in other jurisdictions, which do not have the huge advantage that we have. So a well-meaning but sometimes misguided effort to get involved in the marketplace to encourage some other means of providing energy might have an overall negative impact on what the marketplace has decided is the most efficient conservationist way to do something, which is not to say that the department and even Hydro have not examined solar, wind and ground source heat pump or geothermal, as you have described it. All of the literature that comes out, the promoters of those means of providing energy are known to both the department and Hydro.

We relate to them in positive ways. They are trying to sell their product, but the analysis that has been done by the department—and Hydro has independently done its own analysis, which I do not have as much detail as I do of the department—but the department has concluded that, generally speaking, in most cases, due to the high capital cost of ground source heat pump technology and construction, it does not compete with hydro. In fact, I am advised that it does not compete with natural gas either, even close enough for the environmental benefits factored in to conclusively establish that that is the favourite way to go. I do know that they are making some effort to prove themselves.

I know I was approached to use my good offices to see whether or not the eco-village foundation might try them out there or allow them in effect to compete with natural gas as a source. That is up to the foundation to determine and then the funding. The interesting thing is everyone is trying to determine the balance through the concept of sustainable development. They will have to prove themselves in that sort of way at appropriate costs.

There are practical and, indeed, functioning applications now of that kind of technology where hydro is not readily available. I have seen some of them in operation. I even understand some schools get

their energy from that kind of technology, and that is a choice made by the bodies that make decisions about capital construction. I guess, ultimately, the school board makes a major part in that.

* (1150)

Mr. Struthers: I think that, when I raised the issue, I used geothermal as one example. The minister talks about solar and wind. My encouragement to him would be to consider some form of a rebate for any alternative energy source with the goal in mind to reduce the amount of hydro being consumed domestically in order to increase the amount of hydro available to us for export. I think, given the sales of electricity to Minnesota that we have had over the years, given I think our ability to export more energy outside of the province is a good thing for Manitobans. It is a good thing, I think, for Manitoba Hydro, and I would encourage the minister to look at any ways that he can, domestically, to reduce the amount of hydro that we use with the goal in mind of increasing our exports down the line.

The minister hit the nail on the head when it comes to geothermal. The reason why many people around my hometown of Dauphin do not just leap into geothermal ground surface heating is exactly the cost that it is going to be to them to get into it at the beginning. You talk to somebody who would like to sell you the system and set it up for you, and he will very convincingly explain how many years it would take to recover that initial cost through savings in hydro because you are not using as much hydro. That is all well and fine, and I think they make a pretty good case in those terms. As an individual homeowner, it is something that would mean a lot to me to recover my initial outlay of capital. But other jurisdictions have considered and actually implemented rebates to help people get into or jump over that hurdle of the capital at the beginning so that they can get to the point quicker where they can realize savings in hydro.

As it stands now, you are right, not many people are going to opt to move away from natural gas in Dauphin if they have to put up a bunch of money beforehand. I would like to be able to convince the minister that it would be an energy-wise, a conservation-wise step to provide a rebate to people who are looking at other

sources of energy to heat their homes and buildings so that we can get to the point where we are conserving energy over the long term. Maybe the minister might want to shed some light on that.

Mr. Newman: It would not be unprecedented for a government to do that kind of thing in appropriate cases with a comprehensive kind of strategy, looking at perhaps economic development within the province, in addition, in ways that would be significant. That sort of strategic approach contributed to a road tax rebate for ethanol of 2.5 cents per litre. So, you know, if there are ideas for other areas where this would have a strategic advantage in a broad way for the people of Manitoba, as well as, contribute to the reduction of carbon emissions or contribute in some other favourable way to the environment and economic development as well, the department would be very interested in considering and analyzing those and sharing with other departments where appropriate. We have no hesitation interacting with the Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson) and his department or the City of Winnipeg in their areas of fiscal policy development to use their good offices and policies and budgets to advance our efforts in all of the competing requests, that kind of approach. If you can, say, help us make a case, if you can bring forward any case, it is the mandate of this part of our department to analyze it and make recommendations.

Mr. Struthers: Listening to the minister, I was reminded of the discussion that took place in the Legislature not long ago on The Sustainable Development Act, parts of which were proceeded on and parts of which were not. One of the positive things I thought that came out of that discussion was a realization of the interconnectedness of all the departments in government. I think one of the positive things that anybody who got involved in the debate realized was how important it was to have the concept of sustainability injected into each of the departments and each of the activities of government. I think that in the long term will serve us well, if we not just adopt the thinking but have it appear in the decisions that we make in government in whichever department.

One of the things I have become more and more worried about in terms of anything that has to do with resources and resource management is the database upon which we make our decisions. It seems to me to

make good common sense that if you have a database, an inventory that is up to date and is solid, then you can make up-to-date and solid decisions based on that information that you have available, and this applies to any department that deals with natural resources.

Within your department, are there figures that I could obtain indicating how many individuals in the province draw their energy in whole or in part, I suppose in part, from solar panels, from windmills? I do not know if I am being too detailed here or if you would have this kind of information, how many geothermal ground-source heating units there are.

I am just going off the top of my head and I am not going to cover all the different alternative energy, but I am wondering if there is a body of knowledge within the department that I could access that would tell me those kinds of information.

Mr. Newman: We do not have a comprehensive database at this time, but there would be examples available through the department probably, any one of those that you have mentioned and probably others, that would facilitate your accessing them, but not a reliable, comprehensive database.

Mr. Struthers: I would appreciate anyway that the minister can undertake to get that kind of information for me. I am a little bit concerned that we make decisions without that data available to us.

Is there a plan or has the minister considered a comprehensive strategy in gathering all that kind of information on alternative energy sources and the usage out there in the Manitoba wilderness, so that we can more fully understand the conservation and the savings that we are already obtaining and then get a good idea on how we can project any kind of savings and any kind of conservation that we might be aiming for in the future?

I hope that the minister understands sort of what I am looking for. I would like to see a base of data available to his department and to us in opposition and to my constituents that can say here is where we are today with alternative energy; here is where we would like to be 10 years down the road, and have a real strategy towards moving in the direction of conservation of energy.

Mr. Newman: Always these kinds of initiatives have some value, and you have to measure the relative value of using the time and energy and talent of the people that we have working within the department. We certainly have not had that capacity up until now, and in terms of choosing how our two new policy and program analysts are going to use their time, energy and talents, the priority of the department has been to have them concentrate on developing an energy forecasting model and, in addition, to concentrate on doing a greenhouse gas inventory for Manitoba, so those fit the broad strategic priorities that we have as a government at this time, and we got the support of the government to add these two positions to focus on these initiatives.

Mr. Struthers: I would encourage the minister to look at this whole area very carefully. I think it is very basic to making decisions in government. I hope that maybe in next year's Estimates we can sit down again and have a discussion about what has been done from today to next year at this time and have a good understanding of all the data that is out there, all the information, so that we can make good decisions in terms of conservation.

I think it is something that would be a very positive step within the department. This is a case that I will be making in my own Natural Resources Estimates as well. It is maybe even more valuable within Natural Resources where decisions are made everyday on the basis of how many animals and how many trees and how many fish and how much water and that sort of thing, but I think there is an area within Energy and Mines, as well, where we need to have that database so that we can base our decisions on good solid information. So I would encourage the minister to do that.

I guess the other part of this, the natural flow of this, is what mechanism do you use to measure how well we have proceeded along the conservation route, and can the minister explain to me how he as minister looks in his department and decides are we going along the right route; have we reached the goals that we have set for energy conservation?

What precisely is the process he uses to evaluate the move towards conserving energy or the move towards alternative energy sources?

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Dyck): The time being 12 noon, I am interrupting proceedings.

The Committee of Supply will resume sitting this afternoon following the conclusion of Routine Proceedings.

HEALTH

Mr. Chairperson (Ben Sveinson): Order, please. Good morning. Will the Committee of Supply please come to order. This Committee of Supply will be resuming consideration of the Estimates of the Department of Health.

When the committee last sat, it had been considering item 21.1 Administration and Finance (b) Executive Support (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits on page 71.

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Health): Mr. Chair, I would like to introduce Dr. Brian Postl, who is the vice-president of Clinical Services for the Winnipeg Hospital Authority. He joins Mr. Gordon Webster, the CEO, and, of course, Ms. Sue Hicks, who is the associate deputy minister responsible for this area.

I just ask the member, Dr. Postl is available this morning, he is not available this afternoon, but we will bring him back to the committee. I know his colleagues, the members for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk) and Osborne (Ms. McGifford) had a variety of questions around planning for the breast program. So I ask him, I hope that they will be able to join us this morning. If not, we will have to deal with that at another time.

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Mr. Chairperson, I cannot guarantee that the two members can join us this morning because of other committees that are sitting, but appreciate the fact that we will have to perhaps return to those items if we do not have a chance to deal with it this morning. Because Dr. Postl is only joining us for this morning, I am going to go right to the question that I posed when we last met, and by way of preamble, I am perplexed.

I want to understand how we get in a situation where we have a situation where a child can get surgery and surgery is cancelled and then surgery is bumped, and I am referring specifically to the Guffei child, the young

three-month-old who needs surgery before the skull closes, so it is on a time line. Surgery had been scheduled for about a week and a half ago in Children's Hospital and was bumped because of lack of a bed. I assume it was lack of an ICU bed. Surgery was rescheduled for May. It has now been moved back to June.

To say that the family is concerned would be an understatement, and while we tend not to bring to the Legislature these kinds of specific issues, I do so for two reasons: First, I want to understand how this happens and what resolution can be put in place, and secondly, as part of a larger issue that I want to discuss here, it all goes back to the entire issue of when Children's Hospital services were amalgamated and there were guarantees made that resources would be offered on an expanding basis to take into consideration the amalgamation of services.

Since I am on a bit of a roll, I just want to advise you that I am well familiar with the issue, and I am well familiar with the fact that Dr. Postl took over operation of Children's Hospital and requested and I believe received permission to have block funding, which I think was of a positive nature, but, good heavens, the operating rooms at Children's still do not meet Canadian standards, and the operating rooms are in terrible shape. When we amalgamated services, it was guaranteed that these services would be provided.

Now if you go back—and I beg the indulgence of members here for this long-winded nature of the question—to the specific issue of this Guffei child, if there were alternative services available, perhaps the surgeon or surgeons in question could have conducted the surgery at some point previously at Victoria Hospital or at St. Boniface Hospital. But the fact is there is no ICU bed. The fact is there is difficulty slotting surgery for children. I have talked with the doctors at Children's; I have talked with some of the officials at Children's. The hospital is jammed up. Some kids have attended at adult wards. I do not know whether or not the step down unit has been put in place. This is not a new problem.

* (1010)

So my question is twofold. Firstly: how do we deal with this child who needs surgery? Secondly: what are

we doing on a systematic basis so that the McCorrister child does not have to go to the media to get their surgery and the Guffei child does not have to go to the media to get their surgery? What systematic changes are we putting in place to effect change? Those are my two basic questions.

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Chair, this is obviously a concern to us as well about issues around the Children's Hospital. I am going to ask Mr. Webster and Dr. Postl to update the member on their assessment of the problem and their plans or proposals that will be coming forward to correct it.

Mr. Brian Postl (Vice-President, Clinical Services, Winnipeg Hospital Authority): Around the issue of ICU use and surgery, for many years Children's Hospital has required or has needed to use ICU beds in a postoperative recovery process, so that the issue becomes one of trying to balance the schedule of surgery and the kinds of things being scheduled on a given day for surgery and the access to ICU beds, which is in part determined by what came in through the front door in the previous few days, whether that was motor vehicular accidents or trauma from other communities or a serious infectious illness or in certain seasons, of course, respiratory illness.

Now normally that balance works reasonably well. There are times when surgery is either deferred or otherwise delayed because ICU beds are unavailable, but it is a single site for ICU programming in the province for pediatrics. From time to time surgeons book cases against the advice of ICU and are determined to book cases. I think that sometimes those end up in disputes between the surgeon and the intensive care staff about what can be manageable in a scheduled way. I think that, in the cases that have occurred around the neurosurgical and plastics requirements of some children with skull defects that have the capacity to close, those are elective and can be scheduled in a way that is predictable. I think that is the most desirable approach to this problem as opposed to—in this last case, from what I understand, both were booked on a single day. There were two cases, similar cases, booked on a single day.

Around the amalgamation of services, I, of course, was not there at the time, but I think the intent and

interest reflected a falling pediatric population and what the requirements would be for bed utilization. There was a period of time postamalgamation where beds were available that were not entirely used, and there were subsequent closures, postamalgamation, to beds at Children's Hospital. Then there have been intermittent expansions of bed use that have been consistent with epidemic illness in the community that has required additional beds.

One of the fallouts of the fact that through respiratory illness and I think through some of the successes of intensive care, that the intensive care unit in the last 12 months or so has been quite full in an ongoing way, is the whole concept that you mentioned of development of a step-down unit on a ward, and that process continues to be looked at from both a capital, a physical plant and a staffing set of requirements.

We think that likely can be achieved this spring and summer and should allow for the decanting of patients that now are in a PECU, which is adjacent to the PICU. That is an extended care unit and will allow the PECU beds to be used more consistently for intensive care in the event of these kinds of overflows. Ultimately there is a proposal in the works around the redevelopment of intensive care in Children's Hospital as part of a larger Health Sciences Centre redevelopment which will provide slight expansion but probably more importantly more flexibility and more space for the provision of some of these services.

Mr. Chomiak: So there is a proposal that is being formulated where—to do what in the interim period until the actual redevelopment of Health Sciences Centre and the adjacent Children's Hospital is redeveloped. What is the exact status of that proposal and what is the proposal for? Is it the step-down unit that we are talking about or is it some other—can I have more specifics on that?

Mr. Postl: It is a step-down unit. That discussion has ranged from the need for four to six beds to be available. I think right now the discussions are focused on four beds which would allow the decanting out of intensive care of children who, for example, would be ventilator dependent and require assisted technology to breathe and therefore survive but who are in a stable clinical condition that would allow them not to have to reside in the intensive care unit which occurs most

frequently in the extended care part of the intensive care unit. So it would provide an expansion of function that would create some more flexibility around the issues of ICU use in a post-operative recovery mode.

Mr. Chomiak: So the discussion is for a four to six bed unit at some location to be staffed by a determined number of individuals, and is there a time line? You talked about the spring. I asked the minister previously whether or not there had been any proposal to the government with respect to a capital plan of this nature and he indicated the negative, so I am trying to get some time line on the extent of the—what exactly the proposal is and when we might see it?

Mr. Praznik: Just to clarify that the proposal that is now being discussed would be one that would have to come as an additional proposal to our capital program, over and above the—was it \$70 million or \$90 million expected reconstruction projects at Health Sciences Centre. Mr. Webster may wish to comment on it.

Mr. Gordon Webster (Chief Executive Officer, Winnipeg Hospital Authority): Mr. Chairperson, I think that the project that the minister makes reference to is a longer-term one which will call for the redevelopment of ICU at the Children's Hospital. The other project that Dr. Postl makes reference to, the four to six step-down units that Dr. Postl just indicated, is something that with approval to proceed could likely be put in place within a month.

Mr. Chomiak: So as I understand it, there is a proposal for a step-down unit. We are hoping that it has not gone to the provincial government. We are hoping that the proposal will go to the provincial government and that if all approvals should occur in a relatively short period of time, we could see the development of this unit in as little as 30 or, let us say, 30 to 60 days. Is that feasible?

Mr. Postl: Yes, I think that is feasible. The issues frankly will be likely that there are some capital requirements. Those are not extensive. The issues will relate more to operating dollars and finding staff, which has yet to be tested.

Mr. Chomiak: Just for my own edification, what kind of dollars are we talking about for something like this?

Four to six beds, step down and staffing. What are we looking at?

Mr. Praznik: Capital and operating.

Mr. Chomiak: Capital and operating. Is this something that is in the hundreds of thousands, or are we into the millions on this?

Mr. Postl: It would be in the hundreds of thousands.

* (1020)

Mr. Chomiak: Should this take place, would we be fairly confident that the issues surrounding—keeping in mind that there is scheduling difficulties but assuming that this takes some of the pressure off the ICU beds that are used for post-op, can we assume generally that situations like the McCorrister case and the Guffei case, all things being equal, would not tend to be regular occurrences? Is that a fair statement, because of the pressure taken off the ICU beds, which apparently is the major problem, keeping in mind the issue of the respiratory illnesses that occur on a regular basis, as well as, the issue of the people on life supports? If the family and the surgeons were here in the committee today, could they have assurances generally that that type of occurrence would be less likely to occur in the next 12 months?

Mr. Postl: I think the answer is yes, that once received, if the proposal were approved and put in place, it would reduce the frequency of these kinds of events.

Mr. Chomiak: I have never understood what portion of the capital development of the overall HSC program relates to Children's. Can I get a description of what is planned to take place at Children's as a result of the capital redevelopment of HSC?

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Chair, that program with the Health Sciences Centre has been in the works for some time; in fact, its estimated value has gone up. Some things have been added and changed. Ms. Bakken, out of the capital program—because it has been in the works as I said prior to the WHA taking over and their inheriting that process, if they would like to maybe give some sense of that today, but Ms. Bakken would be the one

with the greatest degree of background and information to answer that question. If Mr. Webster would like to comment, that is certainly fine, but Ms. Bakken would be the one with the longest history in that particular plan. We can have her answer that question if the member wishes.

Mr. Webster: Dr. Postl may be able to give you a high-level overview of what the plans are at Children's Hospital.

Mr. Postl: The intent regarding the children's component of the HSC project includes a new emergency room with a capacity of something like 30,000 patient visits annually, a new suite of O.R.s in juxtaposition to the adult O.R.s for the Health Sciences Centre. That is, I believe, six in number, and a new pediatric intensive care unit would be close to, a change in position to be closer to O.R.s and adult intensive care and the new pediatric emergency suite.

Mr. Mervin Tweed, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, I think generally my question with respect to capital has been answered. I was concerned about the operating rooms and the I.C. in particular, but I see that they are both going to be redesigned. I guess I have to assume between now and the actual completion date, whether it is 2003, as I read in the paper on the weekend, or whether it is sooner or later, my real concern then goes back to, will we have and do we have enough capacity in the interim period to carry out the activities that are required, and can I have stats on the occupancy levels of Children's Hospital beds, beds occupied, et cetera?

Mr. Frank DeCock (Deputy Minister of Health): Mr. Chair, we do not have the occupancies broken down in the information we have with us on each one of the centres at the Health Sciences Centre. We have the total occupancy for Health Sciences Centre. But that information could be obtained directly from the hospital, and we will obtain it from them.

Mr. Chomiak: Thank you. I will look forward to receiving that information when it is tabled.

Just to return back to the general question, are we confident between now and the redevelopment, whenever it occurs, that we have sufficient capacity at

Children's Hospital? I will tell you why I pose that question. Because even if approval goes through and four to six step-down units are put in place, do we have sufficient resources? Are Dr. Postl and Mr. Webster confident that we have sufficient resources to take us through until the redevelopment takes place or are there other alternatives or other options that we might have to look at between now and the actual redevelopment to ensure that services to children are provided sufficiently?

Mr. Webster: As part of the 90-day planning process that our 13 clinical service teams got involved with early in the current year when they were put in place, we expect that those plans will be finalized within the next couple of weeks and brought forward to Manitoba Health for their consideration and approval. One of those plans will be related to child health, and that particular topic will be addressed in those recommendations.

Mr. Chomiak: So there is a 90-day plan that is going forward to the provincial government calling for a variety of—am I correct? There is a 90-day plan going forward from the W—[interjection] Okay, perhaps to be clarified.

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Chair, when the WHA began its full operations on the 1st of April, they had in place the program teams in each of the 13 program areas—and perhaps Mr. Webster would like to explain this in greater detail—and they embarked as teams in talking to doctors and nurses and allied health care workers in each of their program areas across the Winnipeg hospitals in a 90-day process to develop their planning and proposal for what changes that they see should take place to improve the operation of the Winnipeg hospital system, and when I say improve, that is not just to get good value for our expenditure, but that is to improve medical care for patients.

The results of that process are what Mr. Webster is talking about, so when the member said 90-day plan, it is a 90-day planning process. The plan comes at the end of the process, just to clarify in terms of procedure.

Mr. Chairperson in the Chair

Mr. Chomiak: Can I get a breakdown of the participants in the 13 clinical programs, and, in

addition, when this process was undertaken previously, several years ago, there was a regular newsletter that went out that outlined the status of each of the 13 programs as they proceeded. It was not 13; it might have been 11 at that time. I am sure the minister knows what I am referring to. Will we have that information available on a regular basis as well?

Mr. Praznik: On behalf of the WHA, I am tabling this list of program team leaders.

Mr. Chomiak: Just in terms of the organizational structure, how does Dr. Postl as the V.P. of Clinical Services—is Dr. Postl responsible for each of the 13 related clinical programs? Is that how the organizational structure works?

* (1030)

Mr. Webster: Mr. Chairperson, the organizational chart that I tabled on Tuesday indicated on the bottom left, there was the Vice-President of Clinical Services with Dr. Postl and his team of an associate vice-president, nursing, and an associate vice-president, allied health. The 13 teams report to that group.

Mr. Chomiak: So, okay, I see where child health—we have women's health, surgery and medicine, dialysis, critical care, emergency, diagnostic imaging, family medicine, geriatrics, mental health, laboratories, oncology, anesthesia. We have a nursing director, an administrative director, an allied health director and a medical director. These individuals are responsible, I assume, for the overall city-wide program, is that correct?

Mr. Webster: They are starting to assume responsibility for that program on a city-wide basis in conjunction with their counterparts within the individual hospitals where those services are provided.

Mr. Chomiak: Just so that I understand the process, if we look at emergency, for example, we have a nursing director, a medical director, an administrative and allied health director. They, as a team, are going to be responsible, together with who from each of the various facilities, for the provision of emergency services in the city.

Mr. Webster: Mr. Chairperson, along with their counterparts. So each of the hospitals who would have an emergency department would have senior staff within the hospital responsible for the emergency department functions, and they would interrelate with the city-wide emergency team.

Mr. Chomiak: Will each of those 13 functions have an envelope budget responsible for the activities in that particular area?

Mr. Webster: Eventually they will. We do not have the comparative financial data on a hospital-by-hospital basis to determine programmed funding as of yet, but as that information is developed, more and more of the hospital resources will be funded on a program basis so that services can be co-ordinated.

Mr. Chomiak: As part of this 90-day organizational exercise or process, are each of these teams putting together a needs assessment in their area?

Mr. Postl: We, in the beginning of the 90-day process, did a number of things. We asked them to use as a starting point in their deliberations the urban design team's recommendations of several years ago, recognizing that that was a large effort that had undertaken a large amount of review. So in each case that was the starting point of their deliberations. They then reviewed the existent data available around the program volume requirements, what kinds of services were being provided at which sites, and met with each of the hospitals, the counterparts in each of the hospitals, within those programs to determine what if any changes would be worth recommending to either improve efficiencies or improve services within the hospital sector.

Mr. Chomiak: So do we have, if I recall correctly, for example, are we going along the lines that HSC will be the trauma centre, that there will be surgeries of a tertiary care nature at both St. Boniface and HSC and neurology based on the Wade Bell's? Are all those considerations still on? Is that process still on or where are we at on that?

Mr. Postl: We have not yet received the final reports, but we are making the assumption that those were all starting points that are being considered in what they

are arriving at in terms of a plan, so I would be surprised if there was any considerable alteration from those principles.

Mr. Chomiak: Some of the pressing issues, for example, of neurologists, neurosurgeons, oncologist and their losses in the city of Winnipeg, how is that being addressed?

Mr. Postl: Mr. Chairperson, I do not have a simple answer for that. I think that recruitment of physicians to Winnipeg is a remarkable difficult set of issues that is tied to the nature of Winnipeg, the nature of the programs we have, and the manpower base in the country that is available, so that I think in all cases those positions are being recruited for. There has been, I understand although I am not involved, some increased capacity within the Manitoba Cancer Treatment and Research Foundation to assist in recruitment. The issue of neurology is a difficult one, because the demand is high and the national supply is not particularly high, so that it is a difficult set of recruitments.

Mr. Praznik: For the benefit of members opposite with respect specifically to oncology, earlier in the year they may recall that we provided the Manitoba Cancer Treatment and Research Foundation, slightly under an additional \$1 million to aid their recruitment efforts to recruit six additional oncologists and I think four oncology associates. They have been busy with that effort. I know they have had at least one potential recruit in to visit me, if I remember correctly, as part of the recruitment drive. I do not have those numbers and their success, but the dollars to fund those positions have been put in place some time.

As part of our retention, there was some effort I believe in agreement there on remuneration issues. So I do not want it to go without saying that—I think it was two or three years ago that in fact happened—we have not been putting more financial resources as a ministry and as a government into those areas. But with respect to oncology, for example, one of the real difficulties is actually finding the oncologists and being able to recruit them.

Mr. Chomiak: Is the Manitoba Cancer Treatment Centre underneath the auspices of this team? Where do they fit within this framework?

Mr. Webster: MCTRF are not funded as part of the Winnipeg Hospital Authority, but when we established our program teams they requested that their senior management group be considered a program team for planning purposes within the WHA, because they have to rely on the Winnipeg hospital system to such an extent for many of their programs. So they are not funded as part of the WHA, but at their request they are part of our program structure.

Mr. Chomiak: Has the WHA engaged any consultants or any other outside bodies to undertake additional consulting and/or organization work?

Mr. Webster: The only consultants that we have engaged to date are to help us in the development of a vision and strategy for a long-term strategic plan for a regionally integrated health information system based on approval that we received from the government last June.

Mr. Chomiak: Who were those consultants, and is it possible to get a copy of that report?

* (1040)

Mr. Webster: Mr. Chairperson, the report is due the middle of June. There were two consulting firms engaged, Price-Waterhouse and INSI to carry out both the review or development of a strategy for the information system as well as to review all of the year 2000 compliance issues with the core computer systems within the nine Winnipeg hospitals.

Mr. Chomiak: With respect to this organizational structure, where did this come from, and is there a precedent or another jurisdiction or locale that this structure is based upon, or is it completely a creation arising out of the initial troika teams that were set up several years ago.

Mr. Webster: The original urban design planning partnership recommendations in 1995 recommended the clinical program management structure. The material that I received from Manitoba Health when I was appointed to this position had a recommended organizational structure as part of that material based on discussions that I had with other similar authorities that have been established in Canada. I then brought

forward a recommendation to Manitoba Health for what I believe the structure should look like and received approval.

Mr. Chomiak: As part of this planning process—and if I am repeating this, you will have to forgive me because it is the first time I have seen this actual chart—am I assuming that each of the teams will come up with recommendations that will feed into the 90-day planning process, that it will then be forwarded to the government at the end or around this 90-day period. Is that how the process is working?

Mr. Webster: The planning process is well underway, and as I indicated, we would expect that within the next 30 days or even sooner the recommendations from those 13 planning teams will be submitted to Manitoba Health.

Mr. Chomiak: So the recommendations will go from the WHA board to Manitoba Health, and there will be recommended action in all 13 areas. That is a fair assumption?

Mr. Webster: Mr. Chairperson, that is correct.

Mr. Praznik: My expectation as minister, the reason why in fact they are coming to Manitoba Health for approval—as I call in the new processes, just as we have done in rural Manitoba, we have wanted to work very closely with RHAs in their initial period. As they get on track, that will be distanced somewhat as RHAs develop their own track records. But also too within those I expect there will be recommendations for consolidation of programming, moving programming around the system which will affect individual hospitals. I think that is a fair assessment. So obviously we want to know—there are likely to be some very significant changes within the system from the kind of preliminary information I have been receiving.

So I think it is important from an overall point of view that the ministry have a role in supporting or working out any perceived problems we see with the recommendations as they come forward. To date I can tell the member that in areas where we have asked the WHA to take on a role and develop programming—like for example, in dialysis, we asked them to intervene

earlier than April 1—we have seen, I think, great success.

Mr. Chomiak: How will the public and how will the various caregivers have input into this process?

Mr. Webster: Mr. Chairperson, with respect to the 90-day process that we are involved with right now, the caregivers, the health care professionals have been providing input through their service teams within the individual hospitals. The public input will commence in June of this year when the community health assessment is undertaken jointly between the Winnipeg Community and Long Term Care Authority and the Winnipeg Hospital Authority, which is a requirement under The Regional Health Authorities Act, that we undertake a community health assessment during our first year of existence. We will be doing that jointly for the city of Winnipeg with the other authority.

By clarification, the health care providers that have been involved in this process are primarily the ones working in the hospitals right now through the hospital teams.

Mr. Chomiak: So if I understand it correctly, there is a process whereby the various teams have been liaising with the hospitals. They are going to bring forward recommendations to the WHA board that is going to go to the government, and then sometime in June a community assessment is going to be undertaken jointly with the Long Term Care Authority to do a needs assessment study in the city of Winnipeg. Is that correct?

Mr. Webster: The community health assessment is separate from the planning process, and it will involve, I would suspect, surveys, forums and questionnaires and public meetings to get public input into the public perception of what the health care requirements are within the city and in fact the province because of the very significant provincial responsibilities for two of our hospitals.

Mr. Chomiak: But, am I assuming correctly that there will be recommendations that will go in? The minister has already indicated that, and I am just looking for confirmation that recommendations go in. For example, if we look at surgery, let us say that it is

assumed that there is a need for expanded surgery at some of the facilities that are underutilized, and of course Seven Oaks comes up as an example and other facilities, so the assumption would be that if recommendations may come in to expand surgery at various other centres, presumably that recommendation would come in, that would take place and then subsequent to that, a consultation process will still, as well, occur. Is that a fair analysis of what is happening?

Mr. Webster: The recommendations that are coming forward, as I indicated likely within the next 30 days from the individual teams, will be very specific in nature as to where services should be provided within the hospitals, where it is possible to consolidate or expand programs and certainly to start utilizing the operating room facilities within our Winnipeg hospital system that are currently underutilized. But there will be some very, very specific recommendations, along with where we have been able to in the short term indicate the resource requirements, both funding and staffing, that would be required to implement those recommendations.

Mr. Chomiak: I have had discussions with the minister on this. It is significant by its absence that we do not have a program team with respect to laboratories. The minister indicated that there is going to be some kind of developments with respect to labs relatively shortly, and I am just wondering why there is no team, as it were, for labs.

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Chair, an excellent question. The reason why that has not happened is the decision as to where we would be moving on labs in the province has remained with the Ministry of Health, rather than being assigned to the Winnipeg Hospital Authority at this particular time. The reason is that we purchase lab services from—or we have lab services coming from our own provincial labs like Cadham, labs within the existing hospitals, private labs which the member and I have discussed. We have the Westman Lab out in Brandon, so we really have a lot of issues.

As the member knows, we put the Winnipeg hospital lab system out to proposals. We had a number of proposals. The winner of that proposal call and to try to negotiate a contract was MDS, whose partners are, I

think, the Manitoba Association of Health Care Professionals. We have been in negotiations with them for somewhere near a year now, and these are coming to an end.

* (1050)

I do not have an answer for the member as to whether or not we have a deal with them or we are going to embark on a different initiative. That is a decision that cabinet will have to make, and I have not yet taken the matter to cabinet. We are still doing some final assessment before I do. But I can tell the member once we have made a decision on the future lab issue, then the next question will be who will be responsible or the body that will be there for administering labs. One question is: do we assign that to the WHA? Obviously if we just consolidate Winnipeg laboratories, that makes sense. If we opt for a province-wide model, then do we use the Ministry of Health? Do we use some other entity to be the host for that? Those are all kinds of issues that I am still working through with my staff and will take the options to cabinet at some particular point for decision. But until we have gone through that process, it would be premature to have a lab program group within the WHA.

Mr. Chomiak: Is any consideration being given to a bridge-funding arrangement for the WHA in some of this program area to take care of deficiencies in the system up until the various programs are up and running and delivering service? Let me give you an example.

We may dispute this, but I think it is pretty clear in terms of mental health programs that there is some major program deficiency, and there is probably a dispute as to whether that is in the institutions or whether that is in the community. I would presume that there is going to be some recommendations with respect to mental health programs and then there is going to be a needs assessment that is going to take place in June. Clearly, there is not going to be definitive answers for some period of time.

If one assumes—and I am using that as an example—there are deficiencies in program, would it not make sense to put in place a bridging arrangement for perhaps

this and other program areas where there are obvious deficiencies, and is that under consideration?

Mr. Praznik: Yes, it does make sense. One of the things we have said to the WHA is they have a budget, and our experience rurally has been an interesting one because when all of—and they are a year ahead of us in this process, ahead of where Winnipeg is—but as many administrators have told me, until they have actually got into running facilities and programs and getting into the intricacies of the budget, which takes some time, they are able to find and discover a lot of things, better ways of doing things and getting value out of the system that was not there before.

So what we have said to the WHA—they are starting off with a budget for the facilities that are there, that is a known. It is going to take them some years to understand those budgets and get into them very deeply. As Mr. Webster says, you cannot move to envelope funding for programs overnight because many of the hospitals are not able to break down their expenditures by program, which is interesting. So that has to develop.

So what we are saying to them is they start off with that base. We expect them to, firstly, be able to—where they can find savings within their system in doing things better, to use those dollars first—and I do not expect they are going to find them all overnight—and where additional dollars are required to bridge a service, solve a particular problem, short term and long term, to come forward with those proposals in those areas and they will certainly be entertained by us.

If last year's experience is any indication, we added nearly a hundred million dollars during the course of the year to our budget, and I expect that if we need to add additional services and it can be justified, whether it be on a bridge basis or on a permanent change in a program, then we will want those proposals. I have never said to them do not come forward with them. We will deal with them on a case-by-case basis. I have said that at this committee, and we will go to Treasury Board appropriately.

But what I do not want to do is establish a \$15-million, \$20-million, \$10-million bridge fund without having the justification for how that is going to be

spent, and also, too, I think they have to recognize that if there are things that they can draw out of the system by way of savings, they should—just for example, the \$2.5 million that was lost on subsidizing cafeterias. We have indicated to them I think already, and they are indicating to the hospitals, that that money is coming out of that hospital budget. It is available for other things within health care. It is not coming out in savings, but it is not a priority of the people of this province to subsidize cafeteria meals in hospitals. The \$2.5 million that was doing that is not available carte blanche anymore, but that is the area where dollars can be found here or there. The first call for bridge money should be on those obvious things and then, secondly, would be new proposals that the Treasury Board would entertain.

So nothing that legitimately needs to be done will go for want of reasonable resources, but I think cases have to be made on a case-by-case basis as we move forward, and that is the way we have done it rurally, and it has worked reasonably well.

Mr. Chomiak: I guess I am asking directly of the WHA, is that consideration a part of the planning process and structure?

Mr. Webster: Mr. Chairperson, we have asked our teams as they look at the Winnipeg hospital system to break down their recommendations into two categories; first of all, the longer-term recommendations that are going to have long-term systemic impact on the system and the shorter-term recommendations that they believe could be implemented to take the pressure off the system in the shorter time frame until they say the long-term one is going to be implemented, and on the short-term recommendations, we have also asked them to indicate the transitional funding that would be required to implement those short-term recommendations.

Mr. Chomiak: The system is broken down into 13 clinical teams, although there is a subprogram under dialysis, which the minister indicated that the province specifically asked for. The minister also indicated that the province is retaining ownership, if I can put it in those terms, of the laboratory programs. Is there any other area—

Mr. Praznik: For a while.

Mr. Chomiak: For a while, on a temporary basis. Are there any other programs that the province has indicated that it is taking a particular interest in ownership of or has asked for fast tracking? Is there anything else that is an exception that is on this list that I am not aware of? I will re-pose the question if the minister is not clear.

The minister has indicated that there was special interest taken by the province with respect to the dialysis program and a subprogram was set up. The minister has also indicated that laboratories are going to be taken, at least on a temporary basis, under the auspices of the province while those issues are worked out. Are there any other programs in these 13 clinical programs that the province is taking a special interest in of that nature?

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Chair, just to go through that list, dialysis, our interest was because we identified after a very frustrating process on behalf of myself and the ministry that where decisions were being made and planning done for dialysis, we recognized, I think, that there were three or four decision-making points that were not all well-connected. So I said that I wanted the whole provincial program to be run by the WHA, so we could have one program team running the provincial dialysis program, and because the Winnipeg hospital system was so central to that program, that that was best housed in the WHA as opposed to in the Ministry of Health, and they would do it under contract for the province.

Mr. Peter Dyck, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair

We also indicated in that case—and it made imminently good sense; I think the member would agree—that having one group of professionals running the dialysis program for the province made a lot more sense than having someone in charge of dialysis in each regional health authority and a very broken program. You could not do good planning or make good decision making, so we said to the WHA you run it on a province-wide basis for the ministry. We will pull the necessary dollars out of other budgets where there were dialysis budgets, and then you will simply contract with the regional health authorities to purchase staff time or space for the rural components of the program, but at least there would be one central direction for dialysis in

the province. So that is why that has developed in that form, and I think it makes sense.

The other area he mentioned was labs, and that it is really a temporary issue until we settle where we are going, and then we will make a decision where that will ultimately be housed. If it is done on a province-wide basis, it obviously has to have a little different dimension than on a regional basis, so that is an area in which we are looking.

The cancer area with the Manitoba Cancer Research and Treatment Foundation today is outside, although they are involved with the WHA for planning purposes and should be. There is a bit of a history and a tradition here, and until we kind of sort out a few issues, they very well may flow into the Winnipeg Hospital Authority at some time as well with the responsibility for the provincial program, but that is not quite yet determined. So those would be the three. There may be another. I cannot think of one. Perhaps Mr. Webster would add to it, but those are the three areas that I would identify today.

* (1100)

Mr. Chomiak: The assumption under the Urban Partnership planning process was that—and, you know, I am wracking my brain for the exact terminology, but I will try to paraphrase, and I can be corrected, but the essence was that one of the planning assumptions made was that people are mobile and in the city of Winnipeg, people can access any facility in the city of Winnipeg because of their mobility. There was actually a terminology that was used during the planning process that was made very clear to both physicians and patients, that mobility is not a deterrent to the program development and operations. Is that still the planning assumption of the WHA with respect to these 13 clinical programs?

Mr. Praznik: Before I let the WHA answer, one comment I would make with respect to that statement, again, one of principle, one of the other changes in this delivery of medicine that I have come to observe, and I know the member for Kildonan, I am sure he would not disagree with me, is the practice of medicine. New technology has led to greater specialization and subspecialization, which at the end of the day has

gotten better results, much better results for those being treated, but when you get to more specialized and subspecialized practice you have to have enough people to be able to support a well-practised team of professionals delivering that service.

Dr. Postl and I have had some discussion about this, about the history of health care delivery. Probably 50 years ago in rural Manitoba, or certainly in the 1950s, early '60s, probably the vast majority of health care services available to an individual would be available through their local hospital, local doctor pool. That was not to say that all the services were rural, but the level of medical care was such that the vast majority of services you would need in a lifetime you can get in a relatively unsophisticated facility compared to today because that was all there was in terms of medical practice. The number of very sophisticated, specialized services were probably far fewer than they are today. So they were for much less things that you would go to Winnipeg or Toronto, et cetera, for treatment.

In most cases you had the illness and you did not survive it or you were treated with the treatment of the day, et cetera, and that could happen rurally or in a small community facility with the best results of the day. But with greater specialization, subspecialization, the application of greater technologies and the requirement for having well-practised teams and large and very specialized care, and of course you need larger population groups to be able to support those specialties.

So today I know, just in a casual conversation, we talked about probably in a rural community, sort of the traditional nonspecialized facility, you might only be able to get 50 percent of your medical care there today. Not because the service is not there. It is just that it is so well refined and specialized that it is only available in places that service a much larger population group. The good thing for the public is that the results are far better than they were in 1950. That is part of the evolution of medical care.

So I just wanted to add that to the member's comments. I think it is an important point to have on the record. But for the answer to the question, I turn things over to Dr. Postl and Mr. Webster.

Mr. Webster: Mr. Chairperson, I think that as we are looking at where services should be provided in Winnipeg, we are certainly conscious of the fact that people are mobile, but our focus is still on patient care so that we are going to combine the ability to utilize the hospital facilities we have, particularly the ones that are underutilized today, and focusing on patient care, what is best for patient care across the city.

In looking at it from a staff perspective, there has also been discussion on the moving of people. We are not going to be, again, arbitrarily moving staff around the system. The key there is if programs happen to be consolidated or moved, we have to be in a position where the staff, particularly the qualified staff that are part of those programs, if they wish to, should have the ability to move with the programs. That does not mean we are going to tell people they have to move, but for those staff who would like to move with the programs, we believe they should be able to move for the benefit of citizens so that we do not lose the quality of training that they have.

Mr. Chairperson in the Chair

Mr. Chomiak: One of the major difficulties that the urban group planning process that took place several years ago fell into was the public concern about the removal of programs from the local community. The typical couple of examples were the family that moved near a hospital because they had an asthmatic child or the senior citizens who live in an area accessible to their local hospital, because they want that range of services for themselves or for their loved ones.

Is that concept—that is, the concept of the community, full range of hospital services—still within the planning assumption of the WHA and the 13 clinical programs? Is that question clear?

Mr. Webster: I will comment first, Mr. Chairperson, and maybe Dr. Postl would like to. We recognize that all—particularly when you get into the community hospitals around the perimeter area in Winnipeg, they do provide community services to their local community, and those services will continue. When you are looking at the consolidation or rationalization of services or combining them, you are starting to look at the more highly specialized services that have to be

combined in a specific location, but the day-to-day community services required by communities will continue to be provided by community hospitals.

Mr. Postl: I think that we are assuming that there are a core set of services which will include emergency rooms in the community hospitals, which will include general medical, probably geriatric bed use, rehab use and some surgical use that will be the core part of all of the facilities.

Mr. Chomiak: With regard to the emergency services, there were a series of recommendations coming out of the Lerner report circa 1970—because there was a couple of Lerner reports, but I think it was about 1994. There were a series of recommendations which included, I assume, because the talk has been that HSC will be the trauma centre, a whole series of recommendations regarding emergency care and clinic facilities at HSC and the like. Are those recommendations still on or still under consideration? Where are we moving in terms of emergency services, I guess, is the question.

Mr. Postl: We are anticipating the continued use of four community hospital emergency rooms, two tertiary care emergency rooms at HSC and St. Boniface, and the likely use of Misericordia Hospital as an urgent care centre with extended hours. Within that context, there are several issues that we are exploring around bed mapping, triage, interhospital transfers that all come into some of the discussion the Lerner report has had. So some of that is still active in discussion.

Mr. Chomiak: I take it from your answer, then, that Grace, Victoria, Seven Oaks and Concordia will all maintain their emergency rooms. Is that correct?

Mr. Postl: Yes.

Mr. Chomiak: Are there acts of consideration being given to surgery, under the surgery program, to surgery in places other than the hospitals in the city of Winnipeg?

Mr. Postl: There has been no discussion within the planning exercise that I have been aware of, of discussion of use of surgery centres or private surgical centres, no.

Mr. Chomiak: Under the area of children's health, are recommendations from the—it is probably not a fair question—the excellent children's health report of 1994 part of the process, the overall recommendations?

* (1110)

Mr. Postl: Some of the issues in that report, Mr. Chairperson, are being addressed by the child health team and continue to be part of discussions with Manitoba Health.

Mr. Chomiak: When Dr. Postl referred to the child's health team, is he referring to the child's health clinical team, or is he referring to another body?

Mr. Postl: Mr. Chairperson, the child health clinical team listed in front of you.

Mr. Chomiak: Is the child's health team, because of the nature of that report and because of the nature of the recommendations, are they bringing in within their gamut other governmental departments and agencies or are they strictly limited to the medical field?

Mr. Postl: I do not think that there is any limit to their potential for interactions with other government departments. I think within government there is an ongoing secretariat that is also serving to bridge roles that the child health team is working with and corresponding with around certain of the issues.

Mr. Chomiak: Just so that I understand the process and let us go to child health as an example. It is indicated that we are a year or two, or we may be some time away, sooner or later, from an envelope funding—what would the budget of the child health envelope look like? It would include Children's Hospital, presumably, plus what?

Mr. Postl: I do not know the answer to that, Mr. Chairperson.

Mr. Praznik: I may not understand the member's question correctly, but if we are talking about looking at a complete envelope of care within the system for children, I do not know if he is talking about WHA, WCA, but I gather it would take a great deal of work to break that out and be able to put it in an envelope what

one spends on children's health, both in the institutional side and the noninstitutional side and in the fee-for-service medical care side. It probably could be done, but it would certainly be a very significant exercise. Within Dr. Postl's envelope of authority is really just the hospital system today. So I am not sure if that answers his question.

Mr. Chomiak: Yes, that does answer the question, because I was trying to get some understanding of the scope and the breadth of the extent of this Child Health Program, and given Dr. Postl's extensive experience in other areas, I was curious as to how that information might be put together and actually proceeded on.

This week, there was a very significant report that was released by the nurses. Will the WHA be undertaking—putting all the politics aside on the issue—will the WHA be taking this report and assessing it, given the relatively significant issues raised by a considerable amount of the workforce and staff who work in the WHA? What response will the WHA make to this particular report?

Mr. Webster: Mr. Chairperson, even before the report had been tabled, our associate vice-president of nursing, which is shown on the chart as one of Dr. Postl's groups, had already met with representatives of MNU and discussed the issues around nursing within the city of Winnipeg, and particularly the shortages and the issues around working conditions, the issues around part-time as opposed to full-time nursing. I have also talked to Vera Chernecki about the results of the report, and she and I will be getting together in the next two weeks to look at some of those recommendations.

But I do know that Vera Chernecki and Jan Currie have already had a number of meetings and are planning on having many more meetings to address that issue. Brian, I am not sure if you have—[interjection]

Mr. Chomiak: I have a myriad of questions, and I have not even got to my card index file, but my colleague is here and wanted to ask some specific questions. I just wanted to ask two small questions before my colleague raises some issues.

The first is the minister indicated at our previous meeting that he would come to this committee with

statistics on the impact of flu, and the minister indicated they are still undertaking to get it. So that answers that question.

My second question is—and I go back to where I began—because I am going to have to leave this committee and go back to the family, the Guffei family whose child's surgery was delayed, set for May and now set for June. Is there any way or how do we go about ensuring that this surgery can be moved up or accommodated to take a good deal of stress off this family, and I am not just using this as one? There are lots of examples of this. How did they go about cutting through—and we have talked about that hopefully they will put in place some step-down beds that eliminate the problem in the future. Between now and then, how do they cut through this process?

Everyone here is sincere. I recognize that no one is trying to put roadblocks in the way, but there are roadblocks. How can they cut through this, so they do not have to phone me and they do not have to phone the minister, and there does not have to be a newspaper article? How can they do this to move up to surgery, unless the assumption is that this is—because it is elective surgery, and good heavens, most things are elective—that it can wait till June?

Mr. Postl: Mr. Chairperson, I think one of the things we need to do is work closely with the surgeons involved to try to convince them that these are not new issues, they have been around for a long period of time in terms of access to ICU, the need to book in collaboration with other people who use the ICU, and to ensure that the surgeons are not creating expectations in patients that are both unfair to patients and unfair to the system. I honestly believe that is part of this issue.

Secondly, I think I will personally go to Children's Hospital and try to sort out exactly what the delays in scheduling are and see whether there are other ways of moving this up.

Mr. Chomiak: I appreciate that response, and at least in the interim period I think it has to be solved. I just want to indicate that you are right. The system has not been able to deliver. I have talked with numerous surgeons who have talked and letters have been written. I actually phoned over and talked with the head of ICU.

Certainly there was almost a planning assumption because of the plug up of beds that surgery was going to have to be delayed. I guess we have to get over this. We have lived with it for a while and we should not live with this. This is simply not fair.

Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona): I have a few questions dealing with the Manitoba epilepsy clinic. I have had the opportunity to ask this question in Question Period of the minister dealing with this issue but was not satisfied with the outcome of those particular questions. I have also had the opportunity to sit in meetings with Dr. Postl and members of the public and family members of individuals who are suffering with epilepsy in the province here. So I have a number of questions with respect to that particular issue.

* (1120)

When I asked my questions of the minister, it was dealing with Dr. Pillay, who was an epileptologist here in the province, and I believe the only remaining epileptologist who is now, from my understanding, going to be leaving Manitoba to continue his research in Alberta, I think in Calgary if I am not mistaken, which leaves Manitoba I think at a disadvantage in that Dr. Pillay is well regarded in this province with respect to the research that he was undertaking here on behalf of people suffering with epilepsy.

Can you tell me: what does the future hold for the Manitoba epilepsy clinic and for the research work that Dr. Pillay was undertaking with respect to his vagus nerve implant process that he, I believe, was pioneering here in western Canada?

Mr. Postl: Well, I think through the internal medicine team that they are attempting to recruit a neurologist, that there is a clear view and understanding that recruitment is required. I think it is recognized that is a difficult process and is going to take some time. In the interim, I think they are trying to explore ways of providing the required coverage to patients with epilepsy and with other neurologic illness. Vis-a-vis the potential for research around nerve implants, I think that is very hard to predict. It depends very much on who is recruited insofar that generally people come with their own research interests, and the likelihood of finding an epileptologist with a very similar interest in

research may or may not be possible. I think it just depends who is out there in the marketplace.

Mr. Reid: If I recall correctly, in the meeting that I attended right at the very beginning of February this year, there was some discussion that took place at that particular meeting with respect to the recruitment of epileptologists or people with a specialty in pediatric neurology. It is my understanding that for a province the size of Manitoba, if we use even our neighbouring province to the west of us, Saskatchewan, I believe they have three people who specialize in this area. It is my understanding that that process has been underway for a long time, long before the Winnipeg Hospital Authority came into existence. There does not seem to be any progress in this matter. We have been going on for a significant period of time, and you have been unable to recruit.

So I am trying to get an understanding here. How is it that Calgary can recruit people that are well regarded—I am talking specialists here now—in our province away from us? What is lacking in our process, our health care system here where other jurisdictions can draw our specialists away from us? What is it that they are seeking that they do not find here in our province to allow them to remain here and to continue their careers and provide treatment to the, what, 23,000 or so people that are suffering with epilepsy in Manitoba?

Mr. Praznik: Two answers, money and weather. I do not mean to diminish the member's question, but in dealing with all our recruitment issues, provinces like Manitoba and Saskatchewan, and the Maritime provinces, for example, have not been able to compete with the salary levels that other provinces have been able to offer. If you notice in the recent settlement between the Alberta Medical Association and the government of Alberta, their salary levels, remuneration levels in Alberta are considerably higher than most other provinces. What is interesting to note in British Columbia, who claims to have the highest levels of remuneration in the country—and we have seen doctors move to both Alberta and British Columbia—they do not have a happy medical community. In fact, they are in a pitted battle with the provincial government there today. So salary becomes an important part, or remuneration, and wealthier provinces have the ability

to pay more for their medical services than those provinces that do not have the same financial wherewithal. So that is part of it.

Secondly, lifestyle also becomes a part of it. The prairie provinces like Manitoba and Saskatchewan that have much harsher and longer winters are not as attractive as places like British Columbia and certainly Calgary. In fact, we have seen many more physicians who have left here for Alberta go to Calgary than Edmonton. That seems to be a perception I have had at least—because of weather, and that city versus Edmonton. So one is always competing with that. I know in issues of recruitment with the U.S., a number of physicians that I spoke to who decided to go to the United States, the amounts of money that are being offered are just astronomical, in some cases, compared to anywhere in Canada for certain individuals. We just do not have the wherewithal to compete with that.

Secondly, a number of those physicians—I know I had a doctor in Beausejour who left, and it was not even a money issue because the position that he accepted in a clinic I believe in South Carolina did not really produce a larger income for him, but what it did do was it gave him more regular hours. He was practising in a rural community. He told me that if he continued to practise—it was in Beausejour where he was a doctor in the community 24 hours a day, seven days a week. He was not practising that, but everywhere he went he was—and I will keep his name confidential—but he was Dr. so-and-so. He felt he had no privacy, he had no life and he told me quite bluntly—I was at his retirement party in his own—it was not really a retirement party, it was his departure party for him and his family. I was in his own rec room, and he told me that if he did not leave, he would probably be dead in five years because he could not keep up the pace and he just needed to have a life. He managed to secure a clinic position with a regular 40- or 50-hour week, and he wanted to dedicate the rest of his time to his family and enjoying life. He was very blunt. He wanted to be in a warmer climate. He just was tired of the winters.

So when you have a profession that is highly mobile and has lots of options, and particularly as the member flags the point that this is a very rare specialty, that there are not a lot of physicians with these skills and that they are probably in great demand, those places

that can offer a better lifestyle, which often means a warmer climate and certainly British Columbia and Calgary have that ability, and offer a higher level of remuneration, that they ultimately find that very attractive, and it is more difficult for us to compete in those particular areas.

Now on the other side of the coin, those provinces only need so many of anyone, so once they have sort of filled their slate, it makes it easier for the Manitobas and the Saskatchewan and the New Brunswicks and the Nova Scotias to be able to compete for those physicians. But that is very much a real part of this.

I know in our recruitment drives in oncology, where we have had greater success, in talking with the people from the Manitoba Cancer Treatment and Research Foundation, our oncologists who are practising in areas like Northern Ontario, or even if they are in a bigger province, they are practising in areas where they are not close to a larger city and some of the oncologists we have spoken to—and one I visited with was in a Northern Ontario community, and for his family there were just more opportunities being in Winnipeg than there were in a Northern Ontario centre.

* (1130)

The same rules apply everywhere. It does make it somewhat difficult, and I think that individual was coming out again with his family to explore Manitoba, and what was attractive to him was a larger centre and the opportunity for his spouse to find employment. If the family liked it here and the spouse could find employment, that physician was prepared to relocate to Manitoba and that was far more attractive than the location in Northern Ontario. So we are all involved in that kind of set of issues, and that is the reality of recruitment. Mr. Webster may in fact want to comment further. I see him looking at his microphone.

Mr. Reid: Just to let the minister know, and he was not at that particular meeting at the beginning of February, but Dr. Pillay never at any time, to me, at that meeting or in private conversation ever indicated that money and weather was an issue. He was leaving, I believe from conversations that occurred at that meeting, as a result of some internal problems, internal

to the Health Sciences Centre operations, which leads me to my next question.

Because Dr. Pillay is, I believe, leaving at the end of May, may be seeing his last patient at the end of May and moving to Calgary, and money and weather was not the issue with him, that there did not appear to be a commitment from Manitoba Health Services or from the Health Sciences Centre itself, what internal problems were encountered in the hospital. Can you indicate what those problems were and what steps have been taken to resolve those issues to, hopefully, prevent other people with those specialties from leaving Manitoba and also to encourage people to come here? Because any specialist, anybody doing work in those areas, has to know that if you come into an area where you are not receiving support from the administration of the hospital or through the Manitoba Health Services, that you are going into a potentially career-ending move, and no one wants to do that, especially when you have specialty areas.

So I would like to know what problems were encountered in the Health Sciences Centre hospital to discourage Dr. Pillay from remaining here, because it was not money and weather, and also to find out in addition to what those problems were, whether or not they have been resolved.

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Chair, the member has certainly asked a fair question, and I am going to have these two gentlemen respond to it.

My answer was in a generality, and I just use for example the discussions out of Brandon with the two pediatricians there to make my point. And there are always exceptions, and the individual doctors, the member is very right—if they are working in an environment where they are not comfortable or there are problems with whom they are working with, that discourages them to leave. If it is not a good working environment, it is harder to recruit.

But I just know, in many, many cases of the difficulty in seeing doctors depart the province, or difficulty in recruiting doctors, and that is an issue that I have spoken with with ministers of Health across the country; we all share that same issue. I was speaking in generalities, making a general statement, and there are

other issues that sometimes come up in specific instances. So I will have those gentlemen answer the specifics around this particular physician.

Mr. Postl: Mr. Chairperson, I do not have a huge grasp of the details, but there were also clearly rather intense interpersonal difficulties involving Dr. Pillay that may have contributed to his decision to leave the city.

Mr. Reid: How does the statement go, *deja vu* all over again? We have Dr. Seshia, for which I wrote to the Minister of Health sometime back last fall, I believe early last fall, and I believe for which I still have not received a response. Dr. Seshia, from my understanding, also encountered similar interpersonal difficulties from my understanding of that particular case. I understand that there are decisions to be made by the management of any organization in dealing with employees of a facility. I am not foolish enough to expect that those things would not occur from time to time, but now we have another doctor with a specialty working in the same area encountering interpersonal difficulties. So does that not raise any red flags with the department and with the hospital itself on how these matters are being handled, and whether or not there is someone else perhaps—I do not know for certain, but perhaps—beyond the doctors themselves that can be the stumbling block or the roadblock in a process of trying to keep our specialists in this particular field in Manitoba?

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Chair, I have some very bad news for the member for Transcona. I can tell him that interpersonal difficulties between physicians and administrations and physicians' colleagues are part of everyday life in Manitoba Health. These are not just two examples; there are probably hundreds out there.

An Honourable Member: Two in the same department?

Mr. Praznik: If the member may hear me out. I can tell him that we, on a regular basis, hear from our administrators, hear from other physicians and physicians privately making statements about other physicians and how they relate and how they get along. We probably need the skills that the member for Crescentwood (Mr. Sale) could offer from his days in

the ministry to settle some of these disputes. I tell him this very sincerely that, yes, sometimes one finds when everyone in a department or in an organization is having trouble that, yes, maybe the problem is with an administrator. In some cases, it is relationships between physicians. I can tell him, being a rural MLA, where you get to hear a lot about relationships in clinics and organizations in your own constituency, happy days are never a term that come to mind. Relationships are tough and people are always getting out of relationships and into new ones in the medical profession and practising with people. Much of this does not become part of public record, but it is certainly there.

I know with respect to Dr. Seshia—the only difficulty I have with this conversation is that it is somewhat unfair to these people from the Winnipeg Hospital Authority. If Dr. Seshia would like to have his whole file put on the public record with relation to this matter, I would have no problem if he would grant that permission, but there are two sides to the coin. I do not know how much information the member has. I was in the same position as him when this issue came up, and I forwarded it for review.

I do understand though and I think I am comfortable in saying this and perhaps my colleagues who are more aware can advise me if I am off track, but I understand that Dr. Seshia did agree to a third-party process to deal with his dispute, if I remember correctly, and he did consent to that process. He just did not like the result. I have been lobbied with respect to this, and I will tell you as minister that I am not going to get involved in these particular situations.

Now the member asks a very right question, though, and I do not want to use this to put off his question. If one sees a continual pattern in a particular area, it does beg the question: Is it the individuals who are raising this, or is there a problem? Because administrators are not always clear.

I can tell the member, too, we have had situations where administrators have made life miserable for everybody, and boards have had to remove them. So I think the real question here—and I would ask Mr. Webster and Dr. Postl to comment on it because they are the managers of these programs—is really, in my view, what steps, what do they do when they see these

kinds of personalities? What kind of investigations do they conduct to ensure that the right change in personnel is being made to ensure some period of clear sailing, as opposed to perhaps the wrong thing happening and people having to leave? If we can perhaps pursue it from that point of view—I know the member is as sensitive as I am to this. One has to be a little bit careful because there are issues—we would not want to see us in a defamation suit or we would not want to be hurting individuals—but there is a lot of information that is not public and, quite frankly, should not be as a personnel matter. But his question about how you handle this, I do not want to make light of because it really is an important question.

Mr. Webster: Mr. Chairperson, I, obviously, just having been an official authority for three weeks now, a lot of this happened before we took place, and individual appointments to hospitals and the medical staff level have been the mandate of the hospitals in the past. In an attempt to address this more on a system-wide basis in the future, as we swing over to program management and we start to take responsibility for the individual programs, one of the initiatives we are putting in place is the development of system-wide medical staff by-laws, which will allow us to become involved in management of the physician issues on a system-wide basis as opposed to a hospital-by-hospital basis.

That will enable us, when we are looking at credentialing and privileges, to address problems that may exist within individual hospitals. It will also enable us to develop a medical manpower plan for the city as a whole as opposed to a hospital-by-hospital basis. So we will be able to determine what the needs are, not just for the city of Winnipeg, but for the province, in the specialty areas on a systemic basis as opposed to a facility-by-facility basis.

* (1140)

Mr. Reid: Well, when you talk about credentials, I mean, I am not in my comments here to follow, I am not trying to slight any of the doctors that are, I am sure, doing their best to provide services to the patients, but it is my understanding that we have a doctor—and I will not use the name here—working within that particular department that does not possess the

credentials that I believe either Dr. Seshia or Dr. Pillay possessed. I do not know if that is part of the problem or not; but, if you are going to a credentials type of system here, one would think that you would want to start at that particular point right now and take a look at the people that you have working in there.

If that is part of the problem that you have got and there are some medical skills that others sense that may not be possessed by that person in that capacity, maybe that is part of the problem, and maybe that needs to be looked at. I am sure the minister knows, and I do not want to put the name of the doctor on the record because I do not think it would be fair to that person. If it is part of the problem, perhaps there needs to be a process here of saying that that particular doctor needs to obtain the training necessary to obtain the credentials for the job that he or she is fulfilling at this particular time.

You know, the minister obviously knows this issue. The meetings—we have talked about some time ago that there was a recruitment process ongoing. It has been ongoing, from my understanding, now for a few years. This is not just a short period of time here. We are losing people here, and the people that are calling me—my constituents are calling me—and saying: what does the future hold for the epilepsy clinic? If we cannot retain the doctors here in those professions, what happens to the clinic? What happens to the patients? It is my understanding that 40 percent of the epilepsy cases are intractable and that Dr. Pillay was handling a great number of those cases and has pioneered, through that nerve-implant process, which, we hope, is at least a part of the solution to allow people to lead more normal lifestyles.

So I need to know, what are we doing here to ensure that that clinic can survive and that the work that Dr. Pillay was doing is going to remain there to benefit or to help the people that are suffering with epilepsy? Is that nerve implant process going to fall by the wayside? Are we going to have to send our patients to Saskatoon or to Calgary to have that type of implant trial undertaken, because it is my understand it is still in the trial phase here? What plans do we have?

I mean, there is obviously a greater cost if our patients have to leave the province and travel to another jurisdiction to have the surgery done versus having it

done in province here and in the city of Winnipeg, for that matter, where it has been occurring now. It is my understanding that the nerve implant process has been reasonably successful, but the patients, from the information that is brought to my attention, are wondering now themselves, because the staff in the hospitals do not know how to deal with it. They do not know that you have to pass, for an example, a magnet over this particular device to trigger it to shut down the seizure.

If Dr. Pillay leaves at the end of May and the hospital staff are not trained about this new technology, these new benefits for the patients, how are the patients to have any security or sense or comfort that their needs are going to be addressed? That is the question they are asking me and one for which I do not have an answer. If you have been through a recruiting process for two or three years, what is our plan? Do we have a plan on how we are going to help these people in the future? There are a significant number of people who are affected by this, and we are not just talking a handful here, we are talking thousands.

So I need to know what the plan is to help people suffering with epilepsy so that I might be able to provide that answer back to my constituents that ask me those questions.

Mr. Postl: I do not have a specific answer other than that they are recruiting, and I know the remaining neurologists are determining how they are going to provide coverage to whatever residual functions need to be covered. So the intent is to provide that coverage, but I can try to find out and provide more specific information in that regard.

Mr. Reid: Well, I would appreciate any information that you can bring back in that regard. Can you tell me, did Manitoba Health or the Winnipeg Hospital Authority, did we try to recruit or set up some type of an arrangement with the doctors working in this field in Saskatchewan? I believe Saskatoon is where the doctors are providing those patient services. Did we try to have those services come from Saskatchewan even on a part-time basis?

Mr. Postl: In reference to pediatric neurology, is that what you are referring to? Yes, we did have some

discussions with neurologists in Saskatoon about providing kind of locum or interim or part-time coverage in terms of call and support. At least at that point in those discussions, they were not prepared to do that.

Mr. Reid: So we can have, if we have 2 percent of our population affected by epilepsy, which would be, what, 23,000 people, if 40 percent of those are intractable cases, I mean, just do the rough math here, and we know how many thousand people are involved here. I am sure that the province of Saskatchewan probably has a fair caseload themselves. I am not sure how or why they would want to have their physicians come here and walk away from their caseload there. Is there nothing that we can do? The minister talked about money and lifestyle. I am not sure doctors operate on that particular plain. I have always seen them as being professional people, so maybe I am naive in this. The minister shakes his head here. Maybe I am being naive, but I have always seen doctors—maybe I have them on a pedestal here, and maybe that is not right—but I have I always seen them want to be professionals, particularly people doing research, that they would want to continue with that.

Has the Premier (Mr. Filmon), for example, been involved in trying to encourage Dr. Pillay to remain in the province? Is there nothing that the Minister of Health cannot try? Is there something that he can try to encourage Dr. Pillay to remain here? Is there something in the research area that we are not providing for him because it is my understanding that he is having some difficulties getting access to the implant devices that bear an expense for health services? Is there something we can do to assist in that regard to allow him to continue the research because, if he can continue with that implant program, it will help Manitoba people without our people having to go out of the province to receive that service?

Mr. Praznik: Sometimes in the great bureaucracy that Health can be, particularly in an institution like the Health Sciences Centre, it does not surprise me from time to time when sometimes some innocuous funding arrangement or particular issue becomes a huge irritant to an individual in the system. It happens regularly, and it is the nature of the beast, I guess. One of my frustrations is sometimes things happen without thinking across government.

If there is a particular issue of that vein that is a concern to this particular doctor, then we would certainly want to know about it to correct it. If it is a matter of not being able to access through a budget some particular equipment or devices that he requires and he is just getting nowhere and a brick wall, we certainly want to know about it. So I am going to have Mr. Webster and his authority undertake to check that out and to find out if in fact that is the case with Dr. Pillay. There may be a lot of other things here that the member and I are not aware in terms of relationships.

* (1150)

You know again, one of the things I have found as these things tend to unwind that, when you have people who are working on the leading edges of technology and in very intense environments, personal relationships either gel very well or they are very strained. The one thing no minister or no government can ever do is fix all those relationships. There may be things here that are just unfixable, but if it is a matter of some irritant in the way that we fund or his inability to access something they need and he has been hitting the regular bureaucratic wall that this cannot be done—and I share with members some of the frustrations of a physician who came to see me from Concordia who could install pacemakers at the Concordia operating rooms but had to do it at St. Boniface because the pacemakers themselves came out of the St. Boniface budget and that hospital insisted that the surgery be done in their hospital rather than outside because it was in their budget.

Consequently, with crowded surgery rooms, we were using them for something we did not need because hospitals were turf-fighting over where work would be done to keep patient numbers high. That is just what the Winnipeg Hospital Authority has been designed for; one of their prime purposes is to eliminate that kind of absolute nonsense.

I remember as well finding out that we would not allow use of certain kind of ultrasounds in community hospitals unless the doctor practised in that hospital, and that had to do with budgeting for hospitals and the way we budget. It was silly. Everybody is a taxpayer, and it is one system, but if you perpetuate these kind of institutional walls between, well, this is our hospital, and that is your hospital, and we have our independent

board, and we are the providers of service, and you are the payers. I have heard that so many times in the last year and a half, it can make me ill, Mr. Chair, because at the end of the day the only people who are being hurt are the patients of Manitoba.

What I hear the member saying is, is there an effort that can be made to see if there is one of these types of irritants that our bureaucratic-paper, institutional-driven that has made it—if that is the root cause of this physician's desire to leave? By the way, I have seen that happen before. I would not downplay it. Sometimes you wonder why somebody is so angry over something, and it is everything else in the world. You sit down and, after digging, you find out that it is some silly little thing way down the line that nobody ever realized was preventing the person from doing the work, and it has added up over the years and come out in another form in that person's mind. If you can solve that, it makes a difference.

So I am just going to have Mr. Webster undertake to pursue this, keeping in mind, of course, that today the Health Sciences Centre still has its independent board and is the employer here, and we are only in the process of taking over that role, but certainly the WHA can endeavour to investigate this matter. I think Mr. Webster may want to give that undertaking.

Mr. Reid: Can you tell me what the waiting list is for diagnosis of people that suffer seizures? How many people would we have on the waiting list currently, and what are the historical values?

Mr. Postl: I have to find out the specific number. I think that it varies somewhat with the kind of illness that is associated with the seizures. In acute context, in terms of actually seeing a neurologist following an acute first event, I think the waiting list is quite short. In terms of the follow-up and maintenance needs of those patients, it would vary in terms of frequency of being seen between months and a year, I would guess, but I can get those numbers.

Mr. Reid: I would look forward to receiving that information to find out how long people have to wait to have some diagnosis of their situation, and whether or not they are a part of the 40 percent intractables versus those that can be treated through some other procedures or perhaps medications.

Can you tell me, for a province the size of Manitoba, how many neurologists should we have that would deal with seizures, with epilepsy? What would be the normal for the province of Manitoba? What would you expect? What would you want to have for our province in numbers? Dealing with epilepsy, I am talking about.

Ms. Sue Hicks (Associate Deputy Minister, External Programs and Operations): Mr. Chairperson, looking at neurologists in general for the province, we can get that information for you. As far as neurologists who are dealing specifically with epilepsy, I do not know that we would have that figure but, from a province-wide basis, I know there has been some work on looking at what we should have in this province. I can get those numbers for you.

Mr. Reid: I appreciate that undertaking. Would it be reasonable to say that we would need at least three people specializing in those areas for a province of this size? Because I think, if I am understanding correctly, Saskatchewan may have that number of people working and specializing in the epilepsy area. We are a similar population size, and I am just wondering if that would be what our expectation would be for this province as well?

Ms. Hicks: Mr. Chairperson, we do not really have a specific number there.

Mr. Reid: If you can, when you come back with your information with respect to the waiting lists and the number of people that would be required, could you give me an indication too of how long this recruitment process has been ongoing to find people specializing in this particular field so that we would be aware of what efforts have been made and how long you have been attempting to solve this? Perhaps this would be more directed towards the minister, because the Winnipeg Hospital Authority was not an entity at the time that this, hopefully, research was undertaken.

Mr. Webster: Mr. Chairperson, we can certainly undertake to get that information.

Mr. Tim Sale (Crescentwood): I just want to introduce an area in which we are going to have to reschedule, I believe probably for Monday, because I do not believe these gentlemen are with us this afternoon. I want to—sorry. [interjection] Clarification?

Then we can certainly do some of this this afternoon. I will now just introduce it so that people have a chance, I guess, over lunch to think about the area that we want to explore.

I want to put on the record that it is our understanding and the understanding of Misericordia's board that the WHA has basically no responsibility for the decision that was made to change Misericordia to a long-term care facility with interim beds and a 24-hour walk-in centre, et cetera. This was a decision reached by government and communicated by letter, which I have a copy, to Misericordia Hospital and was the subject of a meeting on, I think, the Wednesday before the budget, which Dr. Postl and Mr. Fast attended.

Information was communicated to the board of Misericordia Hospital that this was a policy decision of government, it was not a WHA decision, and that it was not a decision that was up for any discussion. It was simply a position the government had reached and wished to communicate to Misericordia, that Misericordia was expected to respond either in agreement or not in agreement, but that the decision in any case had to be reached no later than 24 hours from the time of that meeting, in principle at least, and that was because the matter had, without Misericordia's awareness, been placed in the budget and was in the budget document. We had that debate in the House, and I think that is all a matter of record.

So the issues that we want to explore with the members of the WHA and the minister are matters of planning and policy, and, in particular, we want to know in very specific form what mechanisms are going to be used to ensure both the patients and the professional people, nurses and specialists and physicians, who have developed in Misericordia Hospital programs which might reasonably be called programs of excellence, at least according to the hospital and the physicians who have told us about them. Under the mandate, I might add, of the Minister of Health and his predecessors, which called—

Mr. Chairperson: Order, please. If this committee wishes to go a little bit further—

Mr. Praznik: If members would indulge a few moments because just by the member's comments, I met

with Dr. Postl this Tuesday night with Misericordia, and I would like to update the committee on that and that Dr. Postl was involved in that meeting with Misericordia. He is not here this afternoon. I think he should have a chance to respond to the member.

Mr. Chairperson: Is it the wish of the committee to—

Mr. Praznik: Just a few minutes, five or 10 minutes.

Mr. Chairperson: Order, please—extend our sitting time right now, or you do not want that?

Mr. Praznik: Five or 10 minutes.

Mr. Sale: I think that our member's view, Mr. Chairperson—

Mr. Praznik: You have raised a matter involving Dr.—

Mr. Sale: Also, just note for the record that I did not cede the floor to the minister. I was interrupted, and it was not interruption on the point of order. It is not our view that we should extend at this time, that we should come back to this on Monday when Dr. Postl would be available.

Mr. Chairperson: Order, please. The time being 12 noon, I am interrupting proceedings, and the Committee of Supply will resume sitting this afternoon following the conclusion of Routine Proceedings.

* (1000)

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Mr. Chairperson (Marcel Laurendeau): Will the Committee of Supply please come to order. This section of the Committee of Supply has been dealing with the Estimates of the Department of Education.

Would the minister's staff please enter the Chamber at this time. We are on Resolution 16.1. Administration and Finance (b) Executive Support (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits.

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): Mr. Chairman, at the end of last time, we were looking at the responses of the minister's Advisory Committee on Finance to the

minister's plans for the year and I guess for the past, and I had been wondering about their response on the aboriginal educational issue. The minister had listed a number of initiatives she believes the department has taken, and it seemed to me that these were in advance of a strategy and that the committee was, in fact, responding to what was being done and saying this is not enough.

The minister had suggested that the aboriginal education strategy had been confidential, which I have no doubt it was, but I am very puzzled as to why such a strategy would be confidential. The strategy, as the minister spoke of it last time, had three parts. One is to increase aboriginal graduation rates; the other is to increase aboriginal participation in the labour force; and the third was to work in partnership with the aboriginal community. It boggles my mind that this should be confidential.

Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Chairman, as the member knows, with the development of the initiatives and strategies and new policies and programs for government, that while the details as they are being developed may not be things that are—ones that might be unexpected in a final analysis, and they make good sense, and they may be sort of common goals that one would readily identify with, nonetheless, during the development of those, until the final strategy is in place and has received the blessing and approval of the other people involved—people involved with Native Affairs, for example, other ministries that might wish to have input—that during the process of development they are not kept confidential because there is some strange or unusual thing about them necessarily but rather because they have not yet been formally finalized as government position.

Normally, in the process of developing such policies or initiatives, that is the way in which things operate, and the final pronouncement of goals and objectives and strategies then is fully approved by all those in government that are part of that decision-making process. Until such time as that occurs, the policy is still developmental and not a final product and, therefore, cannot be spoken of as if it is the final product.

So I think that the comment by the educational finance committee is perhaps being just a little bit

misinterpreted in that it arose due to a presentation by the School Programs Division on the possible effects on learning, particularly the English language development for a native students grant. I hope that explanation clarifies the processes and sometimes the length of time that things take to be thoroughly vetted through all the appropriate players before something can be announced as the goals of government.

Mr. Chairperson: Shall the item pass? Pass. Item 16.1.(b)(2) Other Expenditures \$128,500—pass.

16.1.(c) Native Education Directorate (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$284,000.

* (1010)

Ms. Friesen: Could the minister give me an account of how this three-pronged policy was developed? How long did it take? How many committees were involved? What other committees had to review it so that this policy became the government's main plank?

Mr. Chairperson: Honourable Minister, you may want to introduce your new staff.

Mrs. McIntosh: We have Juliette Sabot from our aboriginal education directorate and Carolyn Loeppky from School Programs Division with us today, as well as the deputy.

We do not have an accurate calculation of the exact number of meetings, but trying to recollect, we can give it an approximate number if that is satisfactory because we have had formal meetings and informal meetings and discussions and so on. Basically, the member had asked: how long a process was it, and how many meetings did we have, how many committees, et cetera?

Basically, I would say, Mr. Chairman, that it was almost a year, or at least two-thirds of a year, eight months, eight to nine months, in terms of the process. This was led by me and by my staff in consultation with several groups internal to government, those being not just the K-to-Senior 4 side of the department, but also the post-secondary side.

With the Children and Youth Secretariat, with Native Affairs department and various committees of cabinet,

we had input as well from the urban aboriginal strategy led by Mr. Newman's department. We have had innumerable meetings internally in terms of formal meetings that were scheduled, prepared, agenda-type meetings, probably 10 or 12 internally, an additional five or so from where we received recommendations from the aboriginal perspective steering committee and feedback from things like the urban aboriginal strategy and as well we received what I would call incidental-type inputs when we would meet with other groups of people who were knowledgeable and, in the course of our meetings on other topics, would bring up this issue and provide some information which we would then incorporate into our formal meetings. The other question was—so, in short, we would say that a little more, 10 or so internal, five with other departments, about eight months in the length of time.

Ms. Friesen: A couple of points of clarification on that. The minister mentioned an urban aboriginal strategy (Mr. Newman, Minister of Northern and Native Affairs), and I just wanted to make sure that that was different from the urban aboriginal strategy that has been proposed by an external group to the government. They have seemed to use the same name. I am thinking of one, for example, that I believe has been prepared by the—Mary Richard is the name that comes to mind. I am not quite sure if I have got the name of the organization correct, but the urban aboriginal council of Winnipeg—I wanted to make sure which one we were talking about.

Secondly, the minister also mentioned an aboriginal steering committee. I think this must be something internal to government, and I just wanted to make sure who that was, who was represented on it.

Thirdly, I wondered if there had been any external consultations in developing the strategy external to government.

* (1020)

Mrs. McIntosh: Mr. Chairman, the urban aboriginal strategy, which the member refers to that Mary Richard is a part of, is our strategy. Mary is involved with the aboriginal council, but the urban aboriginal strategy is a government initiative. Originally it came out of the Round Table on Sustainable Development, of which I am a member, and it was set up through the Minister of

Native and Northern Affairs (Mr. Newman) to do an urban aboriginal strategy with public consultation. The minister then of Native Affairs set up the urban aboriginal strategy group, which has people such as George Campbell, Mary Richard and many other aboriginal leaders whose names are known probably to most who follow events in the aboriginal communities.

It is one and the same; there are not two groups. The member asked which group I am talking about, Mary Richard's group or the government's group. It is one group. Mary Richard was asked by government and graciously was willing to lend her time, along with many other aboriginal leaders who worked very hard.

We took part in all of the meetings and in all of the workshops on that strategy, and their recommendations are fully compatible with our education strategy. There was a lot of discussion at those meetings about the full spectrum of our aboriginal peoples, and education, of course, is a key component of that. I hope that clarifies that particular question.

Mary Richard does and has been president of other groups, which made her a very good candidate for the urban aboriginal strategy, but there is only one urban aboriginal strategy. All the people taking part in it have been asked to be there by government, and we are most grateful to them because they have done a very, very good job, I believe, very thorough, and the discussions have been most interesting and productive.

The aboriginal steering committee that the member was asking about, members of the aboriginal steering committee that works with the department in the integration of aboriginal perspectives into the new curriculum. So, as we are developing new curricula, this particular steering committee works to ensure that aboriginal perspectives are integrated throughout that new curricula, not just for the benefit of aboriginal students, but for all students, so that there can be a better understanding of each other across cultural awareness that we believe would be positive in terms of helping people understand each other and be more capable of working together in harmony as citizens of Manitoba.

In addition to the public consultations in the Urban Aboriginal Strategy, because those were very much

public consultation, we did that. We did not hold formal structured external meetings, but we did meet with members of the department's aboriginal perspective steering committee, as I have said, members of the AMC, members of urban aboriginal community. As I indicated before, we had meetings with groups where the prime purpose of the meeting was not necessarily aboriginal perspectives, where in the course of the meeting the topic would arise and very important and helpful information would be provided to us that we then would incorporate into our body of knowledge and information.

Those groups I refer to would be things like the social planning council, et cetera, who had come to see us on certain issues that as a component would involve discussions on this aspect. People, like Wayne Helgason, et cetera, who while that was not a formal meeting called to discuss this issue. Out of discussions that arose informally with those kinds of people over time, we were not necessarily able to get new information but to have confirmed for us that the path we were on was indeed the correct path. So those were more where we would say, well, you know, we are doing this, and they would say, that is the right track, that is what needs to happen. Those are all very helpful in helping us build our overall picture.

We also met with members of the Manitoba Metis Federation and officials from Frontier School Division which, as the member knows, has a very high percentage of aboriginal students; primarily all, for all intents and purposes, are of aboriginal background. So those kinds of things that came up through the educational system were also taken into account and considered. I am only mentioning those so the member recognizes that we did not just work internally, but we have had many conversations.

The visiting of schools has been most helpful to me as minister in that invariably when I am visiting schools, I will see or observe certain things that I can take back and say, you know, I have noticed this and that in this particular school that again confirms we are on the right path, or it gives a new piece of information that I can share with staff. In most cases when I do that, staff is already aware, and I am just building my own body of knowledge.

Ms. Friesen: Could the minister tell us how this aboriginal strategy is different from the strategy the department had before?

* (1030)

Mrs. McIntosh: The member may recall us tabling, last set of Estimates, recommendations that had been put forward. Our original strategy which is not in conflict at all with this next piece of the strategy, and perhaps that is the best way to put it, is that the strategy—we started first with the generic strategy and we are now focusing in on aspects of that. Our overall strategy was renewing education for all, and the original committee making recommendations recommended that we not dummy down standards or put up alternate goals for any group of children, that we set high standards and rigorous and relevant curricula for all and renew the education scheme for all, and this we did.

We had a steering committee that recommended 34 items, 27 of which were incorporated. We tabled those last session, and we say that we brought in higher standards for all students so that all could have a goal of success to reach. At the same time, we increased the staffing component by two curriculum consultants, and we put in more money for operating expenditures in this area, and that strategy was one that was very important as a base upon which to build everything else.

Now we are becoming more focused on the aboriginal population, not in terms of the educational goals, because we did establish those recently in our New Directions, but in areas of integration and process.

Now we have said we have set down standards. We are bringing in new curricula. We want all children to be lifted up so that they can reach these standards, so what do we need to do now to ensure that all students will be able to do this, and we are now placing a greater emphasis on target populations, such as the aboriginal population, for greater success, and you will see a number of initiatives that we are bringing in to ensure that we are able to lift up these students to meet the standards, which was a different approach than taken by some, where they would lower the standards for these groups and thence leave them forever disadvantaged.

What we are saying that we intend to do is to establish an operational framework for partnerships between departments and with the aboriginal people in developing and carrying out education initiatives: to implement a department-wide human resource development plan, which includes training for all levels of department staff to increase sensitivity and operational ability to meet aboriginal needs and programs; to participate with other government departments to prepare preschool children for success in school because we know this is a very vital area that needs to be addressed to ensure maximum potential to succeed once the school years are reached; to establish the mechanism for partnerships with other agencies to co-ordinate activities related to social, economic and health issues for aboriginal people. All of this comes, of course, in the creation of effective, relevant and high-quality curriculum and learning.

So the basic difference, then, is that our strategy, originally very generic for all students including the aboriginal population and now laterally to zero in on what exactly it is that we need to do to ensure that these new standards we have set for everybody can be reached by those who have, in many ways, been at risk—not all but a majority of our aboriginal students have been at risk of not being able to achieve the standards we know they must have for success in the world beyond school, and I believe some of the things we are doing or are about to embark upon are tremendously exciting in terms of achieving those goals.

Ms. Friesen: Can the minister tell me what the graduation rate is of aboriginal students at the moment?

Mrs. McIntosh: Mr. Chairman, the latest census data, which is 1996, indicates 7.6 percent of aboriginal peoples over the age of 15 have completed high school, and that is up slightly, very slightly, from where it was in the 1991 census, which showed 7.4 percent. It is a very minimal increase. We absolutely must ensure that we have a higher graduation rate than what the figures show us.

Now, those are two years old because we only have up until 1996, and I do not know yet if we have seen an increase. That is the only data that we have, but it is one of the reasons we have targeted it as a goal, and

more than that in terms of targeting that as a goal, to increase the graduation rate; also, as a goal, to change the employment rate after graduation for those aboriginal students who do graduate.

We noted some years ago that aboriginal students who had worked hard and achieved success in graduating from high school or college were not being employed at the same rate as other students. Hence, the Partners for Careers program was brought into being, and I believe last year that through that program some 300 graduates were hired by industry and are now able to serve as role models. The message that we are hoping that will go to students from that is: look, I stayed in school, I got my diploma, I got my certificate, I got my degree, and I am now gainfully employed, self-sufficient, and independent. That message going to aboriginal students who may be considering dropping out is a message of, we hope, inspiration to them to remain in school because the message prior to that may have been for some: well, I stuck it out, I stayed in school, I got my papers, and then I could not get a job. So what was the point? That is not a message we wanted young people to receive.

So working at it from a variety of areas, including a show of real success to aboriginal students that graduation will lead to productive work, we are hoping that that and a series of other initiatives will help encourage students to stay in school and graduate because we know that they will do better if they do, and because the traditional graduation rates are worrisome. There might have been an era in Canada and in the United States when a Grade 10 education would still lead to a person able to have a job that provided income sufficient for independence, but those days, I think, have rapidly come to a close. You really do have to have at least the high school. You know, with every bit of education that takes place after high school, the chances for self-sufficiency and independence are greatly enhanced. So the data is, in short, to the member's question, 7.6 percent, which is far, far below the norm for the rest of the population.

* (1040)

Ms. Friesen: Could the minister tell us how that compares to other provinces in Canada in the '96 census?

Mrs. McIntosh: I do not have that here, but we could probably acquire it and provide it to the member. I do not know if we can get it today, but it must be available. We just do not have it here.

Ms. Friesen: Compared to the overall population of Manitoba, I am assuming that 7.6 number is a Manitoba number, not a Canada-wide number. What is the comparable number for rates of graduation in '96 for the nonaboriginal population?

Mrs. McIntosh: Mr. Chair, that number is 60 percent, so when I say it is vastly below the general population, if you compare 60 percent to 7.6 percent, the numbers, I think, are very revealing in terms of the work that is cut out for all of us and why our No. 1 goal for aboriginal education is to increase the graduation rate. That has just got to be the No. 1 goal.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Chairman, these numbers obviously include an older population, both the nonaboriginal and the aboriginal numbers. Does the minister have any way of measuring what has happened in the last 10 years when there has been much more opportunity for off-reserve students to have access to Grade 12? Many reserve schools have not had anything beyond Grade 9. There has been a movement away from some of the reserve schools and into towns and cities for Grade 12. What effect has this had upon the graduation rates? We are looking here obviously at a compilation that includes everybody up to the age of—well, all living people taken into the census.

Mrs. McIntosh: Two things in response to the member's question. First, we do not have the data, and I am not sure how easily it can be acquired. I can give her some information that might help partly answer her question. One of the problems that staff has pointed out to me is that I think nowadays more people would be inclined to identify themselves on census forms according to their ethnic backgrounds, but that has not always been the case. So unless they declare whether or not they are aboriginal people, it is hard to know if we have captured them all in the terms of the data that is compiled. So we can only go on what the people themselves provide to the census takers.

We can see there has been a very slight increase. You know, the informal trends do indicate a slight increase in the graduation rate, very small but at least

going up as opposed to going down or remaining the same, and we see a slight increase in participation in the communities colleges and post-secondary training programs. This does not tell us the direct answer to the member's question in terms of the trend over the last decade. The trend over the last couple of years is a very slight improvement, which is better than going down, but is not a significant increase the way we would like it to be. But, in terms of those people who are currently enrolled in post-secondary institutions, we are beginning to see more people attending post-secondary institutions either as high school graduates or as mature students. This is encouraging because it does show them attending college with the expectation, obviously, of achieving a diploma or training of some kind that would lead to employment.

Mr. Mervin Tweed, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair

Just to give an indication of that, right now Keewatin Community College, for example, of the student population there, 68 percent are aboriginals; at Brandon University, 25 percent of the student population are aboriginals; at Assiniboine Community College, 22.6 percent are aboriginals; at Red River Community College, 11.5 percent are aboriginal students; the University of Manitoba, 4.9 percent; the University of Winnipeg, 2.5 percent; and Collège Universitaire de Saint-Boniface is 1.1 percent. So we have some good percentages, particularly in the Keewatin area, where the people living in the area are by majority aboriginal. We see that reflected in the college. The majority of the students are aboriginal, which is why we are moving the college board there, to 50 percent aboriginal. So we are trying a number of things.

Those are encouraging figures in terms of how many are attending college or university, but it does not give the full answer to her question of the trend over the decade, and I do not know if we have that. We do not have it here and I do not know if we have it in the department. We may not. It might be available from Census Canada. I am not sure. The raw data was just released from Census Canada and, from the raw data, there could be things extrapolated if people had the time to do that research.

I guess our point here is that we have decided that regardless of what history said or how these things

came into being and what was the role of the federal government and what was the role of the provincial government and what was the impact of the residential schools and all of those questions, what is the impact of federal offloading and fiduciary responsibility for aboriginal peoples and the migrations from the reserves to the cities—all of those things are all details that are interesting and can help provide some guidance but, basically, we know the graduation rate is unacceptable and it needs to improve, period.

* (1050)

So we need to start working from where we are and saying we have got to improve the statistics for aboriginal peoples. It is very complicated because it is not just education that is involved. It is the preschool experiences, all of those other worrisome statistics that the member is aware of, because I know this is an area of interest of hers, that the health, the suicide rate, the number of women in crisis, the number of children in care, the number of fetal alcohol syndrome kids, all of the problems the statistics show about our aboriginal peoples in Canada will be ultimately reflected in some way in a classroom situation. So there is a whole initiative that needs to take place outside of the classroom as well as in the classroom to change these demographics and change the statistics. We are working on them on several fronts as a result.

I just had a note from my staff that says that we are working with the Manitoba Bureau of Statistics on aboriginal school-aged population statistics, division by division, which information might be interesting to the member when it is compiled.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Chairman, at the moment we are talking about the K to 12 figures, I think. When we get to the area dealing with post-secondary education, I would be interested in talking more about the employment participation goals of the department. The numbers, obviously, for colleges and universities are interesting. They reflect the work that the institutions have done over the past 10-15 years, in the case of Manitoba, and they reflect also the value that the Access programs had in providing role models and providing an opportunity for people who had not finished high school. I am not sure that they actually are consistent with the numbers of graduates. It is not

necessarily a parallel guide to providing numbers on graduation rates, because there are so many programs which do make an effort to ensure that those people who had not had that opportunity do have the opportunity at a post-secondary level.

The reason I am asking these questions is that the department has set a goal of increasing graduation rates. After 10 years in office, they have decided to set as their main goal increasing the graduation rates for aboriginal students, a very commendable endeavour. I do not think anybody would have any questions about that other than perhaps the timing of it. But what I am wondering and why I am asking these questions is how is the department going to measure this? We have a date with a number for today, 1996. What measurement will you have for next year or perhaps on a two- or three-year basis? How frequently are you going to measure this change? Who is going to measure it, and how will you know when you have had some successes? Sorry, how will the department know they have had some successes?

Mrs. McIntosh: We will measure this progress the same as we measure everyone else. We have a number of things now that will assist us in measuring. We now have a student number for every student that will be a great assistance here. We have the informal measurement that has always gone on in schools where we have the ability to ask individual schools their observations as to their own graduation rates and whether certain improvements have been made there. We have an indicators project under development having to determine how to measure, getting a really good definition or good methodology of collecting data.

We know where we are now, and as I said to the member in my earlier response, we do not feel that—I mean, we could do a lot of analysis on the history—and that is good and useful to have—but we could spend a lot of time gathering data instead of getting on with the job.

The member had a question. I did not quite catch the question. She had a question about our timing? I did not quite catch it, but something about the timing of doing this. I will just indicate, and if she wants to clarify that, I would appreciate it; but what we did coming into government was to take a look at the

education system. My predecessors noted several things, and one was the need to improve the standards and to make the curriculum more relevant and more rigorous. That was not a small task. That was several years in the development, and when New Directions was announced, it was also several years in the implementation, a massive task that, by anybody's indication, would take the better part of a decade.

Indeed, the member herself, I believe, has questioned the speed with which we are moving as being too rapid in many cases; indeed, from the field, we have heard concerns about the rapidity of the change, saying: Can you slow it down just a little bit to make it more manageable? So, if the question as timing was that we are moving too quickly on some of these things, New Directions took a long time to evolve, involving as it did consultations with hundreds of parents and stakeholders over the course of a couple of years, the development of the plan, the presentation of the plan, and now the implementation of the plan, which is still not complete, I recognize, but we have had specific requests from the field to measure the pace of that so that it was not as rapid as the department initially had stated in order to make sure that the field could keep up with the degree of changing that was occurring.

So that is one reason why—we were moving pretty rapidly, and if she feels, we are going too fast, that is the answer to that. If she feels we are going to slow, because I am not quite sure whether she meant we are going too fast or too slow and we have been criticized on both counts: you have moved too quickly with a major overhaul of the education system, the major overhaul being for every student higher standards, measurable standards, diagnostic testing, all of those things, to ensure greater success, in the foundation years and all the way through. Prime importance. Basic, basic best change we could have made.

* (1100)

Now that we are moving into methods by which we can ensure that the target populations are moved up to the standards, as opposed the old ways of dummied down the standards for them, which did them a great disservice, we are now looking at ways to achieve that. We have had to take a look at demographic changes, the devolution of the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs, the Royal Commission on Aboriginal

Peoples. These are the things we have had to be concerned about as we go about making sure that our strategy for aboriginal students is really effective.

Demographic changes, devolution of the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs, as I said, the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, the Canada-Manitoba Labour Force Development Agreement, the provincial government's commitment to develop innovative strategies and initiatives to address education, training and employment for aboriginal people—all of those underlined the need for a comprehensive, co-ordinated aboriginal education plan from the Department of Education and Training that has to also cross all other departments. These indicators, I imagine that in terms of measuring we are developing an education indicators project that will show a number of things: test marks, which are important, but other things which are important that do not seem to get picked up and understood by the public all that well in terms of learning outcomes. In terms of teaching and measuring this to do the things that we have talked about here, it took a certain amount of time, and it was time that could not be rushed, definitely from an educator's standpoint, could not be rushed.

In terms of teaching, we had said that teaching had to be structured to allow students to become effective citizens through the provision of learning experience that will develop skills outlined in our broad outcomes of education, and that it had to be based on student learning outcomes that are challenging and standards of achievement where applicable, a rich knowledge base related to the subject area and to the repertoire of strategies and approaches, then assistance selecting sequencing, presenting and evaluating instruction content.

By that, we are talking about differentiated instruction, a well-known method of teaching, but not universally employed which now needs to be universally employed in order for students, particularly our aboriginal students or those students at risk or disadvantaged in other ways, to reach the high standard. These things cannot be put in place overnight. Again, the member herself has often talked about the rapid change, and the blizzard of instructions that go into the schools for change, and the need to make sure that pace is manageable.

Critical thinking and decision making, active student participation, relevant challenging and meaningful learning experiences, active student inquiry, a rich variety of approaches, technologies and resources, connections between and among topics in subject areas, the changing nature of knowledge, collaborative planning, teaching and assessing, high levels of intellectual activity, individual and group learning, the promotion of lifelong learning.

Mr. Chairman, that is just one small part of one page of New Directions, and that one small part of one page of New Directions is critical to the measurement of success of all students, including our aboriginal students.

So when the member asked her question about timing—and I am answering the question about timing to the best of my ability—I am not sure whether her question meant we are going too fast or too slow. But in terms of the accusations that we have received that we have gone too fast, if you consider that is one small component of one page of New Directions and it took two-and-a-half years to develop, it is taking much longer than two-and-a-half years to change the entire system to reflect this for all students.

If she is saying it took too long to bring these measures in along with now the extra things we need to do, we have identified in New Directions what needs to be done to all and for all, and now the extra things that need to be identified to ensure that we lift up the disadvantaged group over and above these, if she is saying that did not happen rapidly enough, then I say to her one has to be put in place before the other can occur and better than to be done in the '90s than never done at all, because it certainly was not done in the '80s. To have it ignored through the '80s and then have the people responsible for education in the '80s concerned that it is taking too long in the '90s, I say, is to go back to the pointing finger is whose fault it was.

We are saying it does not matter that the New Democrats ignored this problem when they were in power. It does not matter that the federal government put people in residential schools in terms of what we need to do now. Those things were important. It was too bad about the residential schools. It was too bad that the '80s ignored this problem. But to point fingers

and say you did not do your job when you were there, and then to have the people who were there say and now you are taking too long to do it is irrelevant. It is being done finally and it needs to be done. It is very important, and I think the best thing to do—I know the member is interested in this topic—would be to receive help from everybody, including the opposition, to make sure this helps aboriginal people. Even if as a side effect it makes the government look good, that should not be a concern to members opposite. They should be more concerned about what we need to do than scoring points about whatever it is that may have been trying to be implied there.

Just to conclude, the reconstruction of risk into promise is at the heart of renewing education, creating opportunities for children to learn, children who in the past were not given the benefit of a full evaluation program. Learning has to be reorganized to recognize and locate promise in children who differ from the prototype.

So I hope with that, if I have misinterpreted the question as to timing, you know, the member will no doubt clarify and I will attempt to be more clear, but I do not see how we could have speeded this up any more without severe criticism from the field, and I do not see how we could have introduced these measures in advance of the overall strategy.

Ms. Friesen: Well, the question, of course, had nothing to do with the speed of curriculum introduction.

There was one comment I made and one question. The comment dealt with the slowness of the government to respond to issues which were very evident in Winnipeg, in Brandon, other parts of the province. They were spoken of by the AJI, which the government has chosen to ignore. They were spoken of by groups such as Winnipeg 2000, which talked about the educational issues surrounding aboriginal people, and here we are in 1998, and the government finally has an aboriginal strategy, which, as I said, boggles the mind that it should have been confidential and taken that long to develop.

Nevertheless, the government has it, and my question related to that was the government has stated that it

wants to increase the graduation rate of aboriginal students. We have a starting point with the census data of 1996 of 7.6 percent complete high school. I asked how the government was going to measure its success. How will it know how many students, in the future, of aboriginal descent are going to graduate from high school? Is it going to measure this on a two-year, on an annual basis?

* (1110)

The government came back with it now has student numbers and it has informal measurements and it has an indicators project. Well, the indicators project, it seems to me, that is merely another way of posing the question that I am posing. It is not a solution. It is another way of asking the same question. So, in effect, the government has two responses. Now we have a student number and we have an informal measurement whereby we can ask individual schools.

Well, according to information the government has given me in earlier Estimates, neither of those are new. The government has always been able to ask individual schools. The government for some years now has been saying we have been putting a million dollars a year into this line on the school information system, and, yes, we do have student numbers. One of the issues I have always raised with that student number and that goes back to the days of the previous Minister of Education is how are aboriginal students identifying in that, and the government's response, I understand, has been it is self-identification.

The government has set itself a clear goal of improving graduation rates. We know where we are starting from. How often are you going to measure it, and how are you going to measure it? It seems to me in previous answers that I have got on that question that the student number is not going to do it.

Mrs. McIntosh: I agree with the member opposite that at long last the government has this thing that was needed in previous decades as well as this decade. I am not pointing fingers at them, and I hope that she is not pointing fingers at us. The point is somebody is finally doing something about this problem. The fact that it was not her government or that my government did not do it in year one does not negate the fact that it is now

being done. I think that is the point that we need to concentrate on and ensure that together we do it correctly for the sake of the children and the people involved.

I indicated in my answer to the member earlier, and I am sorry if it was not made clear, that we do have the student number, we do have the electronic data and the means to collect and report. I thought I said that, but the member seems to feel a student number, the electronic data is not somehow going to help us. It will help us tremendously to collect. We will be reporting on an annual basis, in answer to that aspect of the question, but we do remain dependent on self-declaration. We do not have the ability to walk into a school board and say, you are this kind of person, you are that kind of person, you are the other kind person. We still remain dependent on the self-declaration of ethnic status, and I think to go in and force people to identify themselves along ethnic lines is—there is something about that that is not palatable.

I think while it does create some problems in collecting statistics and being able to categorize people, I still think it is an important principle that people be allowed the choice as to whether to declare themselves of a particular ethnic background or not. Like with affirmative action, if people do not want to use affirmative action, they do not have to, we do not force them to. We say, if you wish to declare yourselves eligible for affirmative action, you may do so. We provide them the opportunity. But I think to go into schools and force them to say whether they are this race or that race is not, as I say, a palatable or right thing to do. I think they still have to have the choice as to whether they wish to declare their ethnicity or not.

But the good news about that is that more and more people today are becoming proud of their heritage as aboriginal people and are more willing to declare their status or their aboriginal roots. That is a healthy sign because it shows a pride beginning to emerge, and that I think has been helped by a number of things in society, not just schools, but attitudes in general in the public.

I think maybe the one thing I did not indicate to the member in my other answer is that we will be reporting on an annual basis, but I believe I did say that we

would have a student number and electronic data means to help us collect and report, and I reiterate, we still are dependent on self-declaration to identify ethnicity.

Ms. Friesen: I am still looking for the starting date. The minister gave me a '96 number from StatsCanada, and that is the most recent number that she has. Does she have from her own student number from the process of self-declaration a number of graduates from last year? Or what is the most recent number that that student number will give her? Where is the starting point going to be for which this student number is going to provide the evidence?

Mrs. McIntosh: Again, perhaps I did not make myself clear in my first answer to this question which was two questions ago when I talked about measuring and saying that we have informal measurements right now from school divisions, and what our approach is, is pretty well known.

Mr. David Faurshou, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair

For the record, we are embarking upon a collaborative approach with the Manitoba Association of School Trustees. We will not be beginning our data collection until we have our indicators in place. As I mentioned—I know I did in my answer indicate we had an indicators project under development. We are working with the Manitoba Teachers' Society on that with the Manitoba Association of School Trustees to pick a common start date, which, hopefully, will be September '98. Again, it is a collaborative approach and we are working with the field, so we need to make those decisions jointly. At least, we prefer to make them jointly; I guess, we do not need to. We could do it by just demanding things from them, but I think it is important for the success of this to do it jointly and then we have a common start point. We have indicators which we seek. We have the measurement which is identifiable. We have student numbers that we can use to track students, and we can watch them proceed via data using our indicators and our measurements.

As I indicated, we are in the process of defining a way to collect that data. I said that in my first answer. We should then be in a position to make the tracking of these initiatives meaningful, accurate and thorough.

We know that in the basic trends we have seen over the last couple of years, the very slight improvement we are seeing is too slight for our goals. We need to see a much more substantive improvement. We need to work with our partners in education to ensure not only that we have everything in place that is correct. We have gone through a long process right now to develop the measurements and goals that we think are the ones that will work. We now need to start tracking that to begin the process of following students on their progress to see if our initiatives are having the effect that we expect that they will have. I do not know if that clarifies it, expands a little bit upon my first response in sufficient detail that I have clarified, perhaps, that which was not totally clear in my first response.

* (1120)

Ms. Friesen: Yes, it does clarify it. Essentially, the student number is one of a series of tools that will be part of data collection which has not yet begun, and I understand what the minister is saying. I understand the importance of collaboration, but I am at a loss to understand what the school information system has been doing with its million dollars a year for the last six or seven years. This is not the line to discuss that. Maybe we will discuss that when we get to it. There have been newsletters appearing from it in the last couple of years and just before Estimates. I do not think I have had one this year, but we will see what has been happening there.

It seems to me for a government that has set itself that kind of a goal that the ability to monitor it would be crucial, and it is a difficult one to monitor—there is no doubt about that—because it does deal with a variety of different ways of collecting statistics. There are different agencies involved. There are the issues of self-identification. So it would seem to me, if you are going to set a goal that is defined in that way which invites, in fact requires, measurement and reporting, then it is one that perhaps might have been included in the task that the government had set itself.

I wanted to ask about a couple of things in this department, this section of the department. We are on 16.1.(c), Mr. Chairman, still. I am very curious as to why this reports to the deputy minister. It seems to be quite an anomaly in the whole reporting structure of the

department. This section of the department has been around for many years. It used to be numerically a very strong part of the department. I believe at one point it had at least 17 employees. It has been down to as low as three. Now, I see it is up to five, and it reports to the deputy minister. I find that very curious, and I wonder why that has happened, where it fits with the field, where it fits with all of the groups with whom it would need to be involved in order to accomplish its mandate.

Mrs. McIntosh: Mr. Chairman, it is not a native education branch. It is the Native Education Directorate. It went from three people to five people. It used to report to special programs division. Now, because of its expanded mandate, it reports to both deputies and through the deputies to me.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Chair, when it reports directly to the minister, or through the deputies to the minister, how does this particular directorate—I believe it has actually been called a directorate before. I do not think there is any name change there. I do not see a vast change. In fact, I do not see many changes in its mandate, and I am still curious as to why it has been put directly under the deputy minister. I do not understand the minister's explanations of that, and my concern beyond that, having that puzzle resolved, is how this particular section of the department then interacts with all of the field staff and the regions and the school divisions that it needs to interact with to fulfill its mandate.

Mrs. McIntosh: Yes, it has been called the directorate for a year or two. I just mentioned that because the member had called it a branch and it is probably inadvertent. Why has it become important to have it report to the deputies instead of programs division branch? Because its mandate has changed. It used to be part of a team to help with one small unit, to help develop curriculum for languages, et cetera. Now, it is an important part of policy setting for the whole department and greatly changed mandate. Very important then that it have expanded influence that it can then work to help us with full implementation of a policy of inclusion which includes an integrated response.

So the aboriginal education and training strategy and the directorate needs to be seen in a larger context of

overall government and departmental priorities because those are interdependent. They require linkages. A policy of inclusion, such as the one we have gone to, will influence policy development and result in action through policy implementation, and that includes legislative and regulative policy, government structures, curriculum policies, assessment policies, et cetera. So it is a changed mandate. It is an expanded mandate. It reports to the deputies, because its impact is department-wide and no longer just limited to one portion of one branch.

The contact with the field occurs in multiple ways with all program areas. The field is not a directorate. The field is not a program delivery unit and, as I say, contact with the field occurs in multiple ways in all program areas. The directorate via contact and collaboration with the program areas gathers information, and that information will augment other means of information gathering. It is a small part of a team. It works with staff and the minister to provide advice to the minister, and it oversees overall the implementation of effective responses for aboriginal students. So it is a greatly expanded mandate, and we are blessed with Juliette Sabot who works tirelessly along with the others, tireless efforts to ensure success in this area, a very valued and knowledgeable person in that position.

* (1130)

Ms. Friesen: Well, that response was not very different from the response I used to get when I asked why they cut the number of people in this section of the department. Ministers, not just this minister but previous ministers, used to answer—well, we have expanded the mandate; we have given them the role of integrated response; we are going to expand—when I used to say: Why are there not any curriculum materials coming out anymore in the way that they used to? Why are the supports not there for the classroom in aboriginal materials? The argument was, well, it is going to happen in the field; it is going to happen through integrating our response in curriculum, et cetera. Essentially, the same list the minister has just given me, so I think we will have to leave it at that. There has obviously been some reason for this shift. I am not quite sure what it is, but I do look for the integrated response.

I wanted to go on to talk about the additional staff which the footnote in the Estimates suggests that this is for curricula frameworks and aboriginal perspectives. I wonder if the minister could, for the record, tell us who the additional staff are, whether these are permanent staff. My understanding from reading the board minutes, I think it was of Winnipeg No. 1, is that one staffperson is seconded, so I am not sure whether these are actually long-term staffing arrangements or whether this is a short-term kind of circulation of people in and out, which is another way of staffing and an interesting combination. So I would be interested in knowing some more about that and the longer-term plans for this directorate in terms of staff, which is an issue I have raised I think many, many times because it is one of concern to me.

If the minister would like to tell us a bit about the curriculum frameworks that are being developed with aboriginal perspectives in them, this is something that I understand has been going on for some time, and now we have two additional people there. I am glad to see that, but could the minister tell us where that fits with what has been happening and what the plans are?

Mrs. McIntosh: We went through this last year, I remember, fairly clearly because I could not seem to help the member understand a certain philosophy, that is, the philosophy promoted, accepted and requested by aboriginal people with whom we have consulted. The member still feels somehow that having a large team of people develop little things for curricula that would say this is for an aboriginal student is somehow the right way to go.

It is the way things were done for a period of time, and it did not work. It was seen by some as patronizing. It was seen by some as segregating. It was seen by some as not the way to go. What all our feedback from our consulting has told us is this: aboriginal perspectives need to be threaded throughout the entire curriculum. The old-fashioned viewpoint the member keeps asking us to reintroduce is to bring in a big team of people who will sit down and write a curriculum that is specifically just for aboriginal people, that does not integrate aboriginal perspectives through the entire learning process in all subject areas in all curricula.

The new approach, the approach sanctioned by the aboriginal people with whom we have consulted, is the one that I have outlined for the member last year and again this year, that we are working on with the western protocol with colleagues in other provinces, that will say here is a curriculum in language arts, and as you go through the curriculum there are things that are in the curriculum that are cross-cultural awarenesses that are there for aboriginal and nonaboriginal students to better understand each other's culture, each other's way, so that they can be proud of who they are and live in harmony with each other because they understand each other.

I went through this last year. It is a new approach and it is one that is seen to be much preferred than the approach the member keeps asking us to reinstate, the approach that was used and discarded as not being as effective as the new way. Maybe the member feels the other way was the better way, in which case perhaps if she wishes to state that, it might help clarify why she keeps asking to have the old-fashioned way reinstated. We are saying we have a new and better way that we believe, in the long run, will uplift people more and give greater dignity to individuals and help increase understandings.

In our new blueprints, we indicate that we want those understandings of each other to occur. As I indicated earlier, first we laid down the overall blueprint for New Directions, the overall generic statements about education for all children, and then we do a number of things. We put in place the special needs review to see how those children can fit into New Directions in a meaningful way. We bring into being the way in which we are going to handle our aboriginal students to do for them the maximum benefit in lifting up their standards, and so on and so forth.

We are remodelling apprenticeship, soon to be announced how we are doing that so that we can see how we can prepare students for that aspect, but all under the umbrella of overall excellence with measurable standards and rigorous and relevant curricula. Relevant curricula for our aboriginal students in our opinion is not the thing the member has twice, for two years now, asked us to reinstate. A large group of people preparing specific curricula designed

to be exclusive rather than inclusive, we do not believe that anymore. That is an old-fashioned view.

So I think it is important to stress that because I obviously did not help her understand that last year, at least accept that that is our position. If it is not her position, she can keep asking us to bring back the old way. I will maintain that I think we are on the right track. I do not want to go back to the old way. It did not work. The graduation rates we are seeing today came about because of that way, and they are not good. The students who are graduating today, I may remind the member, or the students who are not graduating today, who are dropping out today, started school under the reign of the former Premier of this province, Howard Pawley, and they started school and they dropped out. They did not graduate, so obviously their early years and their early beginnings were not working or they would have completed.

That is why we have got the strong emphasis on early intervention. That is why we are going that route. I am quite willing to have the member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale) speak if he would like to.

An Honourable Member: You have been government since 1988. They were six years old then.

Mrs. McIntosh: They were in Grade 1. The member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale) maybe does not realize school is 12 years long, not 10, and I am talking about early intervention and early years being a focus of our emphasis here because it is part of our overall aboriginal strategy that the early years are extremely important and they have to be a prime focus in order to ensure a graduation rate down the road. He may not realize that the students who would have graduated this year started school while Mr. Pawley was Premier of Manitoba and had their early years in school during the Ministry of Education in place by the NDP, and the graduation rates—they should be coming through today—are abysmal.

And so we are working to correct it and putting in new ways that have been sanctioned by the key players affected, and we will track the results and we will have the things that we can show in support of our approach. I am confident that we will show an increased

graduation rate with higher levels of learning and greater success in the world.

The member had said that we did not increase the staff, but, then, in her response she indicated that she did acknowledge we had increased it by two. So she may have just made a misnomer, and I appreciate her acknowledging the staff has increased by two there in that small, concentrated directorate that is working cross-department, interdepartment, et cetera. We do not have plans at this time to add more staff. We use the whole-department approach to support the directorate. It is a directorate. We expect that all staff and all consultants will support the goals in their work, and the consultants and all of those people work for everybody, including aboriginal students.

* (1140)

So to imply, as the question very clearly implies, that unless a person is out there especially designated to work with aboriginal students, they are not doing any benefit for aboriginal students, is to do an extreme disservice to our many department people who are out there working hard for all students, including aboriginal students.

I really would like the record to show that the people in our Programs Division, the people preparing curricula, the people working to improve standards and help children at risk and develop early interventions and bring in reading recovery are not going out and saying because we are not part of the aboriginal directorate, we refuse to work with aboriginal children. We will only work with those at-risk children who are nonaboriginal. They do not say that.

They go out there—reading recovery, for example, where it exists is working with students at risk in Grade 1 regardless of their ethnic background. They work with aboriginal and nonaboriginal students, and to imply that the only people who can do anything to help aboriginal students are those who work with Juliette in the Native Directorate is to do a very grave disservice to those very good department staff we have who work for all children and who try to meet their needs as the needs are identified, without consideration for the colour of their skin or their economic background, but

taking rather the child to help develop that child's brain and that child's knowledge.

So, please, please, do not leave any further implications that staff who are not directly consulted with the Native Directorate do not do any work for aboriginal children. It is wrong. It is the wrong interpretation.

So we will not be adding staff unless we feel it is necessary, because we have this inclusive attitude that is working, and we have outcomes identified, solutions in place. We have a clear workable framework for collaboration with the department. Those outside the department and our branch works in close conjunction with—our aboriginal branch is very familiar with New Directions, for example. They know the standards that we are attempting to have all students meet. So they are back and forth with each other on a constant basis.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Chairman, well, that was an interesting meander around the issues. The minister chooses to believe or chooses to misinterpret what I am saying. It is a constant problem with this minister, and then she has a little discussion with herself and interviews herself on the issues that she has raised.

I do not think I have ever been able to get across to the minister that this is not an either/or situation, that inclusive curriculum and the development of curriculum materials for aboriginal students and for all students is not mutually exclusive, but the minister wants to take a particular other perspective and to develop some arguments around that.

My questions dealt with the curricula frameworks that have been, or are intended to be developed in this department according to the Estimates book and for which the new staff have been hired. I believe those fall into a number of criteria, and I believe some of them have to do with both aboriginal languages and aboriginal studies. These would be for I think it is the elementary school levels, high school levels. Perhaps the minister could tell us which curriculum materials are being developed.

Mrs. McIntosh: I could provide some information to the member. It is best discussed under Section 2.(e) where it appears for a formal discussion, but I can

provide some information for the member in the meantime until we get to that line.

The integration of aboriginal content in Manitoba curricula is titled Aboriginal Perspectives. That integration applies to learning experiences for all students. Examples for the social studies curriculum of Aboriginal Perspectives, produced for that social studies curriculum, would be the Manitoba Education and Training released to the field; Native Studies Early Years K-4, a teacher's resource book and the accompanying framework in August of '95; Native Studies Middle Years Grades 5-8, a teacher's resource book and the accompanying framework released in April '97 by the Department of Education and Training. The Manitoba Education and Training will release into the field about now. I am not sure if it has gone out yet, but it should be. If it has not, it will be going out soon. Native Studies Senior Years S1-S4, a teacher's resource book, that will go out through our bulk mailing system to everybody.

These are curriculum support documents that provide background information, activities and sources for teaching social studies from kindergarten to Senior 4 using an aboriginal perspective. Our new curriculum, of course, will include pre-European Canadian history, as well, which has not been there in previous—it may have been touched upon in some text but not the way in which it will be in the new curricula.

The department has also released Success for all Learners, a handbook on differentiating instruction, a resource for kindergarten to Senior 4 schools. That is for all students, as our policy is, but it contains in it examples of teaching strategies based upon aboriginal learning processes which will be particularly useful for aboriginal children and may have some benefit for others, as well.

The department has set as a priority the inclusion of aboriginal perspectives in all curricula being developed, and aboriginal people are included in all program development project teams. We, of course, identified this need in '94, the need to integrate aboriginal content into curriculum in Manitoba. That need was expressed not just by government but also by educators and aboriginal people who expressed the need to integrate aboriginal content into curricula. That was identified in

1994 by the then Minister of Education in *Renewing Education: New Directions, A Blueprint for Action*, and it was reinforced in *Renewing Education: New Directions, a Foundation for Excellence*, which was in August '95. So here we are some three or four years later with some of the subcomponents of this fleshed out and in the process of being implemented.

* (1150)

We intend to have aboriginal participation continuing on all the project teams, and aboriginal perspectives will continue in all future development of Manitoba curricula. The English language arts and the math framework are now complete, and we are currently working with the western protocol to develop social studies, and in particular the social studies framework of learning outcomes will have a very strong infusion of aboriginal perspectives in it.

That is a brief bit of information. I think when we get to 16.2.(e) we could have a better discussion on that topic as that line appears in the Estimates.

Ms. Friesen: I would like to ask the minister to table a set of the documents that she has talked about, the social studies K to S4 teachers' resource books and curriculum support documents. The success for all learners, I believe, has been tabled before, but if it has not, if that could be tabled and hence become a public document.

I wanted to ask the minister about the math framework documents that have been published. If she could indicate where the aboriginal perspective is in that. What does she mean by aboriginal perspective in there? Could she give me some examples, page numbers? I do have the math documents. I am interested to know what the minister understands to be, or believes to be, the level of example and—I am not sure what the right word would be—I guess, conceptual framework.

Mrs. McIntosh: That is what I meant when I said it might be best discussed under 16.2.(e) when we have the staff here that have been working on those kinds of details. We can at that time get into that kind of detail, but because we are offline in that, we do not have those staff people here—I mean, we could pause and go and

get the information, but we might be better to wait until we actually get to that line and the correct staff people are here who have been working on those areas.

I do want to indicate something I left out in my other comment, in my other response, in that Cree and Ojibway curricula development are beginning in this '98-99 fiscal year with planning to ensure that the frameworks developed by the western protocol will be further refined to meet Manitoba needs. We have been working—a major emphasis on collaboration on basic education initiatives in developing frameworks for international languages and aboriginal languages, and the western protocol frameworks will be used as kind of generic frameworks that will guide the development of language specific, a foundation for implementation documents.

Ms. Friesen: I understood the minister to say we would discuss specific curriculum elements later on, but I also asked her to table the documents, or to agree to table the documents. I understand the minister will do that.

My other question, however, does come specifically from this line, and that is the two additional people who have been hired to deal with curricula frameworks and the development of aboriginal perspectives. So I am looking for an indication of what they will be doing. I am still puzzled as to why I cannot discuss it under this heading, which seems to me, as it says here, to oversee the implementation of the department's aboriginal education and training strategy. Again, that is one of the difficulties I am having understanding why this is here and why other things are elsewhere and how they interrelate. But for the moment, if we could focus upon the footnote on page 29 of the detailed Estimates book, which says that these two additional positions are for the development of aboriginal perspectives in curricula frameworks and desktop services.

Mrs. McIntosh: The member is correct in looking at that in that it is—you know, it would lead one to come to that conclusion the way it is worded, and that is unfortunate because I understand that footnote was added after. What has happened with that footnote, it explains the new staff by classification type and not by their function. In their function, they are looking at the policy development, et cetera, those analyses, and the

classification type is in that category. To be more clear and to be more fully accurate, the footnote should have read their function or an explanation of the classification type.

The member is asking for detail that we can, and would, be willing to provide. We just do not have it here right now. In the case of mathematics, just as a generic statement, the outcomes in the curriculum framework of outcomes and standards are broad enough in nature to accommodate content and activities that reflect a diversity of cultures, including aboriginal cultures, and the specific aboriginal perspectives are being included in the foundation for implementation, which are documents suggested as part of the suggested instructional and assessment strategies and learning

resources. I hear what she is asking for, and we will eventually get her that information.

Our time, I see, is up for the day at any rate, but it is a good question, and as we get further into Estimates the answer will be provided for her.

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Faurschou): Order, please. The hour being 12 noon, pursuant to the rules of the House, I am interrupting the proceedings of the Committee of Supply, with the understanding that the Speaker will resume the Chair at 1:30 p.m. today and that, after Routine Proceedings, the Committee of Supply will resume consideration of Estimates. Thank you.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, April 23, 1998

CONTENTS

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Committee of Supply (Concurrent Sections)

Energy and Mines

Mihychuk	2047
Newman	2047
Struthers	2054

Health

Praznik	2060
Chomiak	2060
Postl	2061
Webster	2062
DeCock	2063
Reid	2073
Hicks	2079
Sale	2079

Education and Training

Friesen	2080
McIntosh	2081