



Third Session - Thirty-Fifth Legislature
of the
Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS
(HANSARD)**

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Speaker*



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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Fifth Legislature

Members, Constituencies and Political Affiliation

NAME	CONSTITUENCY	PARTY
ALCOCK, Reg	Osborne	Liberal
ASHTON, Steve	Thompson	NDP
BARRETT, Becky	Wellington	NDP
CARSTAIRS, Sharon	River Heights	Liberal
CERILLI, Marianne	Radisson	NDP
CHEEMA, Gulzar	The Maples	Liberal
CHOMIAK, Dave	Kildonan	NDP
CONNERY, Edward	Portage la Prairie	PC
CUMMINGS, Glen, Hon.	Ste. Rose	PC
DACQUAY, Louise	Seine River	PC
DERKACH, Leonard, Hon.	Roblin-Russell	PC
DEWAR, Gregory	Selkirk	NDP
DOER, Gary	Concordia	NDP
DOWNEY, James, Hon.	Arthur-Virden	PC
DRIEDGER, Albert, Hon.	Steinbach	PC
DUCHARME, Gerry, Hon.	Riel	PC
EDWARDS, Paul	St. James	Liberal
ENNS, Harry, Hon.	Lakeside	PC
ERNST, Jim, Hon.	Charleswood	PC
EVANS, Clif	Interlake	NDP
EVANS, Leonard S.	Brandon East	NDP
FILMON, Gary, Hon.	Tuxedo	PC
FINDLAY, Glen, Hon.	Springfield	PC
FRIESEN, Jean	Wolseley	NDP
GAUDRY, Neil	St. Boniface	Liberal
GILLESHAMMER, Harold, Hon.	Minnedosa	PC
HARPER, Elijah	Rupertsland	NDP
HELWER, Edward R.	Gimli	PC
HICKES, George	Point Douglas	NDP
LAMOUREUX, Kevin	Inkster	Liberal
LATHLIN, Oscar	The Pas	NDP
LAURENDEAU, Marcel	St. Norbert	PC
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	NDP
MANNES, Clayton, Hon.	Morris	PC
MARTINDALE, Doug	Burrows	NDP
McALPINE, Gerry	Sturgeon Creek	PC
McCRAE, James, Hon.	Brandon West	PC
McINTOSH, Linda, Hon.	Assiniboia	PC
MITCHELSON, Bonnie, Hon.	River East	PC
NEUFELD, Harold	Rossmere	PC
ORCHARD, Donald, Hon.	Pembina	PC
PENNER, Jack	Emerson	PC
PLOHMAN, John	Dauphin	NDP
PRAZNIK, Darren, Hon.	Lac du Bonnet	PC
REID, Daryl	Transcona	NDP
REIMER, Jack	Niakwa	PC
RENDER, Shirley	St. Vital	PC
ROCAN, Denis, Hon.	Gladstone	PC
ROSE, Bob	Turtle Mountain	PC
SANTOS, Conrad	Broadway	NDP
STEFANSON, Eric, Hon.	Kirkfield Park	PC
STORIE, Jerry	Flin Flon	NDP
SVEINSON, Ben	La Verendrye	PC
VODREY, Rosemary, Hon.	Fort Garry	PC
WASYLYCIA-LEIS, Judy	St. Johns	NDP
WOWCHUK, Rosann	Swan River	NDP

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, April 7, 1992

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolsley): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Charles Brown, Patti Cohen, Charlene Skraba and others requesting the Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae) call upon the Parliament of Canada to amend the Criminal Code to prevent the release of individuals where there is substantial likelihood of further family violence.

Mr. Cliff Evans (Interlake): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Agnete Fjeldsted, Jessie Chappil, Helga Jonnasson and others requesting the Minister of Housing (Mr. Ernst) consider reinstating local housing authorities with volunteer boards.

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Beth McFee, Dave Bain, Margaret Moar and others requesting the Minister of Justice call upon the Parliament of Canada to amend the Criminal Code to prevent the release of individuals where there is a substantial likelihood of further family violence.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Mr. Speaker: I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton), and it complies with the privileges and practices of the House and complies with the rules (by leave). Is it the will of the House to have the petition read?

The petition of the undersigned citizens of the province of Manitoba humbly sheweth:

THAT child abuse is a crime abhorred by all good citizens of our society, but nonetheless it exists in today's world; and

It is the responsibility of the government to recognize and deal with this most vicious of crimes; and

Programs like the Fight Back Against Child Abuse campaign raise public awareness and necessary funds to deal with crime; and

The decision to terminate the Fight Back Against Child Abuse campaign will hamper the efforts of all good citizens to help abused children.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislature of the Province of Manitoba may be pleased to request that the government of Manitoba show a strong commitment to deal with Child Abuse by considering restoring the Fight Back Against Child Abuse campaign.

* * *

I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member for Radisson (Ms. Cerilli). It complies with the privileges and practices of the House and complies with the rules. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read?

The petition of the undersigned citizens of the province of Manitoba humbly sheweth:

THAT the bail review provisions in the Criminal Code of Canada currently set out that accused offenders, including those suspected of conjugal or family violence, be released unless it can be proven that the individual is a danger to society at large or it is likely that the accused person will not reappear in court; and

The problem of conjugal and family violence is a matter of grave concern for all Canadians and requires a multifaceted approach to ensure that those at risk, particularly women and children, be protected from further harm.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislature of the Province of Manitoba may be pleased to request that the Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae) call upon the Parliament of Canada to amend the Criminal Code of Canada to permit the courts to prevent the release of individuals where it is shown that there is a substantial likelihood of further conjugal or family violence being perpetrated.

*(1335)

* * *

I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett). It complies with the privileges and practices of the House and

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

The petition of the undersigned citizens of the province of Manitoba humbly sheweth:

THAT child abuse is a crime abhorred by all good citizens of our society, but nonetheless it exists in today's world; and

It is the responsibility of the government to recognize and deal with this most vicious of crimes; and

Programs like the Fight Back Against Child Abuse campaign raise public awareness and necessary funds to deal with crime; and

The decision to terminate the Fight Back Against Child Abuse campaign will hamper the efforts of all good citizens to help abused children.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislature of the Province of Manitoba may be pleased to request that the government of Manitoba show a strong commitment to deal with Child Abuse by considering restoring the Fight Back Against Child Abuse campaign.

* * *

I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member for Transcona (Mr. Reid). It complies with the privileges and practices of the House and complies with the rules. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read?

The petition of the undersigned citizens of the province of Manitoba humbly sheweth:

THAT the bail review provisions in the Criminal Code of Canada currently set out that accused offenders, including those suspected of conjugal or family violence, be released unless it can be proven that the individual is a danger to society at large or it is likely that the accused person will not reappear in court; and

The problem of conjugal and family violence is a matter of grave concern for all Canadians and requires a multifaceted approach to ensure that those at risk, particularly women and children, be protected from further harm.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislature of the Province of Manitoba may be pleased to request that the Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae) call upon the Parliament of Canada to amend the Criminal Code of Canada to permit the courts to prevent the release of individuals where it

is shown that there is a substantial likelihood of further conjugal or family violence being perpetrated.

I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member for Broadway (Mr. Santos). It complies with the privileges and practices of the House and complies with the rules. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read?

The petition of the undersigned citizens of the province of Manitoba humbly sheweth:

THAT the bail review provisions in the Criminal Code of Canada currently set out that accused offenders, including those suspected of conjugal or family violence, be released unless it can be proven that the individual is a danger to society at large or it is likely that the accused person will not reappear in court; and

The problem of conjugal and family violence is a matter of grave concern for all Canadians and requires a multifaceted approach to ensure that those at risk, particularly women and children, be protected from further harm.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislature of the Province of Manitoba may be pleased to request that the Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae) call upon the Parliament of Canada to amend the Criminal Code of Canada to permit the courts to prevent the release of individuals where it is shown that there is a substantial likelihood of further conjugal or family violence being perpetrated.

* * *

I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member for Point Douglas (Mr. Hickes). It complies with the privileges and practices of the House and complies with the rules. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read?

The petition of the undersigned citizens of the province of Manitoba humbly sheweth:

THAT the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry was launched in April of 1988 to conduct an examination of the relationship between the justice system and aboriginal people; and

* (1340)

The AJI delivered its report in August of 1991 and concluded that the justice system has been a massive failure for aboriginal people; and

The AJI report endorsed the inherent right of aboriginal self-government and the right of aboriginal communities to establish an aboriginal justice system; and

The Canadian Bar Association, The Law Reform Commission of Canada, among many others, also recommend both aboriginal self-government and a separate and parallel justice system; and

On January 28, 1992, five months after releasing the report, the provincial government announced it was not prepared to proceed with the majority of the recommendations; and

Despite the All-Party Task Force Report which endorsed aboriginal self-government, the provincial government now rejects a separate and parallel justice system, an Aboriginal Justice Commission and many other key recommendations which are solely within provincial jurisdiction.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislature of the Province of Manitoba may be pleased to request that the government of Manitoba show a strong commitment to aboriginal self-government by considering reversing its position on the AJI by supporting the recommendations within its jurisdiction and implementing a separate and parallel justice system.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Mrs. Louise Dacquay (Chairperson of Committees): Mr. Speaker, the Committee of Supply has adopted a certain resolution, directs me to report the same and asks leave to sit again.

I move, seconded by the honourable member for La Verendrye (Mr. Sveinson), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Oak Hammock Marsh Ducks Unlimited Complex

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, dealing with the Ducks Unlimited complex at Oak Hammock Marsh, the government has had a number of different roles. On the one hand it has been a proponent of the project with \$1 million in funding from the provincial government to the project. It is also a legislator in terms of changes to

The Wildlife Act last year. Thirdly, it is the custodian of the Clean Environment Commission as the government of the day for licensing purposes.

A number of groups locally, nationally and internationally are now very concerned and very opposed to the project at the Oak Hammock Marsh and are raising a number of concerns on the international stage.

Yesterday, we learned that according to ID consulting group the size of the project that was originally licensed by the provincial government has indeed increased from 8.6 acres of land to 45 acres of land, certainly five times greater in size than the original project that was licensed by the Clean Environment Commission.

In light of the role of the government to be the independent body to protect the public on this environmental process, would the Premier (Mr. Filmon) today agree to suspend the project, to suspend the funding, and have the project returned to the Clean Environment Commission so that we can have a review of the licence that is provided to the project and public input into an ever increasing project in terms of the scope?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, I heard the Leader of the Opposition quoted today as talking about credibility and integrity. It is exactly those two issues that one should be examining when one responds to the question that the Leader of the Opposition has put forward. The fact of the matter is that almost all of the questions that come forward from opposition members as well as the basis upon which organizations half the world away make their decisions is in fact incorrect information. This is yet one more story that finds itself rooted in information that is absolutely and totally false.

The works facilities that are represented in the Ducks Unlimited plan and development have in fact been less than that which was presented to the Clean Environment Commission. In fact, in 1989 the original plan called for 3.5 hectares, and only 2.35 hectares have been covered by parking lots or works that have to do with this facility. In addition, there was an area of upland to be stripped of topsoil and replanted with native vegetation, always part of the plan and continues to be part of the plan.

A detailed work plan and schedule was presented to the Citizens Advisory Committee for this matter of stripping and replanting with native vegetation to in fact return and restore the area surrounding that

facility to its natural habitat and its natural circumstances. That is what is the 18 areas that has been wrongly referred to by the Sierra Club that is now being parroted incorrectly by the Leader of the Opposition.

* (1345)

Oak Hammock Marsh Ducks Unlimited Complex

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I have the original licence calling on a three-cell sewage treatment facility for .8 hectares of land and that has grown in size now from 1.9 acres of land, according to the report, the engineering report is now 10 acres of land, again on the one part of the project at all that was not referred to by the Premier and has grown over five times.

It begs the question, if there is nothing to worry about in terms of the original licence, why would the Premier not agree to suspend the money? Why would the Premier not agree to suspend the licence and have it go back to the Clean Environment Commission? If what the Premier is saying is correct, then I am sure the Clean Environment Commission and the public will be able to see what the Premier has said.

Mr. Speaker, dealing with inconsistencies, on two occasions now the project has been given permission to proceed with accelerated construction at the site requiring amendments to the original licence. In fact, on March 24, 1992, again the government gave permission to amend the licence for a more fast-track construction and development of the complex at Oak Hammock Marsh, with increased construction, decreased time period, in a very sensitive period of time that even the Clean Environment Commission identified in their original licensing report.

I would ask the Premier (Mr. Filmon): How can we have changes and amendments to the agreement for faster construction, quicker construction, more intense construction with trucks and tractors on the one hand and no referral back to the Clean Environment Commission to deal with the issue of the expansion of the complex according to the ID consulting group as we have seen here today?

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment): Again, Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition would like to have the public compare apples and

oranges rather than talk about what has really occurred at the construction site.

I believe that he is probably well aware that it was the Department of Environment that ordered the size of the sewage cells to be increased so that any discharges could be properly contained. That was done very much with an eye to the protection of the environment to make sure that the area was not damaged beyond any area that we had understood was to be included in the construction site.

I think the member, in all honesty, would have to accept the fact that it only makes common sense to allow construction to occur early before the migratory birds appear on site rather than to force the construction to be delayed. If he somehow disagrees with that, perhaps he would like to elaborate.

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, I would refer the minister back to the original Clean Environment Commission report that dealt with that issue.

Mr. Speaker, I have a further question. On page 92 of the ID Systems Ltd. report, dealing with the vegetation and wildlife investigation on the proposed construction area, it talks about water quality. It talks about potential contamination with hydrocarbons should fuel or oil leak from construction equipment. It talks about the increased sizing of the project and its potential effect on the short term and long term of the project.

Now, we have a simple question. If the independent report is showing a five times increase in the size of the project and if the government is so confident in their position, why will they not refer this back to the Clean Environment Commission so the public of Manitoba can be sure that they are not ramming this project through, that all the public can have a complete and accurate input into this project that the government is sponsoring with \$1 million of our taxpayers' money?

Mr. Cummings: Mr. Speaker, I am disappointed that the Leader of the Opposition would choose this approach to misrepresent again what is happening at the Oak Hammock site.

In the presentation of the Clean Environment Commission, it has been reported to me that Ducks Unlimited presented the area that they were to take topsoil from, presented their reclamation projects in the committee which was advising and which was reported to as recently as July 4 last year, prior to the beginning of the construction. The committee

which included the Sierra Club, the Friends of Oak Hammock and Naturalists, indicated that this—and I could quote the feelings that they put on the record at that meeting where they said this last document is great: This is what the advisory committee wanted to see; the replacement of vegetation is good; the process of re-establishment of vegetation on site should be documented because it is an excellent demonstration of a project well done.

North American Free Trade Agreement Letter Tabling Request

Mr. Jerry Storie (Flin Flon): Mr. Speaker, when our federal government first announced that it was going to be entering into discussions with the United States and Mexico to get into a North American free trade agreement, we opposed it and told the government and expressed our concern to the people of Manitoba about the prospects of such an agreement. We were pleased when the government, albeit conditionally, expressed its concern about such an agreement.

* (1350)

My question is to the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism. Given our respective interests in protecting Manitoba from the implications of any such agreement should it be signed, will the minister today undertake to table the letter of concern that he said yesterday he had delivered to the federal government, so that we might join with the government in protecting the long-term economic interests of Manitobans from the impacts of this agreement?

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism): In terms of the letter that I sent the Honourable Michael Wilson yesterday, the fundamental purpose was twofold to address some of the obvious concerns in the draft document that all provinces were provided with a few weeks ago, but equally and probably more importantly to again put on the record, our six conditions that we have indicated on many occasions in this House, that we oppose a North American free trade agreement.

The only way we would ever support a North American free trade agreement is if those fundamental six conditions are, in fact, met. I will not reiterate them for the benefit of the House, as all members, I am sure, know them. I will certainly take the honourable member's question under consideration.

Mr. Storie I hope we are on the same side on this issue.

Departmental Review

Mr. Jerry Storie (Flin Flon): Mr. Speaker, this side has asked on many occasions for the minister to table any studies that the Department of Industry, Trade and Tourism has done with respect to the implications on a sector by sector basis or on an agreement basis. I ask the minister today whether in fact the Department of Industry, Trade and Tourism has prepared any overview of the implications of this agreement for cabinet.

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism): The answer is yes, Mr. Speaker.

Departmental Review Tabling Request

Mr. Jerry Storie (Flin Flon): Mr. Speaker, on March 26, the First Minister (Mr. Filmon), in an answer to a question of the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer), said that when such a document was tabled with cabinet that he would be prepared to share it with the opposition. Will the First Minister now live up to his commitment?

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism): Mr. Speaker, the submission that was made in the House back in July of 1991, clearly outlined the parameters of the detailed work that was done. I have outlined on many occasions that for us the single most important source of information in compiling a position on this issue has been the consultation process that we undertook with Manitobans, with individual sectoral organizations, the various groups of academic institutions, with labour and so on, in terms of formulating our position. Our position, in terms of the research that was done, was made very clear with the position that was stated here in this House.

Point of Order

Mr. Jerry Storie (Flin Flon): Mr. Speaker, what is the minister—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member does not have a point of order.

North American Free Trade Agreement Cultural Industries

Mr. Reg Alcock (Osborne): Mr. Speaker, I must say that I share the concern of the member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie). I am a little surprised to hear that the minister is unwilling to table the information that

he is basing his decisions on when he is asking the rest of the House to support his position.

I do find that in reading the agreement that there are increasing items of concern. I note in the exceptions one of the concerns the people in this province have had, the people in this country have had, is the lack of any protection for cultural industries. The U.S. has said clearly that cultural industries are on the negotiating table. When I go through the general exceptions, Article 11 and Article 106, I see no protection for cultural industries. I would like to know if this is one of the items that the minister has raised with his federal counterpart.

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism): The answer is yes, Mr. Speaker. It is covered under the very first condition that we have attached to any potential support and that is that there be no renegotiation and no opening of the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement. The federal minister has indicated that on several occasions as support for the cultural industries and we certainly support that position.

Mr. Alcock: Mr. Speaker, given that the first condition has been violated—there is no question now that it has been violated—is the minister saying that he is prepared to withdraw support?

* (1355)

Mr. Stefanson: Mr. Speaker, at this stage none of the conditions have been violated. There is no agreement. What has been provided to provinces is a draft text with positions of all three countries with some agreement in some areas, all kinds of issues where they totally disagree, some issues that are not even addressed at this stage. Clearly we are not dealing with an agreement at this stage whatsoever, so none of the conditions have not been met at this particular point in time.

We will continue to stand by our conditions and one of them is, as I have said, that there be no opening and renegotiation of the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement, and the cultural industries are protected by that very point.

Departmental Review Tabling Request

Mr. Reg Alcock (Osborne): Mr. Speaker, that is simply not the case. In this agreement virtually all of the conditions have been violated, so I would ask the minister: Will he table his research, will he table his information that supports his position that his six

conditions have not been violated, because the agreement clearly states otherwise?

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism): Mr. Speaker, I think what is happening is not unlike what has occurred across Canada with the Canada-U.S. free trade discussions. Unfortunately, people are seeing ghosts, people are painting positions that do not exist. I have explained in this House what we have been provided with is a draft working document that was compiled by Canada, the United States and Mexico, as I have said, with some areas of agreement, some areas of disagreement and so on. We have been given the opportunity to respond to that particular working document. There is no agreement, so at this particular point in time, it is totally unreasonable to suggest that any of our conditions have not been met. We have said on many occasions in this House if our conditions are not met, we will not support any agreement and that still is our position and negotiations are ongoing.

Oak Hammock Marsh Sewage Treatment

Ms. Marianne Cerilli (Radisson): Mr. Speaker, the treatment of sewage at Oak Hammock Marsh has been one of the largest concerns with respect to the project and now we find out that we are going to have 10 acres of sewage lagoons at Oak Hammock Marsh. To realize this there is going to be over 100 staff and some 200,000 visitors who are going to have to have their sewage treated. The concern about this is they are going to be using a sewage treatment that is not proven to be effective. It says in the report from the Clean Environment Commission that an artificial marsh system will be designed and that this method is not widely used and will serve as a demonstration project.

I would like to ask the Minister of Environment: Why is the marsh being used as a demonstration project? Why are we taking this risk?

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment): Mr. Speaker, first of all, I think the risk is in the mind of those who say unless something has been used widely that it is unsafe. In fact, to show you the confidence that the people who are recommending this have in the process, quite clearly they believe that the third cell will, in fact, be very much the same as any cell within the marsh and will fully support habitat.

Ms. Cerlill: My supplementary question for the minister is: Who will be responsible for guaranteeing that this lagoon-sewage treatment system will not leak?

Mr. Cummings: Mr. Speaker, the licence very clearly states the requirements that the construction will be meeting requires the production of samples that will demonstrate the impermeability of the construction, and it will not be licensed unless it meets those standards.

Ms. Cerlill: The minister did not answer the question. The question is very straightforward. Who is responsible for guaranteeing that this sewage-lagoon system is going to work?

Mr. Cummings: I believe the member opposite subscribes to the sky-is-falling theory, and that is that if there is any possibility of anything going wrong, it will. That seems to be the approach that she is taking to this matter. Perhaps that is more a matter that she hopes that will be the case than really her own personal desire; but I can tell you that the standards upon which we are imposing the construction of this system will be carefully controlled and monitored and constructed to those levels that have been demonstrated that it will not leak.

If the member is asking for a guarantee that it will not leak, obviously that is the guarantee. It will be in the standards that we imposed during the construction and that we make sure the contractors live up to.

* (1400)

Dutch Elm Disease Program Scientific Opinion Tabling Request

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): On March 17, the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns) in reply to a question said that he had cut his Dutch Elm Disease prevention program on the advice of professional foresters who, and I quote, recognized that the drought cycle had been broken and that we could bring it back to the 350,000 level without jeopardizing the program.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister of Natural Resources if he would table that scientific opinion. Would he confirm that such opinions may, in fact, chart the past course of droughts, but they do not in any way predict or pretend to predict the future?

Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Natural Resources): I would be glad to check with the department to see whether or not that opinion is available to me in written form.

The specific reference that I was making to in response to that earlier question was a conversation that I well recall and that I was reporting on, that I had with foresters of my department and the City of Winnipeg at the time that we were planting a tree—which we do every spring on Arbor Day on the grounds of the Legislature, when those comments were made to me as we were standing around chatting about the beautiful spring day it was and the tree. I will undertake to examine whether or not that specific information is available to me in that form.

Ms. Friesen: Could I then ask the minister if he will at the same time consult with the meteorologists of Environment Canada who are prepared to predict weather ahead of time, but only up to about 90 days? Will he review with them the scientific basis again that he claims is the basis for his reduction of the program?

Mr. Enns: Mr. Speaker, I have many people consulting me from time to time. At 7 o'clock this morning I might report to you and honourable members of the House, I was in Portage la Prairie watching some 3,500 cubic feet per second of water being diverted from the Assiniboine River into Lake Manitoba to ensure that there in fact would be no flooding downstream from Portage. We are a little nervous about that. That gives me some assurance. It has been a long time, the last four or five years, since we have had to use these flood protection measures.

I might also inform the House that yesterday morning at 5 o'clock, the Winnipeg floodway had to be put into service, just on a very short-term service, because of a building up of an ice jam upstream from the floodway gates. Mr. Speaker, all of this tells me that there is a bit more water in our province and that helps the health of our trees.

Mr. Speaker, I am currently, and I would like to be very straight, examining with my forestry officials to see whether or not we can maintain what is being recommended as an appropriate reaction to the ongoing difficulties with the Dutch elm disease program in Manitoba. I am prepared, as I indicated publicly before, to reconsider and to review my own budgets to see whether or not we can provide some additional help in this regard.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Speaker, I think we all share the minister's hopes for more rain.

Mr. Speaker: Question, please.

Ms. Friesen: I would like, in this case, to ask him to consult again with the city forester on the high costs of the past drought in the more than 5,000 dying and diseased elms which last year had to be left on urban riverbanks and which constitute the real and continuing danger to the urban forest.

Mr. Enns: Mr. Speaker, I know that I can consult with any one of my rural colleagues who will tell anybody and everybody in this province that this drought did not start in 1988. In fact, it was there in '84, '85, '86 and '87. That government that she represented saw no need to increase the \$350,000 provincial funding to fight Dutch elm disease. It was this government under this Premier (Mr. Filmon), under this Minister of Natural Resources, that recognized that difficulty and doubled the money to \$700,000. We did that for two years which caught up with some of the problems.

We have now—not reduced—brought it back to the same level that the New Democratic Party government thought was appropriate, \$350,000. In addition, we are of course concerned about Dutch elm disease throughout the province, so we are adding five additional municipalities who will qualify for that support which that government never thought about, Mr. Speaker.

Department of Health Regional Operations - St. Boniface

Mr. Nell Gaudry (St. Boniface): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Health.

Mr. Speaker, last fall, regional home care and mental health workers were temporarily moved out of their offices at 233 Provencher and 1400 Henderson Highway to 185 Smith Street because of health and safety problems with the buildings. Five months ago, in a letter to me, the Minister of Health said, I quote: I want to stress that this relocation is a temporary measure, and the intent of our government is to have our regional staff in appropriate and accessible community offices.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister give us the status of the renovation of the St. Boniface office and tell us when these community workers will be back in their community office providing services?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I cannot give my honourable friend that

information today, but I will certainly endeavour to provide it to him before the close of today's proceedings.

Mr. Gaudry: Mr. Speaker, given this government's stated commitment to bring health care to the community, what other health care services is the minister planning to move into the renovated St. Boniface office?

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Speaker, first and foremost, the intention was to upgrade the facility to provide a more acceptable working environment and that, by itself, will no doubt increase the productivity and the output of services, community-based, out of that office.

Mr. Gaudry: Mr. Speaker, to the same minister, is the minister committed to ensuring that all community health care services decentralized into St. Boniface will be provided in both English and French?

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Speaker, we very much, not only in St. Boniface, but where appropriate in other areas of the province where there is a requirement for services and care providers to operate in our second language, the French language, that appropriate recruiting assures that to be the case. That is not only in St. Boniface, that is in other communities including your own, Sir.

Health Sciences Centre Bed Closures

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Lels (St. Johns): Mr. Speaker, we had some difficult times yesterday getting any answers from the Minister of Health on the important issue of bed closures and hospital budget reductions.

The Premier (Mr. Filmon), in fact, might be interested to know that yesterday the Minister of Health said the 1988 promise of not closing beds without the benefit of a comprehensive review was only good for one term in office, the minority years. Also, yesterday in Estimates, the minister decided to distance himself from his March 23 confirmation of the government-directed 240 bed closures at St. Boniface and Health Sciences Centre.

I want to ask the Minister of Health, based on his previous statements that this government would not allow permanent bed closures because of budgetary constraints, how many beds have been closed permanently by this government at the

Health Sciences Centre because of budgetary constraints?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, we spent from approximately 2:30 in the afternoon yesterday until five o'clock. We spent from eight o'clock in the evening until midnight. All I wanted from my honourable friend the member for St. Johns, the NDP Health critic, was a simple answer. Have you flip-flopped and reversed—oh, yeah, very simple answer—as to whether my honourable friend the New Democrat had reversed the policy put in place by Howard Pawley and the NDP that they would not cover deficits incurred in the hospitals? Without an answer as to whether the NDP have flip-flopped on that policy—because it appears they have because they are calling for us to retire, to pay the deficit at Brandon for once, for their very own instance, and they will call for deficits to be paid by this government in other hospitals contrary to their policy of 1986-87.

Now, Mr. Speaker, yesterday we tried to get around the issue of reform of the health care system. No reform of the health care system can take place if you have flip-flopped and reversed a policy on covering deficits in hospitals because you cannot allow your institutions to be out of control. Secondly, I indicated to my honourable friend clearly and equivocally, we maintained that 1988 promise—period and paragraph.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Health, why have none of the 61 beds closed last summer at the Health Sciences Centre and extended to March 31 of this year—because of and I quote the Health Sciences memo: the need to contain health care costs—been reopened? We are past March 31. Are these 61 bed closures in addition to or a part of—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The question has been put.

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Speaker, in the language that my honourable friend uses which is, I believe, in the memo from the Health Sciences Centre in an effort to contain health care costs, that means to avoid incurring a deficit at the Health Sciences Centre, a policy, I remind my honourable friend, she voted for at cabinet 1986-1987. Of course, they are now flip-flopping on that policy.

Now, Mr. Speaker, let us deal just for a short minute with the information, because I heard one of the New Democrats, who is as ill-informed as they can be, indicate that in 1987-88 there was a bigger

increase to the hospital. The increase to the Health Sciences Centre in the last year the New Democrats were government, was 7.1 percent at a time when revenues grew at 19.3 percent. Who was treating the hospitals appropriately because today our revenues are 2.5 percent and our funding increases—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

* (1410)

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: Mr. Speaker, considering last July we asked the minister about the summer bed closures at Health Sciences Centre, the minister said he knew nothing after he had received a memo from the Health Sciences Centre outlining those extended bed closures, those closures which have now become permanent.

I want to ask this minister: Is this backdoor secretive, blame someone else approach which has characterized bed closures by this government today, is this how the government is going to achieve its target of 440 bed cuts for Winnipeg hospitals?

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Speaker, the way we are going to achieve reform of the health care system in the province of Manitoba is increasing the funding to the ministry of Health by 5.7 percent at a time when the revenues of the Province of Manitoba are growing at 2.5 percent. I contrast that to the increase in health care provided by my honourable friends when revenues grew at 19 percent the last year they were in government, and they provided about a 6.5 percent increase in health care funding.

Mr. Speaker, I do not need to point out to the mathematicians in the New Democratic Party our funding increase to health care is double the rate of revenue growth of the Province of Manitoba. The last time they were in government it was one-third of the rate of revenue growth. Some commitment to health care, one might conclude.

The second thing that we are doing in terms of reform of the health care system, as I have indicated to my honourable friend in Estimates in my opening remarks and again yesterday, is that we will move the services and the budgets with the patient to the most appropriate location of care.

If that means that it is not going to be used in an \$800-a-day teaching hospital bed and can be provided in a \$200-a-day rural hospital or personal care home, so be it, Sir. The patient will receive the

appropriate care; the taxpayers will save the \$600 a day.

Women's Directorate Staffing

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister responsible for the Status of Women.

The other day I received a very disturbing letter from an individual who is appealing to the Civil Service Commission a decision from the minister to cancel the open competition for the Assistant Deputy Minister for the Women's Directorate. She tried to justify the cancellation by saying that there were no qualified individuals for that particular position.

I want to give to the minister and Premier (Mr. Filmon) a copy of the highlights of a resume from one of those individuals and ask them to review it and ask the Minister responsible for the Status of Women to come clean and tell the House why she really and truly did cancel the open competition.

Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister responsible for the Status of Women): Mr. Speaker, first of all, it was a Civil Service board; I was not the person who made the determination. It was a Civil Service board that determined who the candidates were that should be short listed or interviewed, so it was not my decision.

Somebody has appealed the process. That appeal will follow the normal process through the Civil Service Commission, and they will make that determination.

Staffing Investigation

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Speaker, I would ask the Premier, given the circumstances surrounding this particular hiring of Ms. Harvey and the cancellation of the open competition and in fact appointing someone who did not even apply for the position, will the Premier today agree to have an independent investigation into the whole matter?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, I just want to remind the member for Inkster that government has the authority to make those appointments without competition, as is the provision within The Civil Service Act and within the competence of government. This is one circumstance in which the government has a choice: either to go to a Civil Service competition or to make a direct appointment.

In the past, direct appointments were made for similar positions by the previous administration. In fact, the member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylycia-Lewis) was recipient of such a direct appointment for that position. The minister was totally within her rights and capability to do that, and she chose that.

You can criticize the individual whom she chose and say that individual is not competent, and if you choose so, you are going to have to talk to a lot of people who believe that the individual in place is indeed competent and very capable of doing the job.

Government Positions Hiring Process

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Speaker, I am surprised at this coming from the Premier, and I would ask the Premier, is it now government policy that if a minister chooses to open up a position for open competition, that if they do not like the candidates for whatever the reasons might be, possibly they do not think along the same lines of this particular government politically, whatever the reasons might be, that all they have to do is close the competition and appoint the individual whom they would in fact like to be in that particular position?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): In senior positions within government, surely the member for Inkster—[interjection] I know, Mr. Speaker, that the member for Inkster has no experience with government, never having been there. He chooses not to understand that in senior positions within government, deputy ministers, assistant deputy ministers in many cases, those can be the direct appointments of the government in power.

They always have been, and they will continue to be, no matter who is in government. No matter who is in government, they will continue to be at the prerogative of the government. That is the case in which the minister acted, and she acted totally within her rights and within the ability of government to make those appointments.

Paddlewheel Riverboats Lower Fort Garry Trip

Mr. Gregory Dewar (Selkirk): Mr. Speaker, tourism is the third largest industry in this province. Unfortunately, due to the incompetence of this government, tourism is declining almost as rapidly as plants are closing and moving to the United States.

My question is to the Minister of Tourism. What efforts has he made to ensure that the Paddlewheel Queen is able to operate at Lower Fort Garry this season?

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism): Mr. Speaker, my staff has certainly met with the owner of the Paddlewheel Queen. I will take the specifics as notice and get back to the honourable member.

Mr. Dewar: Mr. Speaker, the number of tourists to the Fort has dropped every year since this government has been in power.

Will the minister now review his marketing strategies and meet with representatives of the Fort and of the Paddlewheel Queen so that this conflict can be resolved prior to the tourism season?

Mr. Stefanson: As I said, Mr. Speaker, my staff and actually myself, at a meeting that I attended with the Tourism Industry Association, met with the individual who owns the Paddlewheel Queen. We are certainly well aware of the problem that he is faced with out at Lower Fort Garry. We are working with him to resolve that very issue.

On the issue of research, I think, as I have indicated in this House before, we have done extensive research this past fall, in the fall of 1991, and I am confident that it will show positive results in 1992 for tourism in Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker: Time for Oral Questions has expired.

Nonpolitical Statements

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): I wonder, Mr. Speaker, if I have leave to make a nonpolitical statement.

Mr. Speaker: Does the honourable First Minister have leave to make a nonpolitical statement?

Some Honourable Members: Leave.

Mr. Speaker: Leave. It is agreed.

Mr. Filmon: Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to rise in the House today to remind all honourable members and all Manitobans that Thursday, April 9, will mark the 75th anniversary of the capture of Vimy Ridge by Canadians during the First World War. Few of those brave men who fought the battle for Vimy Ridge are still alive today, but the legacy of their valour and courage lives on.

The monument atop Vimy Ridge in France stands as a tribute to their achievement. It also reminds us that the high cost of this victory was measured in

Canadian lives. The bravery and sacrifice of Canadian soldiers served as a catalyst towards victory in World War I generating renewed faith, hope and effort in allied countries worldwide. At home, the victory at Vimy Ridge created a wave of patriotism and pride that has been virtually unparalleled in Canada's history.

Abroad, Canada was viewed with increased respect. Working together, Canadians had accomplished something the strongest armies in the world could not. Each of the Canadian soldiers who participated in the battle for Vimy Ridge has earned a well-deserved place in history. Without doubt, the efforts of Canadian soldiers on April 9, 1917, made the world a better place for all people.

* (1420)

Recent events in the Middle East have also served to remind all Canadians of the magnitude of the Vimy Ridge mission and the relevance of the soldiers' sacrifice to our lives today. The reality of the Gulf War, the struggle for democracy in eastern Europe and the ongoing battle for basic human rights in South Africa are constant reminders of how fortunate we are in Canada. We sometimes take for granted the rights and freedoms we enjoy as Canadians. Those rights and freedoms have been protected and preserved by Canadians who made the supreme sacrifice at places like Vimy Ridge.

Canadians working together to overcome adversity have had a dramatic impact on world history. The example provided by events like the victory at Vimy Ridge should provide us all with renewed hope as we strive to meet the challenges of today's world. By working together toward a common goal, Manitobans and Canadians can make a difference.

Today, Mr. Speaker, Canadians are making preparations to commemorate an important victory won on the field of battle. We owe it to those who fought on Vimy Ridge to ensure that the significance of their accomplishment and their sacrifice is not forgotten.

On behalf of my colleagues in government, I offer Canada's Vimy Ridge survivors our ongoing respect and gratitude for the significant role that they have played in securing our right to live in peace, harmony and democracy.

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): I would like leave to make a nonpolitical statement.

Mr. Speaker: Does the honourable Leader of the Opposition have leave?

Some Honourable Members: Leave.

Mr. Speaker: Leave. It is agreed.

Mr. Doer: Yes, I would like to rise today and join the Premier and other members on commemorating the anniversary of the Vimy Ridge battle, a battle that was fought years ago and decades ago. I guess we all have in our minds the images of those surviving veterans going up to the military plane to go across to Europe to commemorate the anniversary. What thoughts they must have in their mind as they go across on behalf of Canada and war veterans in Canada to commemorate the battle of Vimy Ridge and the victory at Vimy Ridge. Three thousand of their colleagues, fellow members of the armed forces, of that day died—10,000 casualties on that one very, very famous battle.

This was to be the war to end all wars, and yet we see so much loss of life and yet so much pride in the victory that took place at that great battle. It was a victory in this war that has been documented well. I would suggest that all members read the Pierre Berton book on the war, on the Vimy Ridge struggle, where many other forces were unable to take this strategic ridge. The British and the French were unable to do so, and a unique Canadian force was able to do it, not only to achieve victory but to achieve it by noon when years had passed by when no other force could take this ridge.

Mr. Speaker, we commemorate the heroes of the soldiers involved in that great strategic battle. Historians have said that this is one of the original achievements of Canada, being a unique and separate and sovereign nation which was again constitutionally developed in the Imperial conference in 1929 and in further constitutional developments for decades after that.

This was a battle that brought world recognition to the ingenuity and heroism of Canadian troops. It was also a battle fought by troops from different provinces and different regions right across Canada, and of course, we suffered great losses from those troops all across Canada in this battle.

Mr. Speaker, we are not here to glamorize war. We are here to pay tribute to the great ingenuity of the soldiers who were involved in that battle, to mourn for the loss of life on all sides in a battle for a ridge, a ridge that was supposed to be the key in a battle, in a war to end all wars.

When we pay tribute to those soldiers and those great Canadians in terms of that war, we just want to say that we on this side and all members of this House should be doing everything we can for peace and a world of peace, where we eliminate poverty, where every country is given opportunity, where children can grow up in a democracy that allows all of us to have peace in our world.

Today, we not only commemorate the battle, but we pledge ourselves for peace in our world. Thank you very much.

Mr. Reg Alcock (Osborne): Mr. Speaker, I too would like to join the Premier (Mr. Filmon).

Mr. Speaker: Does the honourable member for Osborne have leave to make a nonpolitical statement? Leave. It is agreed.

Mr. Alcock: I would like to join the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer). You know, the phrase that we use on November 11 all the time is "lest we forget," and for someone of my generation who escaped both great wars, it is easy at times to forget the price that was paid to provide for us the kinds of rights and freedoms and abilities that we have.

It is a little shocking when you move outside of this country and you see people living today, in 1992, around this world, who do not have any of the rights and freedoms and abilities that we have in this country. We have them because of the willingness of people many decades ago to make very great sacrifices.

When the Premier stands in the House today and asks us to demonstrate or to continue to provide our ongoing respect for those who made those sacrifices, I think all members of this House, all members of this province in this country will join with him.

* * *

Mr. Jack Reimer (Niakwa): May I have leave to make a nonpolitical statement?

Mr. Speaker: Does the honourable member have leave? Leave. It is agreed.

Mr. Reimer: Today, the Manitoba 25-cent piece was unveiled in the Legislature. This coin is the fourth in a series of coins commemorating Canada's 125th birthday.

The Manitoba quarter depicting a scene at Lower Fort Garry was designed by Manitoba artist Muriel Hope. I am proud to note that Muriel was born in

Carberry, a community within the constituency of the Speaker of this Legislature. Muriel Hope, currently a freelance artist, has worked as a commercial artist for many years for the Winnipeg Free Press. She has worked in various media, including oils, acrylics, water colours, ink and clay. Her work can be seen in galleries in Manitoba, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Ontario.

Muriel's design was selected from 399 designs submitted for the Manitoba coin. Today, I rise to congratulate Muriel Hope, the artist of the Manitoba coin. The Manitoba quarter goes into national distribution today. As part of a Canadian numismatic history, Muriel's work will be collected by Canadians and cherished as a keepsake by Manitobans.

I ask all honourable members to join me today in recognizing the achievement of Manitoba artist, Muriel Hope.

Thank you.

Mr. Gregory Dewar (Selkirk): May I have leave to make a nonpolitical statement?

Mr. Speaker: Does the honourable member for Selkirk have leave to make a nonpolitical statement? Leave. It is agreed.

Mr. Dewar: It is both appropriate and natural that Lower Fort Garry be recognized by the Mint as a symbol of this province.

Built in the 1830s, Lower Fort Garry is the oldest stone fur trade post in North America still intact. On a personal note, my great-great-great grandfather, William Robert Smith, worked at the fort between 1848 and 1868 as Clerk of the Court and Council of Assiniboia. The fort, surviving buildings and walls form one of the largest collections of the fur trade structures in this country. York boats and the Red River carts were the major transportation links during that period, shipping furs and trade goods throughout the province.

The fort declined as a trade post in the 1870s but, fortunately, was not torn down and has been restored. In fact, its restoration is still continuing. It is a major tourist asset to this province.

Mr. Speaker, in summary, on this side of the House, we are pleased that the Mint has recognized Lower Fort Garry with the issuing of this 25-cent piece.

Thank you.

Mr. Nell Gaudry (St. Boniface): Yes, Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House—

Mr. Speaker: Does the honourable member for St. Boniface have leave to make a nonpolitical statement?

An Honourable Member: Leave.

Mr. Speaker: Leave. It is agreed.

Mr. Gaudry: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I had the pleasure this morning of attending the ceremonies in the rotunda that was done by the government. I think it was very well done, and congratulate them in doing so.

I would like to join them also in congratulating the artist, Mrs. Hope. I think it was well deserved. In all the competition across the province being chosen to represent Lower Fort Garry, and it is the fact that we are celebrating Canada's 125th birthday this year. It shows, I think, in the people who attended this morning, the young people, older people, and it shows the unity of our great country.

Again, I would like to congratulate the artist who did the design of the quarter for Manitoba.

* * *

* (1430)

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Lels (St. Johns): I am wondering if I could have leave to make an nonpolitical statement.

Mr. Speaker: Does the honourable member for St. Johns have leave to make a nonpolitical statement? Leave. It is agreed.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: Today, April 7, is World Health Day, and I think it is an important time to reflect upon our achievements and to make certain commitments. These are interesting and challenging times for all of us on the health front, and there is no better an occasion like the World Health Day to remind ourselves of the work ahead of us and to commit ourselves to working together.

I would like all of us to join together in commemorating this day and doing three things: Number one, reminding ourselves of the World Health Organization definition of health which stresses health and well-being, goes far beyond the notion of physical health and suggests that what we are really talking about is mental, emotional, psychological, social, economic as well as physical well-being.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, this is a wonderful opportunity for all of us to reaffirm our pride and our commitment to our health care system in this country, one of the best in the world, and to express our determination to fight to preserve our system of medicare.

Thirdly, this is a day for us to recognize our responsibility on the international front, for sharing our resources and energies and ideas in troubled spots around the world to help end poverty, economic depression, ill health on many different fronts worldwide.

For those three reasons, I commend everyone in this House observance of World Health Day.

House Business

Hon. Clayton Manness (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, before I move the supply motion, I would like to announce some House business. I would like to announce committee meetings dealing with annual reports. Already scheduled, the Municipal Affairs Committee to consider the annual report of The Forks Renewal Corporation. That is for Thursday, April 16.

Also, on that same day, I am announcing—and this is going to be new information to House leaders across the way—I would like to slip in Economic Development Committee to consider, hopefully, the conclusion of the 1990-91 Annual Reports of the Channel Area Loggers and Moose Lake Loggers. That is the same day, Thursday, April 16, at 10 a.m. in the other committee room.

Also, Tuesday, April 21, 1992, Economic Development Committee to consider the 1989, 1990 and 1991 Annual Reports of Venture Manitoba Tours Ltd.

Thursday, April 23, I will call tentatively Public Utilities and Natural Resources to consider the 1991 Annual Report of the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation. That is an announcement. Indeed, if it cannot work out, I will postpone that later.

At 7 p.m. that very same day, Public Utilities and Natural Resources to consider the Annual Report of the Crown Corporations Council.

Tuesday, April 28, 10 a.m. in the morning, Public Utilities and Natural Resources, to consider the 1990 Annual Report of the Manitoba Telephone System, and that same committee to consider also Manitoba Telephone System will sit Thursday, April 30, that same week.

Those are the announcements for now, Mr. Speaker. I hope in the course of the next week to be able to complete the list of committee hearings.

Mr. Speaker: I thank the honourable government House leader for that information.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Hon. Clayton Manness (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Highways and Transportation (Mr. Driedger), that Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair and the House resolve itself into committee to consider of the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty.

Motion presented.

MATTER OF GRIEVANCE

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Speaker, under the rules, I would like to take this opportunity to use my grievance.

I was somewhat surprised with the response that I received earlier this afternoon to the questions that I had put forward. I had somewhat anticipated to see some leadership coming from the Premier (Mr. Filmon) of the province on this whole issue, but unfortunately the response that I received has been one of the status quo when it comes to political appointments for the last number of years in the province of Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, I think it is long overdue that, as elected officials, we be more responsible with our actions and that we start treating the Civil Service in a much more professional manner. The Premier, today, had an opportunity to really take a step forward, I believe, had he decided to agree with our caucus, the Liberal caucus, to have an independent investigation into the whole matter, because I believe that there has been an unjust—that something is wrong here, and I wanted to go over a number of the things that have occurred regarding this particular appointment.

Prior to myself doing that, I wanted to make reference to a resolution that I was going to be introducing, Mr. Speaker, but it is No. 48, so chances are it will not come up in the session, unless of course we are in here until September. I have not ruled it out completely, but it is a resolution which I believe would go a long way in restoring respect for politicians.

I, like no doubt many other members of this Chamber, when we knock on doors during the

election, are quick to find out that there is a lot of criticism towards politicians, and that, Mr. Speaker, comes primarily because a certain segment of the population believes that politicians are corrupt, that politicians think of only themselves, that when they think of politics, they think of patronage, whether it is hiring for a job or giving out a contract. So I think that we need to have some serious debate inside this Legislature regarding how these contracts are awarded, how appointments are being made.

Resolution 48 deals with one of those issues, Mr. Speaker. It deals with the appointments to boards and commissions and agencies. Now this is not something that has been new to the Chamber. We have in fact introduced this previously in prior sessions and been somewhat surprised in the sense that the government of the day outright opposes this particular resolution. The New Democratic Party does not support this resolution, and I guess we are asking for both the official opposition and the government to take a more open-minded approach to the whole question of appointments to boards, commissions and agencies, that the system can change if the will is there to change it.

I know when I had read last year some comments from the Leader of the New Democratic Party (Mr. Doer) and I believe it was the Premier (Mr. Filmon) regarding this resolution, they said, well, who are the Liberals here trying to kid? The Liberals in Ottawa made piles of political appointments, and that is true. All three major political parties have made political appointments, but I would argue that we have to bring it in proper context. We are talking about Manitoba. We are talking about the provincial government and the provincial parties.

(Mrs. Louise Dacquay, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair)

Our position has been very clear that there is a better way of filling appointments, whether they are boards, commissions, agencies, whether it is reinforcing the need to have a Civil Service that is endorsed from the government. The government's actions have a severe impact on civil servants, Madam Deputy Speaker. If you make appointments based on other criteria, not using merit and competence as the primary criteria, in fact, you are doing a disservice to the Civil Service.

The other resolution, which no doubt we will be able to deal with, deals with the issuing of

government contracts. I would like to encourage the government, because this one no doubt will come up, to debate this once again with an open mind and to come to the debate with the idea that there is nothing wrong with reforming, starting off within the province of Manitoba, that, yes, the argument could be made on the appointments, that all three political parties have made the appointments, all three political parties have had the government contracts. So, Madam Deputy Speaker, again I would argue that the government should think in terms of a Manitoba context in that the government should not shy away from any form of reform.

* (1440)

Having said that, Madam Deputy Speaker, I want to move on to the questions and talk about the appointment of Ms. Harvey as the Assistant Deputy Minister for the Manitoba Women's Directorate. We at first found out about it through a letter that was sent to myself and—[interjection] Well, when the minister says, one of our supporters, it is irrelevant who sent us the letter, even though it was somewhat amusing to find that the government took such great offence at the fact that the name was blacked out. They had an assumption or they believed they knew whom, in fact, the letter came from.

Well, Madam Deputy Speaker, I am going to touch on that aspect of it too, a bit later. I can assure the member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Connery) that what I talked about earlier today, as he looks into my eyes, was not the individual whom he thinks it was, that, in fact, I would encourage the member for Portage la Prairie to check with the Minister responsible for the Status of Women (Mrs. Mitchelson) and find out who the individual was. He might be enlightened, might be surprised, in fact, might support us—[interjection] I will, I will indicate to the member for Portage la Prairie who it is, because I am going to go through some of the highlights of this particular individual that were sent to myself. The letter was dated, to this particular applicant, on February 26. The meeting occurred, from what I understand, I believe it was in November of '91, with the five candidates.

The letter itself—I am going to quote right from the paragraph, and I do not believe I have to table it because it has been previously tabled. I want to read from it. It is coming, Madam Deputy Speaker, from the Civil Service Commission, in which it is told to this particular applicant: that I also wish to advise

that the decision has been made to cancel the competition as the government has chosen to make an appointment through an alternative method.

Then we had an O/C which was dated the 26th of February. So the date that the letter was sent out was the date of the O/C in which Ms. Harvey be appointed as Assistant Deputy Minister of the Manitoba Women's Directorate. Madam Deputy Speaker, this particular individual was not even one of the five candidates, because the list had been short-listed to five individuals, and this Ms. Harvey did not even apply for the position.

That has offended a great number of people, of organizations. I know we were in committee one evening with, I think it was Bill 5, and we had one of the presenters who was from the Manitoba Action Committee on the Status of Women, and a part of her presentation—and I quote from the presentation. Again, this is public information because she had tabled the information: that the cancellation of the competition for the assistant deputy minister position with the Women's Directorate and the political appointment of Theresa Harvey to that position, a person completely unknown to the women's community of Manitoba is an embarrassment to the women of this province.

Madam Deputy Speaker, this particular presentation was from an organization known as the Manitoba Action Committee on the Status of Women. Suffice to say that there was a considerable amount of opposition, not only to the appointment of this particular individual, but more so in how the individual was appointed because the government had decided to go ahead and have an open competition. I commend them on doing that. I was glad to hear that they had an open competition for this particular position.

What I find, what many other individuals and the Liberal Party find unbelievable is the manner in which this open competition turned into a select choice from the minister responsible, Madam Deputy Speaker.

I was, as I said during Question Period, surprised to hear the comments from the Minister responsible for the Status of Women (Mrs. Mitchelson). Her argument has been, the reason why Ms. Harvey was selected was because none of the candidates who applied for the position had the qualifications. None of them met the criteria for this position.

Then, Madam Deputy Speaker, I received a letter that was sent to myself and attached to the letter, it had a resume of this particular individual. I know the member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Connery) has been waiting for this, and the name of the individual is Ms. Torchia. She works over at the Red River College.

I had given the individual a call and had asked if she would mind if I were to raise the question today in the House and explained to her why I felt that it was necessary to raise it. It is a question of integrity, it is a question of believing in our Civil Service and the system, and I believe that Ms. Torchia agrees with me because she allowed me to use her name.

I want to just comment on some of the highlights of the qualifications of this particular individual. I want to say right from the onset, Madam Deputy Speaker, that I am not saying that this is the individual who should have been hired. What I am saying is that this is one of the individuals who deserved the right to at least be heard, to at least be given a fair chance at the position.

I want to go through some of the highlights of her qualifications: 15 years of experience in the field of women's issues including affirmative action, sexual harassment and abuse; Canadian pioneer in the development of courses which enable women to be employed in alternative occupations; 20 years of outstanding management, program development and instructional experience with demonstrated skills in supervising efficient, well-run departments—in fact, Madam Deputy Speaker, I believe that the department that she was responsible for had more employees and a larger budget than the one she was applying for—poise, self-confidence, speaker on women's issues and alternative occupations; awarded best innovative program Focus North conference, Thunder Bay, Ontario in 1980; nominated for YM-YWCA Women of Distinction Award, Winnipeg, May, 1991.

Madam Deputy Speaker, in terms of organizations or committee appointments: advisory committee member of WINGS, Women in New Growth Situations; member, Coalition for the Education and Training of Women; the Red River Community College representative for Focus on Education for Women; member, Education and Training Sexual Harassment Education Committee; member of the Women's Advisory Committee, Apprenticeship Branch of the Department of Labour; member of the Canadian Congress for

Learning Opportunities for Women; member, Board of Directors of Jocelyn House; member of the Board of Directors, Women's Employment Counselling Services; member of the Board of Directors and Production Advisor, Women's Productions of Thunder Bay.

Madam Deputy Speaker, this is one of those individuals, and I could go on in terms of the work history, I think, that every member in this Chamber would be fairly impressed with. I believe that not only is this individual worthy of having a legitimate open competition for this particular position, so were the other four individuals who applied for the position. I believe that a number of those other applicants, the top five who were selected, should have been given the opportunity to be able to compete fairly for the assistant deputy minister.

For the minister to stand in her place and say that these individuals just do not have the qualifications—and today what does she try to do—she tries to say, well, it was not my decision. It was the Civil Service's decision. Now, realizing that she has erred, she is now trying to say, it was not me. It is time that the Minister responsible for the Status of Women (Mrs. Mitchelson) starts being a bit more responsible in living up to some of the responsibilities that have been given to her—[interjection] Madam Deputy Speaker, to the member across the way, I am being responsible. I am bringing a matter in which a number of professional civil servants and individuals in Manitoba who came before an open competition, who had qualifications—I am standing up for the need to ensure that there is credibility in the Civil Service, that the government support the Civil Service, is an honourable thing to do.

*(1450)

Madam Deputy Speaker, I would even suggest that it is a credible thing for government members to do also, that all members—and I look to the member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Connery) because some would term him as somewhat of a maverick. I look to the member for Portage la Prairie—and I will ensure that he gets a copy of the complete resume and would ask the member for Portage la Prairie to read it over and to tell me, whether formally or informally, and if he tells me informally, I will assure him that it will be between the two of us.

I believe that the member for Portage la Prairie would agree with me on this issue because the

member for Portage la Prairie is honest and straightforward. Maybe that is one of the reasons why he is not where he used to be, Madam Deputy Speaker, but I do not want to speculate on that.

It is a serious problem. We have civil servants for whom we like to think appointments are based on their merit. We have a commission that has the hiring authority, and ultimately delegates it out to the different departments in hopes—underline the words "in hopes"—that the departments and ministers will be responsible.

Well, we have seen some cases where that has not been the case. We have seen some cases where the hiring authority has been withdrawn from a department. I think that the hiring authority should be taken away from the Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship (Mrs. Mitchelson), that the Civil Service Commission—[interjection] Well, for the minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns), I have to say that, because the Premier (Mr. Filmon) disagrees with having any sort of investigation. The Premier is content just to leave it lie in hopes that the media do not publish anything, in hopes that the issue withers down the vine and never again to surface.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I do not want that to occur because I believe that it is a very serious issue, as does the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard), and that is why he is so contentedly listening to every word I say. I think because of that—to the Minister of Natural Resources—I believe, because of the Premier's inaction, that the Civil Service should withdraw the hiring authority of the Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship (Mrs. Mitchelson).

Unfortunately, Madam Deputy Speaker, if an opposition party had the power or the authority to have the Civil Service investigate this particular incident, we would do that. You know, having said that, maybe that is something that should be done. Maybe an amendment is necessary to the legislation that would allow opposition parties or individuals, under some circumstances, the right to request the Civil Service to investigate in an independent fashion what has gone on within a department, when there is something that is so obviously wrong, as we have seen in this particular department, because unfortunately with this particular minister, it is not the first time.

We have seen controversial appointments from this minister on numerous occasions. Every time we raise the issue, whatever that appointment might be, the minister will stand up and filibuster in answer and try to justify side-stepping the Civil Service while at the same time the Leader stands up and defends her. He defends her by not taking any form of action whatsoever, Madam Deputy Speaker. [interjection]

Well, Madam Deputy Speaker, I would not say he has to necessarily cast her adrift. What did he do for the former Minister of Education?

An Honourable Member: Handed greater and more challenges.

Mr. Lamoureux: Well, the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns) and I might disagree on that.

I would think that the Premier (Mr. Filmon) can take some disciplinary actions for the Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship, for some of the things that she has done. [interjection] The member says, like what? If I had leave of the House, Madam Deputy Speaker, I think I could probably go until five o'clock, private members' hour, and give ample examples as to why this particular minister should be questioned for some of the actions that she has taken.

After I talk to the member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Connery), I encourage all members—or maybe they will even put it on the Conservative caucus agenda and allow the member for Portage la Prairie the opportunity to speak his free mind, because I am sure that the member for Portage la Prairie will be truthful on this, at least within the confines of a caucus wall, and who knows, maybe even the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns), because, Madam Deputy Speaker, I do not believe for a second—[interjection]

Madam Deputy Speaker, I do not believe that the government has done a service to the Civil Service Commission, that the government should implement damage control at this point in time, that the government, through the Premier (Mr. Filmon), should have some form of an investigation. If he disagrees with what we are suggesting in terms of an independent Civil Service investigation, tell us what actions he is willing to take.

If he tries to justify this one particular action of the minister—well, to review some of Hansard and some of the other appointments that have been made, some of the other commitments that have been made, and I only cite the secretariat's office, I

cite the outreach office, all appointments that have been called into question and have been substantiated, not only from the critic from the Liberal Party, but a number of outside apolitical organizations.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I can honestly say I did not know Ms. Torchia. I do not have any idea if she is even politically affiliated. [interjection] I do not know if the minister wants that on the record, so I will not put it on the record, but I believe that the government, the Premier (Mr. Filmon), should go ahead and take some action on this issue, that the government in reviewing—and that is why I gave a copy to the Premier and to the Minister responsible for the Status of Women (Mrs. Mitchelson), was to go over that particular resume.

I know that there were a couple of other individuals who were bandied around from the government, that being the former MLA for Ellice, Ms. Avis Gray, and a school trustee, Anita Neville. The government ruled them out of order, no doubt for whatever—[interjection] well, after careful consideration, the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns) says.

Let me just say, Madam Deputy Speaker, a report that came from the Manitoba Civil Service Commission which was a review—after I quote from it, I will give it to the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard)—of the recruitment, selection and classification process within the Manitoba Civil Service, March '91.

* (1500)

This is for the Minister of Natural Resources. This is what I would like to quote from: Ministerial Interventions—that is where I want to go, and it reads: The control that ministers appear to have over who gets approved for selection causes some concern. There is a perception among managers and employees that not all appointments are made on the basis of merit because there is too much ministerial intervention in the hiring process. The minister knows whenever there is a vacancy and can ensure that an individual of the right party colour will be hired, or that an individual of the wrong party colour will not be hired. I am suspicious of ministerial action.

This comes, Madam Deputy Speaker, from a senior manager. Then it goes into a conclusion, and I would encourage all those ministers who are interested in following up on this to read that report

because, once again, what it does is it reinforces what we have been saying in the Liberal Party for the last four years.

The Minister of Labour (Mr. Praznik) said that he had tabled the report. I am sure that he has many more reports. Encourage the ministers and the Conservatives backbenchers to go over that report, live up to what that report is saying, to start respecting and having faith in our Civil Service and the manner in which individuals with merit are given the opportunity to be able to compete for positions.

You know, the government members will walk out, and you know what they will say, Madam Deputy Speaker? What they will say is the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) is saying that Ms. Harvey has no qualifications. You are calling into question her own qualifications, as they have said that I did for Mr. David Langtry, Alice Kirkland. They criticize that continuously and not once do I call into question the qualifications of the individuals that have been appointed.

What I call into question, and the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns) says that he noticed that, and I am glad to hear that, because I do not call into question that. What I call into question is the manner in which the government fills positions.

Now, Madam Deputy Speaker, we want to be a responsible opposition, and all you need to do is listen to the member for The Maples (Mr. Cheema) during the Health Estimates, and you will see that the Liberal Party is in fact a responsible opposition. Not only am I criticizing, I am also suggesting alternatives.

So, Madam Deputy Speaker, I would encourage the government to start having more faith in our Civil Service for Civil Service appointments. I would encourage the government to look at Resolutions 27 and 48, resolutions that I have been given the privilege to introduce on behalf of the Liberal Party. I would encourage that the government act on those resolutions, that the government act when it comes to restoring some confidence back into the Civil Service.

Madam Deputy Speaker, to say, well, the Liberals have done it federally, the NDP previously have done it provincially, that we are all the same when it comes to political appointments, and the Leader of the New Democratic Party (Mr. Doer) when he stood up on the resolution, he said that. I heard the Leader of the New Democratic Party say that.

The Liberals have been worse nationally, the member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie) says. Well, Madam Deputy Speaker, I have always said that the Liberals, the NDP, the Conservatives, all political parties in the past have abused it. All of them have abused it, but that does not justify—[interjection] The member for Flin Flon says I am a man ahead of the time; I thank him for the compliment.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I believe that what we need in this province is leadership, leadership that has been demonstrated from the Leader of the Liberal Party (Mrs. Carstairs) when she starts endorsing and promoting resolutions of this nature, leadership that is lacking when it comes to the New Democratic Party, because I heard what the member for Concordia (Mr. Doer) had to say when it comes to patronage. [interjection] Yes, but you support patronage. [interjection] The Leader of the New Democratic Party says he does not support patronage. Well, I would suggest to the Leader of the New Democratic Party to pull Hansard on commenting on the Liberal resolution regarding patronage and the comments he said regarding Mrs. Carstairs.

So, Madam Deputy Speaker, there is a lack of leadership from the government and the official opposition when it comes to trying to change the attitude of political appointments, patronage, government contracts and so forth. It is long overdue that this Chamber—and both sides seem to take liberty trying to say so-and-so had an appointment, so-and-so had an appointment from the Liberal Party. Is that how they justify their positions? The Leader of the New Democratic Party supports what the government is doing regarding Ms. Harvey? Is that what he is saying?

Madam Deputy Speaker, let us change the system. If you disagree with what has happened in this particular instance of the Assistant Deputy Minister of the Women's Directorate, then let us start moving toward changing it. I would encourage the Leader of the New Democratic Party from his seat to stand up and to put his position on the record when it comes to appointments.

We have seen the position from the Premier (Mr. Filmon), albeit very unfortunate and sad, but it is equally important that Manitobans know who is the alternative to this particular government.

I would be more than happy to allow the Leader of the Opposition to ask a question, if I could have

extra time put on or just have leave for it. At the end of my grievance, I would be more than happy to field a question from the Leader. How much time do I have left, Madam Deputy Speaker?

Well, Madam Deputy Speaker, only five minutes left and the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) says I still have not made my case. I do not know how to respond to that, other than I hope that the minister will read Hansard because he obviously has not been listening.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I did want to conclude my remarks by saying that it is high time that we start recognizing individuals for what they bring to the Civil Service, and that the government, more than any other political party, for obvious reasons, has to take the lead when it comes to the filling of vacancies, whether it is within the Civil Service, whether it is with the department heads.

The government will argue that political patronage is needed, and I would even concede to a certain degree that there is a need for some very limited number of positions. Other than that, Madam Deputy Speaker, I think it is long overdue, that we need to see reform within the Province of Manitoba, and I would ask the Premier (Mr. Filmon), in closing, to have an independent investigation through the Civil Service regarding this particular case. I would hope that the Premier will, in fact, take some form of action, failing that.

Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. I will now be more than happy to answer any questions from the Leader of the New Democratic Party (Mr. Doer).

* (1510)

House Business

Hon. Clayton Manness (Government House Leader): Before you put the question, Madam Deputy Speaker, House Business, I was in error in announcing one of the committee meetings.

April 23, Public Utilities and Natural Resources, re MPIC, that meeting will be called for 9 a.m. instead of 10 a.m.

Madam Deputy Speaker: It has been moved by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness), seconded by the Minister of Highways and Transportation (Mr. Driedger), that Madam Deputy Speaker do now leave the Chair and the House resolve itself into committee to consider of the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty. Agreed?

Motion agreed to, and the House resolved itself into a Committee of Supply to consider of the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty with the honourable member for St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau) in the Chair for the Department of Health, and the honourable member for Seine River (Mrs. Dacquay) in the Chair for the Department of Family Services.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY (Concurrent Sections)

HEALTH

Mr. Deputy Chairperson (Marcel Laurendeau): Will the Committee of Supply please come to order. This afternoon this section of the Committee of Supply meeting in Room 255 will resume consideration of the Estimates of Health.

When the committee last sat, it had been considering item 1.(b) Executive Support: (1) Salaries, on page 82 of the Estimates book.

Shall the item pass?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): I have some information that the member for The Maples (Mr. Cheema) asked for yesterday. I do not know whether this is all the information he needs or not, so what I will do is, I will give him—one of the things he asked for was approved beds per 1,000 population of all hospitals, 1988-'89. I have that information. The Canadian average is 6.8; it ranges from 7.7 in Saskatchewan to a low of 5.5 in Ontario; Manitoba is at 6. I will leave this information with my honourable friend, but I want to put some of it on the record.

What I have in terms of the teaching hospitals, and I want to indicate to my honourable friend that I could not—I want to give him a small caution on the comparability of the information between provinces. I have teaching hospital utilization comparison. I have information on Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and B.C. and then Canada as an average.

This is excluding pediatrics in Ontario. Manitoba is included, because we have pediatrics at the Health Sciences Centre and St. B. I just caution my honourable friend that some hospitals exclude pediatrics, such as Ontario, so that there is not a complete comparison on that information.

The third piece of information I have is the utilization comparison of public general hospitals, and I use Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, B.C. and Canada. It has separations per

1,000 and beds per 1,000 population, which I think is information my honourable friend wanted.

The next piece of information that my honourable friend asked for was the occupancy rates and average lengths of stays for hospitals. What we have done is, we have used the MHSC annual statistics '89-'90, because the information my honourable friend wanted was in the chart.

What we have done is, we have taken the under 15 bed and just used the total at the bottom of the chart for category 1, but each hospital is listed. It gives occupancy percent based on rated beds, and that is on pages 31 and 32 and 33. I will give that information to my honourable friend.

The last piece of information that my honourable friend asked for was rural hospitals operating room procedures, a sample of selected hospitals. We have two things here, and I do not think there is any problem with giving you this sheet. Let me explain. We did it by hospital A, B, C, D, E, F. We did not identify the hospitals, because apparently we have a standing agreement with the hospitals that before we release specific information like the types of procedures offered, surgical procedures done, we have to get permission of the hospitals, but I have the hospitals identified underneath.

I am going to delete that for the day, because we do not have permission of the hospitals to release that. I have operating room procedures from six hospitals in obstetrics and gynecology; urology; general abdomen; orthopedics; ear, nose and throat; dental, plastic. I have the total surgeries per year, and I have the operating room hours per week total and the number of operating room hours.

We will give that to you as soon as I can attach names to the hospital, if we get that permission, so you can identify what hospital does what.

* (1520)

Now, there was one other piece of information my honourable friend asked for, and it was on the weekend occupancies. The occupancy levels of hospitals on weekends, we cannot get this information readily because the reporting of occupancy rate is calculated over a seven-day period. It is not over Monday to Friday, and then a separate assessment for Saturday to Sunday.

We can obtain it by asking each individual hospital, but I will discuss that with my honourable friend. In discussion, staff indicate that the occupancy levels decline on Fridays and Saturdays

in surgical wards as, of course, patients are discharged, and the occupancy level rises during Sundays in anticipation of surgery being performed on Monday.

These fluctuations in occupancy levels are not reported to occur on medical units but on the surgical units, so I will give my honourable friend—and I think there is a copy of this for the opposition critic—I will provide this information to my honourable friend, but I would like to discuss the further detailing of the weekend. Would you want more information? Because what I would suggest is maybe we could pick—because we have five categories of hospitals: 15 bed and under, 16-30, out of the MHSC statistics, 30-60, 60-125 and then over 125. Maybe what we could do to get a sample is to pick a hospital out of each category and see if we could develop, in a reasonable period of time, weekend statistics.

Unless my honourable friend is compelled to have the information, we have to go to each individual hospital to get it and it might take some amount of time.

That information will be available very shortly.

Mr. Gulzar Cheema (The Maples): Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I think this information will help us in many ways to determine how the reform is going to take place and how you are going to regionalize some of the centres and have special centres in some of the communities and how some of the services are going to consolidate within the community hospitals in Winnipeg.

The other issue which is very important is that issue of weekend occupancy, from twofold. Number one is that there has been talk and it has been done in many countries and the United States and other parts of the world, even under the nationally-funded health-care system, that you could have selected beds in a given hospital, given a few numbers, that these beds would function from day 1 to day 5. So any surgical procedure on an elective basis can be done through those beds. If you attach those selected beds with the pre-admission clinics and the post-discharge clinics, that is a very effective way, and that can eliminate at least one or two days of admissions. It can be done.

That will not deny these acute admissions, it will not deny the urgent admissions, but certainly if our elective procedure, if somebody needs to come on

Sunday afternoon, if that person can come on Monday morning, have the procedure done and go home and then you can definitely have very selective admissions, that has been very effective. So I think it is very important to look from that angle.

The second is the occupancy rate in certain hospitals or in certain places. There has been—I want to be very careful in this, I do not want to raise unnecessary fears—but I think it is worth discussing what people tell. There has to be some discussion that occupancy at weekends sometimes may be related to social problems or social situations or, for example, somebody is living alone, does not have a family member, that person comes to the hospital, so their admission may be totally a social isolation problem. If we can provide some of the services dealing with those special problems, we can definitely improve the system. I am not blaming anyone here, but I think it is just the pitfalls of the system. It has been a problem in some institutions that the patient comes to a hospital, and you do not have social services that are on call 24 hours a day, and they have to be compassionate.

Certainly there are a lot of people who get into that system of caring. You go through all the process and you end up admitting a patient, and that may or may not be suitable for accurate admission. Still patients are being admitted in some circumstances on social isolation. They may have two or three more diagnoses, but that is the total condition of a given patient.

If we can look into that aspect and have some correlation with the Department of Family Services, some co-ordination can be provided. That I think will save—not only save but continue to provide equal care in the community that can be viable. I think that is one of the issues why I raised those two specific concerns, because it is like a bad admission, it is going to come. It is a matter of time.

As long as the information is there, then the public is well informed. The health care providers know why this is being done. The pre-admission clinics are there; you have post-discharge clinics; in-between assessments are being done. That will also eliminate a duplication of tests if they are being done.

If you have every person going to a pre-admission clinic for elective surgery, you are eliminating a lot of the duplication of services. That is a given fact. There were improvements when the forms were

introduced in the lab system there. The health care provider has to put exactly what is required, so that has saved us a lot of money and a lot of hassles.

Now, if we have a pre-admission clinic in a given hospital or in a central location, that will, first of all, have a control; second, it will save overnight admission; third, data collection will be much easier and the patient care will not suffer. There are definitely admissions being done; elective surgeries are being done; they will be done in the future. Those kinds of issues have to be a package of the health care reform. It will not affect the health care services.

I do not think anybody will deny it, even the health care providers, because it saves them time as well because not every health care provider wants to put a patient in the hospital. As the minister knows full well, the practitioner would love to work outside the hospital because it is comparatively less work, less responsibility, as compared to the institutions; but, if your patient is being admitted, you have to take care of the patient, you cannot abandon the patient.

I think the balance can be achieved. Those were the two reasons behind my questioning for the weekend admissions. That kind of information will be very, very useful, and it has been done. I mean, in Europe it is being done; it is being done in the States and some other places. I just wanted to reinforce that issue of why I asked these special things.

The second thing is the admissions in some of the hospitals. For example, in the small communities or in some hospital where you have a high rate of alcohol or drug abuse or family violence, some admissions that are also being co-ordinated are based on those results. It is common on weekends in some places, and that is not to isolate any community or given hospital; that is all across this nation.

I think if there could be a person designated in a given hospital to take care of the social aspect of the medicine, which is a very essential part of that, whether we agree or not. It is not a question of even agreeing; it is a question of whether we have a policy. We have social workers in the hospitals; we have social workers working in the community; but their role is not well defined in terms of taking care of responsibility and taking care of the patient in the community and saving hundreds of dollars. I think

that is a very valid point, and it will save us a significant amount of resources.

The other issue is why we raise the issue of bed occupancy. I remember that in 1989 when we were debating the issue I said about a particular hospital—that was Pine Falls. I just gave an example; I said, we do not need a hospital expansion in each and every community and that was used against us in the election of 1990. That is why I want to be very cautious in naming any given hospital, but I think the number of occupancies is very essential. You have to see what is the maximum rate of occupancy in a given hospital so that the bed reallocation or restructuring can be done.

* (1530)

If the people will be told in a given community your occupancy is that much at a peak level so why do you need extra beds?—I think can be done very effectively. Information is very essential, but it must be scientific. The data is available to the Manitoba Health Services Commission. You just have to put each and every hospital separate and look from that aspect. I am sure the hospital boards would like to proceed in that way, because they do not want to have a bad name in the community as well.

If the hospital board knows where the government is coming from, and how they are going to improve the system. So I just want to put those things on the record and wait for the minister's response and see. Does the minister believe that those are the areas where we could move in terms of the health care reform?

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I appreciate my honourable friend's comments and I guess I am interested in exploring. No doubt some of my senior staff have got further information on the preadmission, post-discharge clinics, because right off the top I can see those as being a valuable opportunity to reduce, say, overnights for patients going into surgery the next day.

I guess there are a number of questions I would have immediately about whether they are attached directly to each hospital, and the organization, but intriguing concept, I can see a value to it.

When I give you an example personally, when I went in to get the plate put into my blow-out fracture, I sort of tested the system because my honourable friend made the case about duplicate testing. On the way in to Winnipeg that week, I had my test done

at the local hospital, Carman Hospital, and had them forward it to me when the results were available. I mean, I have no other medical complications. I am theoretically in fairly good health, et cetera, it should not be a high-risk admission.

When I went to the hospital to get my surgery done I presented my lab test X-ray and lab test to the admissions clerk and promptly was put through the same routine again—blood work and X-rays. That was three or four days later. People had told me that this is a waste of taxpayer dollars. Subsequent to that, we have had some pretty serious discussions with the hospitals on the admitting process to try to eliminate that, because that is just a plain stupid waste of resource.

Some hospitals have already taken that initiative several years back. If you come with your X-rays and the information you need for admission, it is accepted if it is even several weeks old, providing you are a healthy individual without the possibility of additional medical complications upon admission.

On the issue of, for want of a better kind of a language, the social admissions to hospitals where, because of single person living circumstances, admissions occur. We know those occur. What we are trying to do in terms of forestalling that as much as possible is to try to develop, if you will, a quick response capability, 24 hours a day, in the Continuing Care Program. Currently, we operate five days a week, basically nine to five if you will. That is not exactly accurate, but generally we are certainly not a 24-hour admission program.

We think there is merit to making that part of a reformed health care system. I am pleased to see my honourable friend recognizes that as a reasonable service enhancement to his part of the reform process. It requires co-ordination and that has always been our traditional difficulty, if you will, or challenge within the ministry because, four years ago, when I came into the ministry, we had our separate streams and separate ADM and commission responsibilities which involved institutions primarily and insured services. Then we moved over to the department for the community services. The reorganization brought together program lines under one ADM so that now, in continuing care, we are very much communicating with the acute hospital side so we can accomplish that kind of greater utilization of the resource and forestall or prevent admissions to the hospital.

The reorganization of the department was an essential first step in trying to achieve some of the things my honourable friend sees as valuable program initiatives to take on and continue with the reform of the health care system. The admission and discharge clinic, I am intrigued with that. I will certainly give my honourable friend the commitment to pursue that idea because I think that can have a substantial opportunity.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, if the member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylycia-Leis) wants to ask a question on the same issue, can I continue? Sure.

Can the minister tell us then—we have talked about the community support in a basic principle and also the restructuring of the hospital, but we have not discussed the issue of, for example just picking a number, if so and so beds are going to be moved out of a given hospital, you are going to have a space. Does the government have any planning in mind to make sure that is a part of the outpatient services within the given hospital so that that kind of enhancement can be done, so that we do not end up in a situation where you have to spend extra money, say, in a few years time because, once you leave a space open in a given institution, it is going to be used right away. It does not matter whether you have a plan or not.

We should have a plan in mind that that kind of space is going to be used for the outpatient surgical procedures because that was done in Seven Oaks Hospital. It is being done at Victoria and some similar circumstances out of St. Boniface Hospital. I just wanted the minister to keep that in mind. It is a very important aspect, the same like, if you have a bed, it is going to be occupied. If you have a space, it is going to be occupied in the hospital because somebody is going to say, my space is small, I need two more desks. I think those things have to be kept in mind because the capital expenditure, as the minister knows, is very, very expensive. If you want to have co-ordination and when you have everything under one roof in a physical complex, I think that should be kept in mind.

I would just like the minister to be careful in that situation, because sometimes it is too late if you leave the decision in the hands of self-interested groups.

Mr. Orchard: Well, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, my honourable friend is ahead of the thinking process that I have, but the caution is well received. I know

what he speaks of because, in one of the institutions, when a brand-new facility was built and the old facility was to be left vacant, that was the agreement. Subsequent to that, it was filled in an office role function which had, you know, if you want to be blunt about it, nothing to do with patient care. That certainly was not envisioned in the overall development plan, so I understand what my honourable friend is saying and take his caution seriously. We will try to forestall that natural desire to build bureaucracy and expand office space.

Mr. Cheema: Can the minister tell us, out of the exact support staff, is there any position which is vacant?

* (1540)

Mr. Orchard: I will tell you what I will do. There is one position that has been vacant; it has been vacant for a couple of years now. I have a special advisor position that is attached to the ministry. I had it filled once for about 10 months or a year, and I have not filled in subsequent years.

I tell you what I will do, to avoid all of the questions here, is simply give my honourable friends the breakdown so that they can see where the vacancies are and where the SYs are in each of the program areas. As we get to those program areas, any questions you might have in terms of the vacancy rates or plans for improvements, I will attempt to answer them.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the position of special advisor, was that position being occupied by Dr. Wade in the past, or was somebody else in that position? Was Dr. John Wade the special advisor?

Mr. Orchard: No. What I am speaking of here, we had John Wade on a contract as special advisor, I guess, officially to the deputy minister—was that not the arrangement we had with Dr. John Wade? [interjection] Oh, no, yes, that is right. No, he occupied the executive director of Research and Planning position—sorry.

When I came into the office in '88, there were three political staff positions. There was an executive assistant, a special assistant and a special advisor. I at one time had all three positions filled for about a year, but I have not had the special advisor position filled now for probably two years.

Mr. Cheema: The minister had one more person working in his department. He was out from

California; he was a health economist. Is he part of this team, too?

Mr. Orchard: That was Dr. Larry Wiser. We had a one-year contract with him, and that was all we engaged his services for, for the one year.

Mr. Cheema: Can the minister share with us his work? Is there specific project that he was given so that we can gain some valuable information or learn from his one year of service in the department?

Mr. Orchard: He was on a national committee for us. I am probably going to get the name wrong, but the Canadian council on technology assessment I think is what it was called. We utilized his services for that year to represent Manitoba on that technical advisory committee.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, can the minister tell us, this first position, the managerial staff, is this a position of the Deputy Minister of Health?

Mr. Orchard: I am sorry, I was catching another answer. I missed the question.

Mr. Cheema: I am just asking, the position No. 1, is that a deputy minister position?

Mr. Orchard: In the minister's office?

Mr. Cheema: Yes, in the Executive Support.

Mr. Orchard: In 1.(a)? Is that not me?

Mr. Cheema: No, not you. They will not pay you that much; they should, probably.

Mr. Orchard: Well, I thank my honourable friend, but no, that is my deputy minister.

Mr. Cheema: We know that the MLAs and the ministers are underpaid, and I have no hesitation of putting that on the record. I think it is really a disaster to see that the people who take a responsible job, give up their other jobs partially or fully, take responsibility, take all the heat and work 80 hours a week—in some cases some minister has to work that much and is paid \$2 to \$3 an hour. That is very sad.

I have no problems saying that the minister's salary has not gone up in this province for a long, long time, but that is besides the point. I think that is up to the three parties to look into that issue. It is very sad to see that the department had the minister get less salary than people who work within the department. It is unheard—it is not even a corporate structure or any way in any management position anywhere in this country or anywhere in the rest of the world. It is unheard when you see that

the Minister of Health is less paid than the deputy minister. That is pathetic.

Mr. Orchard: It is sort of that saying, "Only in Canada, eh?"

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I will ask the minister the last question. I am sure the member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylycia-Leis) will want to get into this debate also. What is the salary of the deputy minister?

Mr. Orchard: \$94,900.

Mr. Cheema: Last question again—I will make sure this is the last. The amount which was paid to Mr. Reg Edwards, can the minister tell us the amount now? I think during the last three or four times, it was—

Mr. Orchard: I think you have Mr. Kaufman.

Mr. Cheema: Yes, Mr. Kaufman, sorry.

Mr. Orchard: Look, I am going to have to check the update on that to find out the ongoing saga and status of the Kaufman contract, what has been described by some as an obscene attempt at endrunning the electoral system, but I will not comment on it in that regard. No, I do not have the finalization of that, but I will give my honourable friend an update Thursday.

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis (St. Johns): Mr. Deputy Chairperson, let me go back to some of the issues that we still need some answers for with respect to this government's plans on hospital bed closures and hospital budgets. The minister has now, over 11.5 hours, I believe, close to 12 hours, been quite rigorous about avoiding any question, so we will just keep at it, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, and hope that at some point we might get a few answers.

Since the minister is unwilling to come forward with respect to his directive to urban hospitals to cut some 440 beds or to come clean in terms of the entire hospital system in the province of Manitoba to cut some 440 plus 75 beds, making it 515 beds by our count, I am wondering if we could back up. We will start at a more simple level, more basic level in terms of numbers of beds and go back to the issue I referenced in Question Period and the situation at the Health Sciences Centre with respect to the summer bed closures that became extended bed closures, that now appear to be permanent bed closures.

I am wondering if the minister could give us some information now here in Estimates that he was unwilling to provide in Question Period about the

situation with respect to those summer bed closures that became extended bed closures, that now still appear to be bed closures after the deadline for extended bed closures. What is the number? How many remain closed? How many have become permanent? What are the minister's plans with respect to addressing the situation there?

Mr. Orchard: Well, you know, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I do not know how many times I have to make this kindly suggestion to my honourable friend, but that kind of detail I do not have here today because we are not in the hospital line, but you know, to really help my honourable friend move her little agenda along, I am going to try to have for Estimates on Thursday the answer to the 61 "summer closures" at the Health Sciences Centre so I can give my honourable friend some sense of that, because I do not know.

If we are going to deal with all of the Estimates and go all over and wander all over, let us make that rule. Then we will just pass the whole shebang at the end, if that is what you want to do, and then I will have about 150 staff out here waiting to answer, you know, little bits and pieces and questions.

We have a process in Estimates so that you do not abuse the time of professionals who are serving the Province of Manitoba, and they are not serving it very well, I submit, when they are here answering or listening to my honourable friend and myself politically talk around issues. Now, if you want to get into the hospitals, we have a very simple process to do it. Pass the Estimates. I will get my staff in for hospitals; we will get into the hospitals.

* (1550)

Now, let me give my honourable friend a little example, again from the Health Sciences Centre. I think the explanation yesterday was lost on my honourable friend. But you know, last year, about this time of the year, when we were undertaking our discussions with the Health Sciences Centre and all the hospitals, they were asking for a budget—and let us just pick for pure, simple number figuring so we keep it good and simple—for \$100 from the government to run their hospitals. Government said, I am sorry, we can only provide \$95 to run your hospitals. Of course, the case was made that the \$100 request from the hospitals was a bare-bones request, the absolute minimum they could operate under. Fine. We budgeted \$95. The \$5 difference was the "cutback" that my honourable friend keeps talking about.

Because I do not have the numbers from Manitoba, I will give you some real numbers from Ontario. Ontario hospitals asked for \$630 million of increase this fiscal year. They are receiving \$75 million. The cutback in NDP language and analysis in Ontario is \$555 million. That is the cutback in Ontario. Now, I know my honourable friend does not call it a cutback when she defends her Ontario folk. Hospitals at this time last year said, we cannot operate unless we get our \$100. Government's decision to provide \$95 is wrong. We cannot operate.

The Health Sciences Centre in particular said, we do the most complex surgeries; we are down to urgent and emergency scheduling of surgeries; our elective slates are cancelled. I mean, it is a tough situation. I said to staff, this is serious; get me some analysis. I can share that analysis with my honourable friend again today, as I did Monday two weeks ago, as I did last night, which shows that the complexity of cases is not as severe as what anecdotically we have been told.

To reinforce that, let us deal with the area of surgery called knee and hip replacement—complex surgery, yes; emergency and urgent surgery, no; elective surgery, yes, 95 percent-plus elective bookings for hip and knee replacements. Amid this horribly difficult budgetary situation at the Health Sciences Centre, where they were only able to operate if they got their \$100, somehow they managed to do the entire elective program and a few tens of thousands of dollars more expenditure in not 12 months but nine months on an elective program. What does that tell my honourable friend as one who looks at the system?

Bear in mind, my honourable friend's question is about the status of 61 summer bed closures. If that was extended just to December 31, those summer bed closures, that is the entire period of time that this whole elective surgical slate on knee and hip replacements was accomplished in nine months versus 12 months. How did those summer closures impact upon the Health Sciences Centre's ability to do that major hip and knee replacement surgery? I suggest, to even the most uninformed observer, the answer would be no impact at all.

I am going to get my answer, and I will have it for Thursday for my honourable friend on the summer bed closures. I will have that for her, but does a light come on with my honourable friend's thinking about where hospital budgets are driven, who has control

over them, how they are used and the case that the Health Sciences Centre is allegedly making to my honourable friend with her memos, et cetera? Like I said to you yesterday, and no doubt you probably did it this morning, did you ask them, are you running a deficit this year? If so, how big is the deficit? If so, did that contravene the policy of the Howard Pawley government? Then, furthermore, did you tell them what you will not tell the House, that you have now reversed yourselves as a political party on that policy because I have not? So I will get my answer from my honourable friend.

When my honourable friend comes here defending the hospitals and defending them for more money and defending them for government now to cover their deficits, I just want to remind my honourable friend—and that is where I got into the difficulty with the honourable chairperson of this committee where I used the word "hypocrite" a couple of times and withdrew it. I do not want to do that because that is inappropriate, and I apologized for that, but you cannot go to the hospitals today with the promise that deficits are all right, we would cover them if we were government, when you did not do it when you were in opposition.

When you talk about health care reform, and my honourable friend says that the NDP believe in health care reform, they have not told us what that means as a NDP policy interpretation. They said on the one hand they disagree with what is happening in Ontario and on the other hand compliment the process there when the process, by outside observers of it say, it is chaotic, but the NDP in Manitoba agree with that chaotic process of change in Ontario, the sheer blunt instrument of cutting funding. My honourable friend agrees with that when it happens in Ontario, tries to make a case out of it when it happens in Manitoba, and indeed it is not happening in Manitoba because we are giving them more money, not less, more money. We went through those figures time and time again.

Now, if my honourable friend honestly believes in health care reform, my honourable friend ought to look at the Estimates of expenditure of the ministry of Health. I am asking this committee and this Legislative Assembly to approve \$1,792,036,200 in expenditures, and that is not the lotteries-funded program or capital program. With those added in, it turns out to be \$1,860,688,400.

Now, if you say you are intent on reforming the health care system, where would you pick up \$10

million? Well, we could eliminate all of administration and finance of the department, and we would get \$14 million. Is that an appropriate place to go? If we eliminated all of the Healthy Public Policy Programs, just eliminated them—poof!—gone—\$16 million. If you are going to really do some reform and you are going to take money away for that reform, well, there is a \$72-million pocket of money in Continuing Care. How much of that should we take away and put into "NDP reform?" None, I suggest.

Well, we could go into Provincial Mental Health Services. Well, we are moving aggressively on reforming that system; we are going to change the way the \$45 million is spent. Okay, so far we have really, in terms of \$1.8 billion, nickels and dimes in relative comparison. So let us go down. Let us talk about Health Services Insurance Fund, total \$1.5 million. Where is the major expenditure in that? Is it the board? Is it the Health Status Improvement Fund? Is it the Medical, even though the Medical is approaching \$300 million? Is it Pharmacare? It is big; it is \$260 million, almost—no, Personal Care Homes is \$260 million. Pharmacare is \$56 million. Ambulance is \$6 million. We could cut the whole ambulance program and put the money into reform. That would be a logical thing that an NDPer would do. Northern Patient Transportation, almost \$3 million. Where is the major money? In the hospital line: \$946,828,200.

* (1600)

Naturally, you are going to put your maximum pressure on cost containment on your maximum cost area. That is why, in 1986, the government that you sat around the cabinet table on passed a cabinet submission, with full approval of the Howard Pawley cabinet, to disallow deficits in hospitals. Do you remember that? Did you protest that policy? Did you say, I object, hospitals should be allowed to spend every nickel and more, that we should never try to constrain the deficits in hospitals; did you argue with that in cabinet? Well, of course, I have no right to ask you what you did in cabinet when that passed, but you were a cabinet member who passed that.

You are saying today, you said yesterday, your bench mate the Brandon member for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans) said on Thursday in Brandon, you said in a press release last month: Give Brandon Hospital the money to cover their deficit. You have abandoned the policy you put in place.

You are willing, as an opposition party who says they believe in health care reform, to allow the largest single program line in the ministry of Health, almost \$1 billion out of \$1.8 billion of spending, to simply run amuck with no financial controls on them. Let them spend, spend, spend, and then you say you are going to reform the health care system. Well, you know, get with it.

That is why I have asked you time and time again: Have you abandoned your no-deficit policy in hospitals that you put in place in 1986? You refuse to answer that. Therefore, I cannot have a meaningful discussion on health care reform because you are not serious about it. The member for The Maples (Mr. Cheema), the Liberal Party are serious about it. They understand the dynamics. They support the no-deficit policy in hospitals; they would maintain it. You do not. So how in the world can you presume to have the intellectual capacity to talk about reform in the health care system when you are going to allow hospital budgets to run in a significant deficit that the taxpayers of Manitoba will pick up?

When my honourable friend gets her information from her sources at the Health Sciences Centre, her alleged sources at the Health Sciences Centre, ask some questions: Are you running a deficit? Why are you running a deficit? What are you doing to manage that deficit? What are you looking at in terms of your operation at the management level? What are you looking at in terms of a co-operative approach to purchasing, as I mentioned yesterday? What are you doing to look at a system-wide approach to personnel function? What have you got in terms of a capital redevelopment staff in the Health Sciences Centre? Ask some of those questions before you fall victim to the easy answer, hey, give them more money, because that was not something you did when you were in government.

It is not exactly honest for you to leave the impression that you would do it if you were government today, because (a) I know that is not an honest analysis, and (b) no other New Democratic government in Canada is doing that. The Ontario government is significantly reducing the rate of funding increase in health care in Ontario. Saskatchewan is actually reducing the amount of money that is going towards health care, and British Columbia has provided an increase to health care similar to ours for a growing population in British

Columbia. Ours is a stable population; it has not changed much in the last decade.

My honourable friend cannot allege to support health-care reform and then say, hospital deficits are A-OK with us, the NDP, us good old boys in the NDP party now that we are in opposition. It does not make sense, and it is not intellectually honest.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I am glad the minister is finished his tirade. I think he should pause for a moment and consider how foolish he is looking before the public, what an embarrassment he is in front of his own staff, how silly he can be, and what a mockery he is making of our Estimates process.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I think this committee should pause for a moment and consider the violation of parliamentary process and democratic legislative process and the whole purpose of our Estimates and budgetary review process. Time and time again, this minister insists on ignoring the question and turning around and suggesting this is a period for opposition to be answering to his questions. Well, it is just absolutely silly, and he is silly, and he is beginning to look silly in front of a lot of people—[interjection] It may be, the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey) suggests that that is my opinion. It may be only my opinion, and if it is, fine. I think my opinion counts.

The point here, for all members concerned, is respect for this committee and this process, and not a snubbing of one's nose, or thumb, whatever the expression is, at the process, where all members are respected and where there is a legitimate role for opposition to question government about their spending plans. We are here to ask questions, and it is interesting now, the Minister of Northern Affairs has asked them. He maybe should have been here for the past 12 hours that we have been at health care Estimates, asking question after question after question and getting not a single answer, no answers relevant to the questions posed, and that is the whole purpose of being here, for the opposition to ask questions and get information.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, we are not—the interesting thing about this whole debate and the whole tirade that we have just heard from the Minister of Health is that we have not at any moment over the past dozen hours in Health Estimates passed judgment on this minister and his decisions, because we do not know what those decisions are, because we have a minister and a government who

will not come clean with its agenda, its programs, its directives. So we cannot pass judgment, we cannot make comment, we cannot be constructive, we cannot add our views, we do not know what we are dealing with. We do not know what this government's agenda is when it comes to something as vital as health care reform.

We have to persist in asking those questions so we can know from whence this government is coming, and to try to establish whether or not there is a basis for trust, a basis for trust between this minister and members of the Assembly and a basis of trust between the minister and the public at large. I appreciate the fact the minister today says half an hour ago in response to my question about extended bed closures at the Health Sciences Centre that he will get me that information on Thursday. That is fine and I appreciate that. He could have stopped there. He could have given me the answer and we could have proceeded in a constructive question and answer period. However, he chose to go off on his own tangent, his own tirade, his own silliness.

Beyond the fact that the minister promised to provide us with a little bit of information on Thursday about extended bed closures at the Health Sciences Centre is clear after only being at this about a dozen hours that the minister is being selective about what information he intends to provide.

When the minister does not want to provide the information and let us know the facts and come clean with the government's agenda, the minister says he cannot possibly answer that question, the appropriate staff are not here. My goodness, how unreasonable of the opposition to even ask that. But when he wants to answer the question, when it is coming from his friend, the other Conservative Minister of Health, or critic of Health, he is prepared no matter how detailed the question. He has information at his fingertips or finds it very quickly, in short order, so I would expect, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, that if the minister can provide this kind of detailed information as he did today on very specific questions about precise occupancy rates and average length of stay in hospitals and approved beds per thousand population for all hospitals in Canada, and utilization comparisons and so on and so forth, then I expect that the minister on Thursday will be able to answer and provide us with simple information in response to our question for what is the budgetary increase for each hospital.

A simple question I would think, would not you? A fairly simple question.

So I trust that that will be forthcoming, that that will be provided to us no later than Thursday.

I raised the question time and time again of bed closures because people in this province would like to hear some answers. As we have pursued this it has become increasingly clear to me that there is a hidden, secret agenda, for which the minister will never be forthcoming, about which we will never hear any details, over which this minister and this government will never take any responsibility, but the decisions have been made and those decisions will be executed.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, this whole issue of summer bed closures is a prime example of why we are still asking the same questions a year later, why Manitobans everywhere are worried, why this minister and this government has not established a relationship of trust either in this Assembly or with the people of Manitoba. Last spring when we first heard about summer bed closures at hospitals, we raised the issue in the Legislative Assembly. The minister told us then, and that was on June 13, and let me quote, "I cannot indicate to my honourable friend the answer to that question, because I simply have received no recommendation from the Urban Hospital Council on the issue of summer bed closures."

* (1610)

I wish my friend to my right could hear this because he is forgetting the kind of strategy of this minister and the tactics of this government when it comes to implementing something on the sly. Shortly after that, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, we heard more details about those summer bed closures and how they were being turned into extended bed closures. We raised the matter again on July 9 and 10 last summer. The minister said, and I am quoting from the July 10 Hansard.

"Yesterday, when my honourable friend asked me the question, I answered to her that I had not been informed; nor had the commission, and my commission staff were there, my associate deputy minister.

"Mr. Speaker, my answer today is the same as my answer yesterday, and indeed at the opening of the newly renovated Health Action Centre, where the Province of Manitoba invested some \$600,000 in a community health clinic, Mr. Jim Rodger was there,

and Mr. Jim Rodger gave no indication of impending disasters, as my honourable friend would like to have us believe is happening."

Well, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, we did not know it at the time, but we know now today that a couple of weeks before that statement, the minister and his staff has received detailed information in the form of a memorandum from the president of the Health Sciences Centre outlining in very precise numbers the summer bed closures at that facility and the extended bed closures at that facility, the Health Sciences Centre. I refer specifically to a memo dated June 26, 1991, a couple of weeks before the day July 9, 1991, signed by Mr. Rodney Thorfinnson, President, Health Sciences Centre to Mr. DeCock, Associate Deputy Minister, Manitoba Health Services Commission, a memo entitled Extension of Summer Bed Closures, with some very specific information that I referred to listed in that memorandum.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, it seems to me that we are dealing with an absolute lack of openness and honesty from this minister on such an important issue as closures of beds in our health-care system. The minister states on July 10, 1991, that neither he nor any member of his staff nor anyone in the commission or the commission's staff knew of bed closures, summer bed closures or extended bed closures. We know now that was not the case. I do not know how we go from here, when we know that this minister is not prepared to be straightforward and honest about questions that are posed to him either by us or by anyone else. We are not getting straight answers. We are not hearing the facts, but they are happening anyway. We cannot sit by any longer, and the member for Maples (Mr. Cheema) should not be sitting by either.

When the minister tells us he has—when he is confronted with certain facts about pending bed closures, to suggest that he takes no responsibility for it because it is being decided by the Urban Hospital Council, or it is being reviewed by this hospital, or it is someone else's responsibility, or it is someone else's decision; and then turn around and it becomes clear that he knew about them, he was behind them, he is part of it, and it is a done deal. Exactly as I said yesterday, decisions made without any openness, any trust established, any opportunity for scrutiny, any opportunities for us to comment either positively or negatively.

If this minister would come clean and come forward with the information, we could be helpful and constructive and responsible just as he has been suggesting, but we do not have the facts, we do not have the information. For the member for The Maples, how do we put our agenda on the table of health care reform and make suggestions and comment and appreciate decisions being made by this government when this government will not fess up to those decisions, will not tell us exactly what they are, will not tell us what is behind them, will not come clean on any aspect of it? I do not know how the member for The Maples can sit by and accept that kind of an agenda, that kind of devious, tactical maneuvering, manipulation, back room, backdoor—

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Order, please. I would like to remind all members that we should refrain from impugning any motives. We have been trying to refrain from using some of that language, so if we could tone it down just a little bit.

Point of Order

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I would reply to all the issues that the member for St. Johns is raising. I do not want to interrupt that, but I think it is very unfortunate that we are stuck on something which we still have 40 hours to debate. We are just picking at the pieces. We are asking for an honest and frank debate, and I think—

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Order, please. The honourable member does not have a point of order.

* * *

* (1620)

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chairperson. I do not know, maybe the member for The Maples is missing what is happening to us, but he should realize that it is very hard to proceed and go through 40 hours of Estimates when we are not getting straight answers. I find it very difficult to be a part of this process when I have been lied to. It is very hard to feel confident that we are not wasting 40 hours of our life and a whole month ahead of us, when the minister last summer could not even be straightforward about the fact that he knew, his department knew, his commission knew, his staff knew about these summer and extended bed closures.

As I said, perhaps we could have understood then if the minister had been straightforward. We could

have seen that in fact some of these bed closures were extended, because they made sense from the point of view of the services being provided on a day surgery basis and in other ways. That is the kind of information we need, so we can see if this is really a reform, this is really a plan where services are still guaranteed, where quality patient care is not going to suffer.

Until we can re-establish some sort of basis for trust, it is going to be very difficult, let me just say that. It is going to be very difficult. However, I will try to pursue a line of questioning.

Yesterday, the minister would not respond to our questions about either the 160 beds being suggested as reduction targets for the Health Sciences Centre or the 240 target for Health Sciences and St. Boniface or the 200 beds targeted for community hospitals. Today, he has not been terribly forthcoming about whether or not the extended summer bed closures have become permanent bed closures at Health Sciences Centre and whether or not those 60-some beds are part of the 160 or in addition to the 160. I would still be interested in getting some information along those lines. I would like to know from the point of view of communities in the city of Winnipeg if he could at all find himself to be straightforward today with respect to the 200 community hospital bed reduction target and if he could give us a breakdown.

We have heard and we would like to hear something from the minister so that we are not simply fearmongering. I raised this specifically because it does impact on my own community and the member for The Maples' (Mr. Cheema) community, and that is the concerns around the Seven Oaks General Hospital and the reports in the paper that 30 to 40 beds will be closed at that hospital.

I would like to try once more today to ask the minister if he could give us the breakdown for the 200-bed target for community hospitals and indicate if all community hospitals will share in that target equally or if different hospitals will be hit harder than others and on what basis those decisions will be made.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: I would like to, at this time, inform the committee that there is an order that is dealt with within the Estimates and that has been going line by line.

Today we are dealing with 1.(b), which is Executive Support. The questions being asked pertinent to the hospitals would be further added to Section 5, Health Services, (b) Hospitals and Community Health Services, wherein we would have the staff available to answer those questions. We are probably going to stay on this same area as long as we stay within this, and I understand we are asking for some decorum on how the questions are coming forward, and I understand where the members are coming from.

I think we will have to ask for all members to try and stay within the lines that we are dealing with, and I think I will be looking for further advisement at a later time, but we will leave it at that for now.

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, in short answer to my honourable friend, no, and secondly, you know, I have agreed to give my honourable friend some information on summer bed closures that I do not have right now.

My honourable friend says I never answer any questions for her and I do for the member for The Maples, and I have the information with the questions to my honourable friend the member for The Maples, and I seem to be able to have those developed to present to him.

Well, I want to tell you exactly why. The member for The Maples is asking for statistical information that my research branch can provide. My honourable friend the member for The Maples asked about some operating room times in rural hospitals. That information can be pulled together by the research department; that is what they are there for. That is what this area of the administration of the department is designed to do.

My honourable friend the member for The Maples asked for occupancy rates at hospitals and lengths of stays in hospitals. Well, that information fortunately is in pages 31 through 33 of the Manitoba Health Services Commission report and was easily summated. We could not provide my honourable friend from The Maples a response on weekend admissions because, as I explained, that is too difficult to pull out. We do not have that information.

Now if my honourable friend finds it offensive that the member for The Maples asks genuine questions and gets answers and does not dance around on the head of a pin trying to create political issues but genuinely tries to find out information from Research and Planning and it is provided to him, if my

honourable friend finds that offensive, I apologize to her. I am sorry to offend her for providing information about approved beds per 1,000 population across Canada, nationally. I apologize to her for providing to the member for The Maples statistical information on the utilization of teaching hospitals. I apologize to her for providing to the member for The Maples a utilization comparison of our public general hospitals, information that he requested that is available out of Research and Planning.

The questions my honourable friend wants to get into in terms of the increase in budget hospital by hospital for this current year is in the Estimate process on page whatever of our Estimates, page 88, under Health Services Insurance Fund, Hospital \$946,828,200. Every time my honourable friend is asked a question about current budget, I have given her the same answer: Would you consider posing those when we get to the Hospital line when I have the appropriate staff here?

When statistical information on past expenditures has been requested, my research department has that and I provided it. I provided it for Brandon, I provided it for Health Sciences Centre, because that is the kind of information this part of the ministry routinely develops, creates and makes available. I have answered those questions very directly to my honourable friend, but that is not good enough. Do you know why it is not good enough, Mr. Deputy Chairperson? Because my honourable friend used the phraseology that there are base line budget reductions. That was her phraseology.

I said, that is not accurate. I corrected her with some specific historic examples. My honourable friend did not accept that information and, in her next series of questions, used the phraseology again, base line budget reductions. Now my honourable friend says, we cannot in the NDP trust this Minister of Health because this Minister of Health will not give us good information. Well, when I give you good information which refutes your misinformation, your incorrect information, your false information, do you correct that on the record and in the language of use that you use in posing the next question? No. You will not accept facts when I give you facts, and you have the audacity to say to me that I cannot be trusted?

When you get information which refutes the falsehoods you put on the record, do you change your errant ways? No. You insist on putting them

back on the record. So you want to talk about frustration, I share your frustration. I share it in exact coin opposite to what you are. That is why from time to time I find the debate with the critic for the Liberal Party refreshing, because my honourable friend understands health care reform. He understands some of the directions that have to be undertaken, he has done his homework, and he is willing to provide constructive criticism on the process. He has provided advice on opening the process to public consultation which, sir, I have indicated I am prepared to do in a public discussion paper similar to mental health reform—

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Order, please. At this time I would like to remind the members to please choose your words carefully, so that we do not run into any problems. Falsehood is one of the unparliamentary words.

* (1630)

Mr. Orchard: Sorry, Mr. Deputy Chairperson. Thank you. I apologize for using that terminology. When inadvertently incorrect information is presented by my honourable friend and I correct it, I try to do that to provide the correct information. That does not seem to help.

I share my honourable friend's frustration, but I share it with this now pathetic excuse that we just heard that, oh golly gee, we cannot possibly lay out what our reform plan is, because we do not trust the government. What absolute balderdash. What you have just told this committee and all those who read this Hansard is you do not understand health care reform. You have no agenda for health care reform; you have no ability to critique a plan that I laid out in my opening remarks which said the services will move with the patient to lower-cost institutions and to community-based care, and when that happens the occupied bed in the higher cost institution will be retired from service.

That was two weeks ago plus one day. That is the parameter of health care reform. It is reinforced by day surgery, it is reinforced by continuing care, it is reinforced by support services for seniors, all of which were mentioned in my opening remarks. That is a plan for health care reform.

I did not hear my honourable friend say, no, that is wrong. I did not hear my honourable friend say anything, but my honourable friend then comes along with this feeble excuse that the reason we will not answer whether we flip-flopped and reversed on

the no deficit to hospitals budget is because they are in opposition, and they do not have to answer that. Oh, I agree with you. You do not have to answer that, but you cannot with integrity discuss reform of the health care system if you have reversed your position on a policy which disallowed deficits in the hospitals. Because when your hospitals consume \$950 million out of \$1.8 billion and your policy is now to let their budgets run out of control to feed the deficits that my honourable friends, your alleged sources at the Health Sciences Centre are not telling you that they have incurred, then you do not understand health care reform.

It is not me that is looking foolish in the eyes of the public out there, it is the New Democrats, because by their silence, their refusal to answer the question about deficits in hospitals, whether they have changed their mind on the policy they put in place in 1986, shows that they are living in the past and afraid of the future, and they have absolutely no constructive criticism to offer to reform of the health care system in Manitoba.

That is what it demonstrates, because do you think the Liberal Party through their critic are not taking a risk in some of the suggestions my honourable friend is making to me in presentation of legislation and in questions in the House and in debate in Estimates? Of course they are, because I could run from this room and I could say, well, you know, the Liberal Party is willing to do XYZ, but you know what? There is a maturity of understanding about the challenge that is in front of us, and the challenge my honourable friend—and I have to commend his words to all members of this House, because he said when we introduced the first discussion paper of the Centre for Health Policy and Evaluation.

My honourable friend, the New Democratic Health Critic (Ms. Wasylycia-Leis) made about five sentences of positive comment and then went on a tirade on totally unrelated issues. She was reminded by the member for The Maples (Mr. Cheema), the Health critic for the Liberal Party, that this is not exactly the time for narrow, partisan, cheap political initiatives, because this issue of preserving our health care system is so important, we cannot get into this narrowed nonvision old-think that the New Democrats are demonstrating that is not even in tune with what New Democratic Party governments are doing in Ontario, Saskatchewan and B.C.

They say they disagree with what they are doing in Ontario, Saskatchewan and B.C. That is what your critic said yesterday. I do not know whether the member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie) was aware of that. Well, I hope she tells us what she disagrees with so we will not do it, so we will not make that same mistake that the NDP are making in Ontario, Saskatchewan and B.C. I hope you tell us. I mean, you disagree with something they do. You disagree with everything we do. So tell us how to improve the process. That is what the debate of these Estimates is geared to.

I will provide my honourable friend with information in current budget for hospitals when we get to hospitals, personal care homes when they get there, home care when we get there. When my honourable friend asks historical questions as the member for The Maples (Mr. Cheema) has, I will provide that information as my research department can.

Now, I want to deal with some cute language that my honourable friend used on summer bed closures. My honourable friend said, the first we learned of summer bed closures last year. What abject fabrication of the facts, because for 20 years that I have researched the issue there have been summer bed closures, there have been seasonal bed closures at Christmas, there have even been seasonal bed closures at Easter time.

All the time that my honourable friend was in cabinet there were those summer bed closures, and she tries to leave the impression that it is a new phenomenon, a new phenomenon that they just discovered last summer. Well, that is balderdash, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, and that is some of the cute trick cheap politics that is going to discredit my honourable friend and relegate her to the sidelines in health care reform.

My honourable friend complains about me providing answers to the member for The Maples (Mr. Cheema). If you asked those kinds of questions you would have got those answers, and you would have got them today presented in the same fashion, but you did not, because you did not know what questions to ask to understand the system to provide advice on reform. I cannot help you in that regard. I cannot help you and I cannot help you do your homework, but I suggest you get at it, because you are not being very productive, and you are not showing a very good image for the party that claims to be the saviour of medicare and the

founder of medicare, and all of that rhetoric which means nothing in Ontario, Saskatchewan, et cetera, today.

So I will answer your questions, always have, and I always will. My honourable friend may not like the answers. I cannot help that, because I am not going to give her the political answer that she wants to spread in her handouts that the NDP print and circulate widely, which are not exactly accurate information, paid for by the taxpayers, to send across the length and breadth of the province.

I cannot give her those kinds of answers. She has to create, herself, those incorrect answers, because I am not going to give her them.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, without resorting to that tone, I want to let the minister know a couple of things. Number one, I will worry about my image, and you worry about yours. Maybe we can get somewhere if we start on that basis.

Secondly, the minister may feel my questions are not genuine, but he should tell that to the people who are feeling the impact of changes to our health care system without the benefit of knowledge and understanding. He should tell that to the individual we have heard from who spent five days waiting in an emergency hallway because there was no bed in that hospital to be transferred to.

He should tell that to the individual who waited 10 days on a stretcher in an emergency hallway, waiting for a bed to be opened. He should tell that to the dozens and dozens of other individuals who write to us with their concerns, who are feeling the impact of pressures on our health care system, and who do not see the benefit of a truly reformed health care system that the minister talks about.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I appreciate your words of caution about sticking to the line that we are on, Executive Support. However, I want you to know, that I am raising these questions here because, in fact, this is the centre for decisions being made in this regard.

The decisions with respect to hospital budget reductions, the decisions and the directives being sent out regarding bed reduction targets are coming from this line, from these people, from the minister and his deputy minister. They are executing decisions no doubt taken by Treasury Board and cabinet, by this government as a whole.

But they are implementing those decisions. They are taking the directives forward. The deputy minister, the key person in this line of Executive Support, is the messenger for this government, and one of the key forces behind this whole strategy. It is the deputy minister who has been out conveying these specific bed reduction targets.

* (1640)

It is the deputy minister who has been pulling numbers out a hat based on, I would assume, Treasury Board and cabinet directives. It is the deputy minister who is masterminding the whole strategy with respect to hospital budget reductions and hospital bed reductions.

So I do not believe that we will be any more fortunate in terms of getting answers if we hold all of these issues to line 5. In fact, our bigger concern is that by then the decisions will have been made. Our only chance is to raise the issues now, while we have the information, to try to convince the government to reconsider or to at least slow down the process until there has been that opportunity for legislative scrutiny, for public input, for professional advice, for community reflection.

However, I do not believe we will have much more luck in terms of getting answers today or on Thursday or next month for all that matter. We have asked specific questions about bed cuts and budget cuts for hospitals. The minister says those are politically phrased questions. They are pathetic questions. He has put all kinds of innuendo and impugned all kinds of motives around these questions and been very judgmental about this line of questioning. He is free to have those opinions, and I do not take them personally. Although he may want me to, but I do not.

The fact of the matter is, they are very important questions, public policy questions, on the minds of the people of Manitoba right now. I think we have a responsibility to ask them and to try to allay some concerns and to put them in an overall context.

I would like to try once more to see if we can establish some trust in terms of previous comments and decisions and ask the minister, in terms of this whole issue with respect to summer and extended bed closures, if he could now tell us when he or members of his department first received the information from the Health Sciences Centre about the summer and extended bed closures that began

last summer and were extended to March of this year and now appear still to be closed.

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I shall attempt to get that information.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: I appreciate that answer. I am wondering if the minister could tell us, with respect to the role of the deputy minister in this whole area—I do not want to jump to any conclusions, I would simply like to know the role of the deputy minister with respect to the health reform agenda and if there has been any change in terms of his responsibilities as a deputy minister and in terms of the whole health care reform agenda.

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the deputy minister is the senior officer of the department and as such has administrative responsibility for all initiatives in the ministry including the reform agenda. The changes my honourable friend is referring to are delegation of certain of the signing authorities that my deputy minister normally had to other senior members in the ministry. That would allow my honourable friend to understand that the deputy would then have a greater amount of time to work on the agenda of health care reform, of moving with the system.

Also, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, although I am not particularly—how would I put this genteelly and not sound critical—pleased with the amount of time commitment my deputy has out of province. My deputy is the senior Deputy Minister of Health in Canada now and as such is chairing a number of national committees involved in the reform of the health care system of Canada.

He is doing that because his work, in his opinion, is respected pre-eminently across the length and breadth of this province, even though my honourable friend made very close to disparaging remarks about my deputy minister just a few minutes ago, even though he is not here to hear them. That was her choice.

My deputy is very well thought of nationally and has been called upon by the Council of Ministers and the Council of Deputy Ministers to chair several, and to be a member of several, national committees dealing with the whole issue of medicare in Canada. That is an indication of the professional esteem with which he is viewed. I realize my honourable friend, in her earlier remarks to this question, does not share that, and I regret that. But again that sort of shows the kind of areas that my honourable friend

is out of touch in, where she is now saying that, if there—well, I regret that kind of reflection on senior staff in the department. It is not called for.

The changes my honourable friend referred to are changes in signing authority which were passed. Her Leader made comment to me about it about two weeks ago, and it was done for the reasons that I have indicated to my honourable friend.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: Yes, I have just one quick final question on this matter and pass it over to the member for The Maples (Mr. Cheema).

I am not sure what the minister is referring to in terms of negative reflections I made about the deputy minister. I made some very objective statements about the deputy minister being at the centre of this whole strategy and the mastermind of the strategy for implementing the government's agenda. I have yet to make a disparaging remark about the deputy minister, so it is interesting that the minister would read that into what I am saying. He is obviously somewhat defensive about his own deputy minister, and we will get into that later. I certainly have some questions about the practices of the deputy minister, and I will be quite blunt about them, and I would be happy to do it when the deputy minister is here.

Let me just ask one final question, and that is: Can I take it from the minister's remarks that in terms of the whole government's health care reform agenda on the staff side, the key player, the key person for the government, the co-ordinating person heading up the effort is the deputy minister?

Mr. Orchard: My honourable friend was a minister of government at one time, and I believe the major initiatives that were undertaken in the ministry for which she had responsibility, the key and the senior executive officer then was her deputy minister.

I indicated to my honourable friend, my senior executive officer is my deputy minister, and he is responsible ultimately for all decisions and all programs and all implementation across the ministry, as I am as minister.

He is the senior executive officer of the bureaucracy of the Department of Health. He is supported by a very competent senior management staff that has been built and put in place over the last several years, and I will rank my deputy minister and my senior staff, who are here with me today, and others who will be here as we proceed through this

Estimate process, with any staff of any ministry of Health anywhere in Canada.

I say that very, very sincerely, not because some of the individuals are here today, but because it is accurate.

I know it is accurate because I have seen the kind of abilities we have on the national scene as a smaller province in Canada, and the capabilities that we have are driven by the excellence of our senior management.

That is why my deputy minister is representing the Province of Manitoba, myself as minister, and the other senior managers within the ministry of Health who support him in his efforts on the national scene in chairing and being a member of a number of national committees dealing with very complex and difficult health care delivery issues across Canada.

My honourable friend reinforced my concern that she has some lack of understanding of the competence of my deputy minister with her comments that, yes, she is going to get right into some of these specific issues. I sincerely hope she does, because I want to hear what they are, because I will defend the actions of my senior staff and this ministry because they are competent and they are dedicated to the process of change that this ministry of Health is embarked upon, that this government is embarked upon.

* (1650)

They are dedicated to it because they are long-serving professionals, and the majority in the Ministry of Health understand the challenge and the need to undertake those changes to preserve the system that we all value, that being the health care system of the province of Manitoba. That kind of professional experience and advice is invaluable.

I look forward to discussions with my honourable friend about her specific concerns that she may have about my deputy minister, because I would be glad to dispel any of these myths and allegations my honourable friend may wish to make.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I just want to be very careful in what I am going to say. I understand that over a period of four years whatever we say is sent in a mailing to different organizations, and then it has been told that if you would have been speaking for four hours, the so-and-so party spoke only for 20 minutes and they may not be doing their job properly.

The member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylycia-Leis) has put three times on the record that we are supporting the government, the Tory government. I think we are supporting the goal. The goal does not belong to me, neither to the member for St. Johns and not to the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard). It belongs to all of us and, having a 2,000 difference in votes between us and the NDP, we still have a large percentage of supporters out there, and if you combine the three parties, let us not go into those things. I do not want to get into that, I think it is a very, very slippery slope. I do not want to be overly critical of the member for St. Johns, but I think she will learn very quickly that she is on the wrong, wrong, wrong side of this issue. That is going to become very clear and it is going to hurt them, personally. It is not going to hurt the individual taxpayers because that is not what our intention is here.

You have spent a lot of time talking, and I have paid a lot of attention to see what you are going to say. I want to learn from you, your experience, your meetings with many groups, and your organizations, abilities and everything, and see how you can translate it into the real meaning of what we are discussing here. In my views—and I will never, never attack anybody who is working for a particular government. That is their staff. We support our staff, they have to support their staff in a way that the government people who are working for NDP and other governments in the past. You do not shoot the messengers. That is very sad because you have to look at people who are giving a very, very valuable service to our province.

I will not go more into that, then I will be blamed that I am defending the government. I am defending civil servants, whether they are part of this government or any of the future governments, because they are taxpayers and they do not like what is happening here today. I do not think they will be very happy to read your comments.

But let me just put into the other perspective that why—I mean we keep on—it is only one page and the Executive Support we are discussing that we want to focus attention. We want to get the information for the minister, and we are not changing our path. I am not changing. I am not going to change my path. It is focused; it is very well focused. We are seeking information and then we will make a decision on behalf of the taxpayers.

That is why the public campaign is more important than all three of us here because they are the real judges because they know. If the member for St. Johns is saying she is getting all these letters and all that mail, we get a lot of mail, too. We get mail, you would not even believe it. But our aim has been that when we get complaints, we investigate and then we try to explain to them what could be done in a positive way. Sometimes people are so happy, you would not even imagine if you tell them things can be improved, and they appreciate that.

Even though I understand the Question Period seems to be the focus of our attention, that is going to change because the media even in this Assembly, they understand what is happening. I mean, the viewpoint that we are taking here is a very, very positive one, and they are going to play a major role. I invite them to come and play a major role. Tell us where we are wrong. Tell us what policies that we are putting on the record.

I understand this is a question from the minister, but do we not have to have the answers? Do you think as a professional care giver I will be very happy when I go and meet with the groups whom I work with every day? Do you think it is very easy? It is not easy because I face patients and professionals every day, and nobody has pulled my tie so far and taken me to the side and said I am doing something wrong. They are saying, well, if something has to be done, we just want information.

The health care professionals are really fed up because of this political nonsense because, after all, they have the interest, too. Their money is being spent and they want tax dollars spent in a wise way. So I want those things on the record because I understand that because this is going to go into some union membership, and telling them that so-and-so member is supporting, not supporting your cause. I work with all of them every day, and I spend about four to five hours in the given hospital, absolutely. What they tell you, you are saying, they are telling you of this and that. I meet with them every day, and they know what you want to hear and what you would like them to say. But, in essence, they know what is going to happen, and they understand the system.

I would invite the member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylycia-Leis) to be—let us just discuss to see what would you do, what the government will do, what we will do, and how you are going to fund it. If tomorrow, for example, the government falls, you

become the Minister of Health, how would you do it? For example, two members defect tomorrow and they have a snap election, if you become the Minister of Health, what are you going to do? Are you going tomorrow to become "everything is fine?" I mean the change of the chair is going to make you the best person possible. It is not going to be you, or we are going to criticize the same way we are doing to the Minister of Health.

I am just asking you, I am not accusing you in any way, I am simply asking you to tell us that when you accuse me that we are co-operating, I will co-operate for the taxpayers any time. I do not care what you and somebody else is going to say. We care what is good for the people. Reform has to come. It does not matter whether you like it or not, the system has to change, and as long as the goal is noble, do you think anybody is going to tolerate the cut in subsidies? Nobody. Would you think that the Liberal Party will support a cut in subsidies? I think somebody has to be out of their mind for thinking that we are going to tolerate it, but as long as we understand and the people understand, the system has to change. We have discussed for the last 12 hours—a very good discussion—how much money has to be spent, and what has been happening in the rest of the world, and how we have to change.

But then we keep on going back to the same problem again. We go one step forward and 10 steps backward, we have not even touched the basic part yet. We cannot even make a decision here. Even the basic process, even the three of us here are having difficulty. So you want the system to be changed too quickly and then too slowly, and maybe in one week, two weeks, three weeks, this is a process, it will take some time. That is why even when they were asking about mental health—this system has to change tomorrow—we know it is going to take 240 years. That is one aspect, the rest of the health care will take some time.

I am just putting our comments on the record because these experienced politicians have taught us that we should also be sending the material to the people, telling them what we are saying, and they are reading it. We may not have the perfect language, we may have 20 grammatical mistakes, but the message is getting across. One of the messages is that let us take the health care away from politicians, and that is a good example that if we can continue to do that, and when the public can

start and then we will see who are on the side of patients and taxpayers and not on a special interest group.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Order, please. The time is now five o'clock and time for private members' hour. Committee rise.

FAMILY SERVICES

Madam Chairperson (Louise Dacquay): Order, please. Will the Committee of Supply please come to order. This section of the Committee of Supply is dealing with the Estimates for the Department of Family Services.

We are on page 59, item 3, Income Security and Regional Operations, (b) Income Maintenance Programs.

Mr. Reg Alcock (Osborne): Madam Chairperson, just before we ended yesterday there was a discussion about some information that the minister felt he might be able to provide today. I wonder if he was able to put that together.

Hon. Harold Gilleshammer (Minister of Family Services): Madam Chairperson, yes, I indicated one of the things we would provide today was a booklet that has been developed over a number of months that deals with board development. It is entitled "The Roles, Responsibilities and Functions of the Board," and we are in the process of sending this out to some of the boards that come under the jurisdiction of this department. I think that it is something we have talked about before, and I have certainly talked with various boards about the need to have some program in process to in-service board members so that they understand the duties that they are responsible for, the legal obligations that they accept when they are appointed or elected to a board, so I am pleased to be able to table these or present them to the critics, and would do so at this time.

Madam Chairperson, on some other issues, a question was asked of the appeals to the Social Services Advisory Committee, what number of individuals have legal representation. I have to tell the member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett) that this information is not readily available, but we are doing some research on this and going through some case files so that we will be able to present that information in due course.

I believe the member for Osborne (Mr. Alcock) had asked for some interprovincial comparisons of

major program areas of the department, and some of the information that we have in that area has been supplied to us on a confidential basis by other governments. We do have some information, I believe, that we can make available in due course.

The member also asked for the 1992-93 grants list. We are preparing that and will have that, I would hope, the next time we meet or certainly early next week.

The Board Development Guide is the one that I have passed on to the members at this time. The member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett) asked the question on the number of applications received and approved for income assistance for the disabled. We do not have that information presently available, but I think the member understood that the ones that were on our client list before accessed that program, and I believe there have been some new applicants. We will try and get the precise number for the member.

Mr. Alcock: Out of all of those requests yesterday, the minister is only prepared to give us his Board Development Guide. I must say I am disappointed. I would have thought that the department would be a little better prepared for the Estimates process, but it seems to be becoming the pattern.

I just noticed on this board development guide that, frankly, on a very brief glance seems to be of rather high quality. There was a project some, what, about six, eight years ago, a joint United Way/Social Planning Council of Winnipeg project to provide training to volunteer boards.

* (1520)

It is something that has been recognized for a long time, and certainly it is important if we are going to allow volunteer boards to take on the responsibilities that they do take on that they have high quality information to make board members truly aware of the responsibilities.

I will reserve final opinion until I have had an opportunity to scan this. But what I see going through the tables of contents and such, it seems to very complete and it certainly speaks of some quality of preparation and thought. If it lives up to its binder, I will be quite pleased to stand and tell the minister that he has done something in his two years that seems to be a step in the right direction.

I would however ask him, given that this board training is a priority of his, I note in the table of contents here that an evaluation section under the

board manual: agency evaluation program, evaluation, board evaluation, board member evaluation with a series of work sheets—diagnostic check list of agency health, how does your agency rate, think about how your board is doing, board or committee member self-evaluation—have any of these things been used by a board yet, to the best of the minister's knowledge?

Mr. Gilleshammer: Madam Chairperson, I make no apologies to the member that after we adjourned at midnight last night that we did not have staff work through the night to prepare some of that information for him. But we will provide information on a timely basis. I am sure the member will not find it offensive that we do have other work to do from time to time and are not going to put that aside to do some errands for the member for Osborne (Mr. Alcock).

But we have made a commitment to provide that information, we will be doing so in due course. The board evaluation guide has been developed over a number of months by the department, taking into account some of the suggestions and input that have come from a variety of sources. But at this point in time I do not believe that all of the information in there has been truly field tested with existing boards in recent times.

I do believe that this document will be well received, and I can tell you the department will be prepared to make the changes that no doubt will happen as boards have a chance to put this to some use as they have their board in-services. I see the boards that represent many of the areas that the department funds similar in many ways to boards that are responsible for governing our schools and our credit unions and other organizations. I think that the in-servicing is an ongoing thing as board membership changes and relationships change, and this is simply a developmental guide that can be used to make boards more effective.

Mr. Alcock: Can the minister tell us what this cost?

Mr. Gilleshammer: The cost to date on the copies that have been developed and printed is about \$9,000.

Mr. Alcock: Is there an expectation that agencies that are funded by this department utilize this guide?

Mr. Gilleshammer: In the true partnership that government develops with various boards, it is our expectation and hope that they will find many, many items of value in here to make those boards more

effective in their work and provide the services that the public expect from them.

Mr. Alcock: Madam Chairperson, let us try to narrow that down. Would there be an expectation as part of a service contract that the board of an agency entering into a contract would implement the roles and responsibilities and functions of a board as outlined in this guide?

Mr. Gilleshammer: It is not our expectation to test boards on a quarterly basis to see if they have read the Board Development Guide. Rather, boards have been crying out for assistance in helping to become more effective, and the department in its partnership relationship with boards feels that there are many, many concrete ideas here that can be used to develop boards.

The member might appreciate that there are boards that operate extremely well because of the fact that they have been in place for a long time, and perhaps the board has matured to a point where they are extremely effective. On the other hand, there are times when there are new elections and appointments to boards where boards may struggle from time to time and use the assistance of the department and the Board Development Guide, and the department would be very much open to assisting them with any development that they wish to embark on.

Mr. Alcock: So then, am I to assume from that that this is simply provided as information and that agencies will not be evaluated or will not be part of the expectations of government that they implement the processes defined in this guide?

Mr. Gilleshammer: Well, the member is, I think, trying to set up a scenario that would be confrontational between government and boards. This is intended to act as a guide, a support, a source of ideas to help them in the very important work that they do.

Mr. Alcock: In the spirit of great co-operation then, is the minister saying that there is no expectation that they utilize this?

Mr. Gilleshammer: I will say to the member again that the boards have been asking for assistance and guidance, and the department has brought together some ideas from a number of sources that is called The Roles, Responsibilities and Functions of the Board, a board development guide. We fully expect that boards are going to see this as a valuable tool that they can use to develop their boards and board

members. In the spirit of partnership, we think that they are going to find a lot of valuable information here as a resource that they will be able to use as boards, occasionally take that time out to perhaps go on retreats, or strike board development days where they perhaps get together for two days to say, as a board, how can we do things better? What is perhaps missing from the manner in which we conduct our business?

They may even want to bring in a facilitator and somebody who can work with them. The department, I believe, is willing to extend that hand if there are areas that they feel that they would like to gain further insight into, or if they want further explanations. But this is a board development guide, and I think the member will recognize that boards are in various stages of evolution.

I might just mention to the member that the guide has been endorsed by the Volunteer Centre, the United Way, the Winnipeg Foundation, and the Society for Manitobans with Disabilities, people who have boards of their own and people who work with other boards, and this is intended to be a very positive instrument that can be used as boards struggle to make important decisions.

I do not know whether the member has ever been appointed or ever elected to a board, but I would just tell him that boards often have very important funding decisions to make, staffing decisions to make, policy decisions, and there are times when boards become very frustrated that they seem to be spinning their wheels and unable to make decisions.

This guide is designed as a support and resource to them and, as I have indicated by the four examples that I gave the member, it already has been endorsed by some very prominent groups within the city of Winnipeg, and we expect that other boards will be anxious to take from it what they find important to them.

* (1530)

Mr. Alcock: Madam Chairperson, I can, just for the minister's information, inform him that I have indeed chaired a number of boards and worked with other boards in an attempt to help them develop their board management systems. Like I said when I started these remarks, the manual seems to address most of the areas you would expect a board to address. So I am not at this point—although I did say I would reserve judgment on the manual until I

had had a chance to peruse it in more detail. Generally it seems to be a quality piece of work.

Now the question though was a little different. The minister told us last night that a branch of his department has spent two years, I think as he put it, developing the legal language to try to understand the relationship between the department and the agencies that it funds. He pointed out what a difficult process this was, and that was why after two years they were unable to effect a single contract, but they were getting down to the point of refining the language and beginning to understand the detailed nature of the relationship between government and agencies.

My question for the minister is really simple: Is this manual a guide? Is it something that is being proffered to the agencies to assist them in making some of their own decisions about how they operate, or are the operational suggestions in this going to be part of that description of that relationship between the contractual relationship between the government and the agencies?

Mr. Gilleshammer: This is clearly a document separate from a contract that is signed between government and a board which deals with the funding and service agreements. The bold letters on the front here call this a Board Development Guide, and that is what it is.

Mr. Alcock: I thank the minister for that response. I think it is very appropriate for the government to put out some perspective on good board operation and this one may well serve the task.

Now perhaps, I would like to return to the question of why this department comes to these Estimates so completely unprepared to have a discussion with the House? Why is it, when we have asked for this grants list year over year that they come into this Chamber without having that list ready to present? Why does the minister have to make somewhat—I am looking for a better word than "silly"—perhaps ill-founded suggestions that people should be running off to work all night? You would have expected that they would come into this Chamber with that document already prepared, unless it is the minister's firm intention not to release any of that information and not to allow examination of any of that information until after the budget is passed.

Mr. Gilleshammer: Well, Madam Chairperson, as I understand the process, we come here to present our Estimates and answer the questions that

honourable critics, or acting critics have for the minister. If the member is asking us to, besides spending time preparing the Estimates for our department, we should also be spending time anticipating what the questions might be so that we could have that information at our fingertips, I think the member is going too far. In fact, it was a total surprise to me that the honourable member would even be back to Family Services Estimates after his Leader removed him from that responsibility last year.

I have indicated that the information that had been asked for by critics will be made available, and I recall the member saying one complimentary thing at a previous Estimates, that he was pleased that the department was responding in such a positive way when he and the other critics asked for information about the department.

The request was made last evening for that information. I brought back a booklet today in response to one of those, and I have answered the other four questions indicating some time frame at which we would release that information after we were able to put it in a form that was understandable for members. I take some exception to the member suggesting that the department and the many civil servants that work within the department are not prepared for Estimates. We are prepared. We are prepared to answer your questions, and we are prepared to look at any requests that members have for additional information.

I have indicated that that information will be made available and some of it can be made available more timely than other information. The member will just have to be patient and wait for it.

Mr. Alcock: I do recall a time when I was much more complimentary about the willingness of this department to share information. That coincided with the entry of this minister into this department and unfortunately has never been repeated in a single Estimates since.

There were two kinds of information asked for. The minister has made it quite clear that he is not prepared to release any of the financial information for review in the Chamber until, I think he referenced his time frame, the time frame he gave us on the record was, in due course, which is the kind of time frame that is a little difficult to quantify or to hold the minister accountable to.

But, there was other information. If I understood his response about the interprovincial comparisons, he is saying there is not a single piece of interprovincial information that can be shared with the House because it has been gathered on a confidential basis. Is that correct?

Mr. Gilleshammer: I said earlier today that we would make the grants list available this week. I may have said yesterday, in due course, and we will make every effort to get it here this week.

The other question on interprovincial comparisons of major program areas, we have some information. We want to put it in a more comprehensive package for the member so he can have a look at the programs that are offered vis-a-vis programs like daycare in other provinces and social allowances. Rather than give him bits and pieces of information that we can share, we thought it would be more helpful if we put it in a manner in which he could understand.

Mr. Alcock: Well, I appreciate that I do not have the breadth of knowledge or perhaps the inquisitive ability of the minister, but if he could have just provided the information, I would sort of work my way through it and see if I could not ferret out an understanding that would be more perhaps consistent with my own understanding of how the world works rather than waiting for the minister to doctor the information and present only his view.

I would like the raw information. I do not want something that the minister has seen fit to put together to suit his own purposes. I think the second role here, at this time, is to review the actions of the department and to do that one looks at two things, expenditure plans and the operational actions.

One of the ways you look at the operations activities of the department is to compare it with operations in other provinces. I think it is quite incorrect and improper of the minister to message, doctor or in any way alter that information before presenting it to the House.

Mr. Gilleshammer: I think it is important, Madam Chairperson, that you realize that the terminology the member uses is his own interpretation of that and words that I did not use.

I indicated earlier that we have documentation that has been provided by other governments and provided to us in some confidence. I know that the member would like us just to forward those

documents to him, but we have received them in confidence in terms of some of the work the department does and will not provide that to him without the permission of that other government.

We do have other information. I am sure the member could even do research himself to find some of those comparisons in the Toronto papers or the Winnipeg papers that from time to time carry information on programs across the country, but we want to take the time to provide information that will be of benefit to the critics and we will be doing so in due course.

Mr. Alcock: Now, am I to read, in due course, as a euphemism for later this week? Are we going to see any interprovincial information before the end of this week?

Mr. Gilleshammer: Yes.

Mr. Alcock: In what areas?

Mr. Gilleshammer: We will provide some information on some of the social allowance programs that we offer in this province as compared to programs offered in other provinces, and I believe that we have something that could be prepared and presented to the House later this week.

* (1540)

Mr. Alcock: Madam Chairperson, is Social Allowances the only program area for which this department has interprovincial information that it is prepared to share this week?

Mr. Gilleshammer: No.

Mr. Alcock: Perhaps the minister could expand upon that now and tell us what additional information he is prepared to provide this week.

Mr. Gilleshammer: Well, we will be making every effort to compile some information that reflects on a number of programs across this department. I am sure that when we next meet, hopefully on Thursday, for this Estimates process where we look at the expenditures of the department that we will have some documentation that can be made available to the critics.

Mr. Alcock: Madam Chairperson, the minister did not use the word "hopefully" when he made the commitment to have information made available before the end of the week. He also indicated that he would provide some social allowance information and some "other information." He said that there would be other information in addition to the social allowance caseload comparisons that would be available before the end of the week. What other

information? What branch, what department, what program area?

Mr. Gilleshammer: We will do our very best as time allows us to compile information across a number of programs that the member might be interested in. If on Thursday when we next meet there is further information that he feels he requires for his examination of this department or for the edification of his Leader, we will again be bringing that back probably as early as next week.

Mr. Alcock: Madam Chairperson, we will await the provision of that information. I am sure my Leader, should she be back in the House next Thursday, would permit me an opportunity to finish that particular discussion with the minister.

When we ended last night, we were talking about Social Allowances, and the question I had raised with the minister, simply stated, was: Could the minister tell us how, in his vision of the Social Allowances Program, this service works in a manner that allows people to achieve independence?

Mr. Gilleshammer: I am pleased to be able to spend some time talking about the vision of the government in relation to the Social Allowances Programs and how we see recipients gaining independence and going into the work force.

Manitoba is one of the few provinces, of course, that has a two-tier system of social allowances across the country. I think the member knows but, just in case he does not, I will go into a little detail on that.

The provincial social allowance recipients by and large are long-term recipients, who either have not worked in very recent times and in some cases it appears that perhaps will not be able to access work in the longer term, and of that 27,000 cases, I believe between 11,000 and 12,000 are disabled recipients.

I will tell you that, in meeting with some of the advocacy groups who represent the unemployed, and having an opportunity to visit some of the churches and some of the other facilities in the city and elsewhere where these people gather, it is in many ways disheartening to listen to the stories that people who have been on social allowance for a long, long time, to listen to their plight and realize that for many of them accessing employment probably is not in the near future, if ever.

Where there is, I suppose, more hope is the employables and people who have been employed

and who have to access assistance on a short term. In some cases these people are accessing assistance for two months or four months or eight months, some of them a little bit longer. These are the people who, by and large, want work and have had some work experience in recent years, but through perhaps a lack of skills or a lack of mobility, a lack of opportunity, often are in circumstances where they are unable to access employment at that particular time.

We have to look at some of the things that we can do as government and work with some of the groups in retraining. This retraining tends to cut across a number of government departments. The Workers Compensation Board, the Department of Education, our educational institutions, the Department of Labour, this department—all provide some opportunities for training and retraining for people who have had some difficulty in obtaining work. I think it is safe to say that most of these people want to work and want the opportunity to have a job and to have income and not rely on either municipal government or in some ways provincial and federal governments to provide them with their income support.

There are a number of things that government can do, and I will get into some of the training that takes place within this department just a little later. One of the things that we recognize is that there needs to be some incentive for people on social allowances to retain some of their earnings while they work their way into the work force. I think Manitoba has one of the most generous work incentive programs in relation to Social Allowances that exists across the country. Still, that is only a small part of the solution.

* (1550)

A second part of the solution is the liquid asset levels. This is, I think, one of the pieces of information that we can put together for the member to help him understand social assistance, the liquid asset levels that exist across Canada. When we looked at that last fall in terms of our reforms and social allowances, it was obvious that the liquid asset levels in Manitoba did not compare favourably with other provinces. So we have gone a long way in addressing that by adjusting the liquid asset levels.

I may have our liquid asset levels here, and I can give you some information on that. For single people, the liquid asset level, I believe, was \$400

prior to our changes. Now that has been changed to \$1,000 for the nondisabled, and for disabled cases it has been set at \$2,000. So this is a fairly substantial increase in liquid asset levels. As well, there have been liquid asset levels for the second person in the family and each additional dependent where there have been some adjustments for that to a family maximum of \$3,000 in the case of the nondisabled and \$4,000 with the disabled cases.

So there has been quite a positive increase across the liquid assets scale that we use, and I think it has been well received by social allowance recipients who want the ability to retain some of their income so that they can make those major purchases and not have to spend all of the income that they get. I say that recognizing that their ability to gain income is somewhat limited.

That again, I think, moves us into about the middle of the pack when we look at the liquid asset levels in other jurisdictions in the country. For instance, a single parent with two dependents, the new Manitoba level is \$2,500, which puts us roughly in fifth place and ahead of a number of other Maritime Provinces and sort of in line with what the province of Alberta would do for a similar-sized family. With the disabled clients, as I indicated, the new liquid asset level is \$2,000, which again puts us into sixth or seventh place amongst the provinces.

So this has been seen as a positive move on the part of the department and the government in recognizing the need to adjust those liquid assets. Again, it responds to some of the advocacy groups and the issues that they have brought before government. That is, in terms of social allowances, one of the pieces of information that we will put together for the critics so that they have an opportunity to make those interprovincial comparisons.

I would like to turn next to the training programs. I have indicated that the training programs do cut across a number of government departments, but probably the most successful one that we have has been the single-parent job access which provides group pre-employment preparation sessions, work experience and skills training placement for sole-support parents. Again, this is a group of people who access social allowances because of low income and through the single-parent job access program we are able to train a number of people. It is estimated that in 1992-93 we should be

able to provide training for 710 people within that particular program.

I might also mention the Gateway program. It provides participants with a combination of classroom instruction and on-the-job training in high-demand occupational areas. Some of that program, I believe, is offered through South Winnipeg Technical school and some other facilities. It is anticipated that we will be able to serve about 110 clients in that area.

Some of the longer-term programming that the department has spread throughout the province is the HROC programs and the HROP programs. These are situated not only in Winnipeg and Brandon but also located historically in some of the other areas of the province.

I would tell the member that just a few months ago I attended a graduation exercise in St. James at a particular program there. I think in the two graduating classes there were close to 40 young women who had taken some training. I had the opportunity to have a graduation dinner with them and talk to them and listen to them, and probably the greatest single thing that they gained from the program that they took was a feeling of self-esteem. Some of them were going to go directly into the work force; others were going to go on to other training programs at Red River Community College and other training institutions and I think were leaving there with a sense of self-worth, a sense of purpose. I admired the work the staff had done with a group of people.

The staff and some of the students mentioned when they first came into the program how they felt very insecure, extremely unsuccessful, unemployed; some of them had problems with the use of alcohol and other substances, and this program, I think, was one in which they participated and brought them to a point where they recognized that they had to take some responsibility for their training and some responsibility for getting on with their own lives.

It was just very interesting to listen to the comments not only of the instructors who were very dedicated and committed to the work that they did with individuals who were disadvantaged as far as employment went. The feeling of pride the students had was certainly matched by the pride that the instructors took in the program. That particular graduating class of nearly 40, I think, accounted for

some 500 graduates of this particular Human Resources Opportunity Centre.

These centres and programs are also located in other areas of the province. I have attended the one in Brandon, also the one in Dauphin. The training is different in some of those centres as they try and provide skills for the candidates that present themselves and give them the skills to get into the job market.

As well, the department is also working with individuals in the community and provide some grant funding to selected community-based organizations for the delivery of training and employment projects targeted to social assistance recipients who are either youth or physically, mentally or emotionally handicapped. Some of these have been very successful.

A local town councillor in Minnedosa who is in charge of that area of the town council and I think a councillor known to the member across the way headed up one of these projects and speaks very highly of the manner in which they were able to train some of the local people and find them employment at the completion of those programs. So, basically that is the work the department does and I would again mention that the government thrust in terms of retraining and educating and assisting these clients also takes place in other government departments. We, by and large, are working with the unemployed who are accessing social assistance. We also have our youth programs, and I think the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) in the budget speech referenced a new program, Partners with Youth that we will be bringing forward and announcing some of the details of later this month.

In very short time then, this is a picture of the training programs that the department is responsible for.

Mr. Alcock: I thank the minister for that answer. I have had some experience with earlier versions of those programs that allow people to develop some skills, both in the classroom and then on the job and certainly found them to be of high quality and quite useful. I believe there are a number of people currently working in the department who came into the department in exactly that way and have performed extremely well and have become very valuable staff in the department.

A couple of questions. Now the minister mentioned 710 people being trained through—I am

not certain if I am confusing two things, the Gateway program or the overall training that is made available, but, as a proportion of the total caseload in the province—and I am not expecting the minister to answer this now—but perhaps if he could provide us with some information on the proportion of the total caseload that is enrolled in training in this province, and a similar relationship to caseload in all other provinces, so we have some sense of what our relative position is in this country.

* (1600)

The second thing, given that the minister seems to be particularly fulsome in his answers today, perhaps I could just prompt him with a few other little questions and that would be the question of special allowances. When the minister is looking at interprovincial comparisons, can he tell us what the special needs allowance is in other provinces, what it is in this province, and when the last time was that it was increased?

Mr. Gilleshammer: Madam Chairperson, the 710 number I referred to was the Single Parent Job Access Program, and that is the estimated number of persons to be served in this budget year. The member is looking for some estimated totals of people who will be served by the department, and I will give him some numbers.

The estimated total persons served under the Canada-Manitoba agreement on employability enhancement for social assistance recipients will be 2,457; the estimated total persons served under the Human Resources Opportunity Programs, 3,925; the estimated total persons served under the Human Resources Opportunity Centres, 1,300, for a total of 7,682.

I am not sure, I have just indicated that within our own jurisdiction that the training takes place in a number of different areas within the province of Manitoba and falls under the administration of at least three different ministries if not more. Other provinces as well will have a different method of providing their training and, again, in looking at information we have. It may be comparing apples and oranges, but we will see what we can find for the member.

The final question, I believe, was on the special allowances that social assistance recipients receive. That is up to \$150 and I believe has been at that level for some time. I would also indicate that if there are extenuating circumstances where

perhaps the department or the worker has to look at unusual circumstances, there is some capability to enhance that.

Mr. Alcock: Perhaps I could ask the minister to be just a tad more precise than "for some time." When was the \$150-level established?

Mr. Gilleshammer: It dates back to about 1970.

Mr. Alcock: The minister says probably 1970. That is far enough back to make the point that I wanted to make.

The question is, why is it—and I have wondered about this before—that governments have not been increasing that allowance in some way, not at this point, although, I mean, presumably when it was established, it was seen to be a reasonable fund to cover those exceptional expenditures people might have. I need not go through the inflationary calculations to suggest how inadequate it is today, but the question that always perplexing me is, why have they not over the past while simply increased it by let us say the rate of inflation for the past three years?

When the minister sits down to make the decisions, presumably there is a presentation to the minister of the various expenditure items in the budget, and presumably there is some decision taken in accordance with Treasury Board guidelines to increase or decrease expenditures. Why is it that there has never been an increase in this particular item?

Mr. Gilleshammer: Madam Chairperson, the department on an annual basis brings forward ideas in the area of social allowances and has to make decisions on the rates that are paid to social allowance recipients for their general needs and also for their housing needs, and in doing so will look at the various economic indicators and will make a recommendation to government. Government makes a decision on those things.

From time to time, we do embark on a number of reforms and this year, of course, decides the 3.6 percent on the basic rates and the 3 percent on housing, we also embarked on some changes in some other areas. One was the creation of a new program for the disabled.

Again, the member might say this is an issue that has been around for a long time. Governments I think have been lobbied and petitioned before by the members of that community, and the groups that represent social allowance recipients, to address

the special needs that the disabled will have, disabled people who are on social allowances.

The member, I suppose, could apply the same question to that. Why had this never been addressed before? This was a time when we had, I think, listened and studied, in the short time that I have been here, to a group in the community that I felt, and government felt, had a legitimate need. That had been brought to government and displayed, and we embarked on a new program. So I suppose the time was right and it was the right thing to do.

* (1610)

The liquid assets is another area. I believe those asset levels have not been changed since the 1960s when liquid asset levels were set. I may be wrong on that date, but it was a considerable time ago that those liquid asset rates were set. Again, after a good deal of study and information brought forward by the department, it was determined by government that it was time to move on those because the interprovincial comparison showed that we were near the bottom of the pack as far as liquid asset rates go. We then made another major change in the social allowances. I readily admit that advocacy groups and recipients bring forward other ideas.

We recently received a report from the Social Planning Council of Winnipeg talking about poverty lines and had a very interesting conversation with them about how poverty lines are set. Again, one knows that there are needs out there that will have to be addressed and levels will have to be adjusted from time to time. The special allowances, I think, has been seen as a portion of the total social allowances that recipients receive. The advocacy groups have indicated from time to time that perhaps that is one area we could look at next. I think these issues are before government and will be dealt with as government is able to do so.

From the position of opposition, of course, it is easy to call on the government to increase spending and to get into this spend, spend, spend mentality. I know that opposition critics from time to time will call on the government to adjust these rates and do so without any responsibility for raising that money or facing the taxpayer and saying, where can we find the money that we need to spend on these programs? At the same time I do not think the member recognizes that there are other competing

forces that are at work so that other departments have some of their needs looked after as well.

We recognize that there are other areas of the social allowances that will be looked at from time to time, but the basic criteria is that we look at the needs for housing and for basic rates on an annual basis and that is adjusted. While we have not made any adjustment this year it is not to say that it may not happen in subsequent years.

Mr. Alcock: Madam Chairperson, I would like to pursue this for a second with the minister, because I think it is not something that the minister needs to feel particularly politically defensive about. Obviously if the rate was first established or the fund was first established in 1970—and I do not recall the exact date that I was given, but it is of that order, it is 20-plus years. It was set presumably at that time. Well, if it was '70, it would have been the early days of the Schreyer government who saw fit not to increase at all during their term.

We went through the Lyon government, with subsequent ministers making a decision not to increase it, into the Pawley government with the same kind of activity and now into this government, so I am not saying this out of a sense of wanting to put some pressure on this minister or to hold him accountable for it. Obviously, he is following a trend that was established by a good many ministers of a variety of political stripes.

It just surprises me that a fund that is established to deal with exceptional expenditures would never have been altered. I am wondering what kind of advice the minister has been getting from the department when he makes those kinds of decisions year over year not to adjust this particular fund. On what basis is that decision made?

Does he believe that the fund is not serving a purpose and that it does not provide the things it is supposed to provide, or is it the belief of the department that people in this circumstance only have needs that require \$150 worth of support, that is sufficient to meet their needs? What is the basis upon which that decision to not alter that fund is made?

Mr. Gillieshammør: Madam Chairperson, if I have in any way given the member the impression that I am defensive about the Social Allowances Program, I would like to correct that misapprehension that he has. I am very proud of the changes and reforms we have been able to

make. These reforms that I have indicated just earlier are ones which I think were long overdue, and this government can take a great deal of pride in creating a new program for the disabled, adjusting the liquid asset levels, adjusting the basic needs at a level probably double the rate of inflation.

I know that members do not like comparisons with other jurisdictions, but I am sure, just as we read the newspapers and receive documentation, that the member will also be looking at what other jurisdictions are doing in terms of their health care, their education funding and their social services funding. If in any way I did give the member the impression that I was defensive, I want to correct that impression. I think the department and the government can be very proud of the substantial changes that have been made that benefit some 11,000 disabled recipients, all of the recipients on the provincial level who accessed a 3.6 percent increase and the response we have given to the liquid asset levels.

The member is zeroing in on a very small part of the social allowances that recipients are able to access on an annual basis. I have indicated that recipients can access up to \$150, but that there is some capacity to access additional dollars if they require it.

Mr. Alcock: Madam Chairperson, I shall not pursue this any longer. It seems to be not producing any sort of answer, which is rather unfortunate.

I think what I will do at this time is allow this line to pass and let the member for Wellington ask a few questions.

Madam Chairperson: Item 3.(b)(1) Social Allowances \$238,489,100—pass; 3.(b)(2) Health Services \$13,649,200—pass; 3.(b)(3) Municipal Assistance \$77,369,900—pass; 3.(b)(4) Income Assistance for the Disabled \$8,000,000—pass.

Item 3.(c) Income Supplement Programs: (1) Salaries \$734,000.

Ms. Becky Barrett (Wellington): Madam Chairperson, I have just a couple of questions in this line.

Can the minister tell me if the 55 Plus benefit levels are indexed as they were in past years but were not last year?

Mr. Gilleshammer: The 55 Plus program is being maintained at last year's levels.

Ms. Barrett: Madam Chairperson, can the minister explain the rationale for not returning the indexing to that program?

Mr. Gilleshammer: The 55 Plus program has had a history of having been reviewed annually by government since it was first put in place I believe in 1980, and there have been times when that program has been maintained at a certain level. Pardon me, the program does go back to the mid-'70s, and from 1974 to 1980 it was maintained at a particular level. At that time for the single person it was \$23.46. Then in 1980-81 the amount of the 55 Plus payment was doubled, so on that one particular year there was a 100 percent increase in that.

* (1620)

Then from 1981 to 1986 there was no increase in it. It was maintained at a constant level. I will just give you some other examples. In 1987, there was a 4.5 percent increase; in 1990, there was a 4.8 percent increase. For this year we are maintaining it at the level we had it last year, so the changes historically in the program have been looked at on an annual basis. For this particular year the maximum quarterly benefit—and I should have pointed out that I was talking in terms of quarterly benefits—is \$111.60 for a single recipient and \$119.90 for each married spouse. So we are maintaining that program at the level it was at last year.

Ms. Barrett: In effect there is a decrease in the spending power of individuals who are eligible to receive those programs.

One other question on CRISP and 55 Plus—in the last year's Estimates, on July 23, the minister stated that CRISP and 55 Plus are targeted for Killarney and Carberry, and they anticipated opening these offices by October 1. Can the minister tell the House or tell me if that has in fact taken place?

Mr. Gilleshammer: The offices are now located in those communities and are open, just within, I would say, recent months. The Killarney office was opened in October; the Carberry office opened in December; and the services provided are accessed through those offices.

Ms. Barrett: Can the minister tell me how many of the staff that were working delivering the programs out of Winnipeg are currently delivering those programs out of Carberry and Killarney?

Mr. Gilleshammer: I am told that there are two people who once worked for the department in Winnipeg in that capacity who are now providing that service in the new location.

Ms. Barrett: So there are 24 individuals providing those services in Carberry and Killarney who were not last year providing those services in Winnipeg?

Mr. Gilleshammer: Yes, those people did not move with those positions when they were relocated, and the normal Civil Service options were pursued by those people.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Madam Chairperson, I have just a couple of brief questions.

It was interesting listening to the minister try to explain the rationale for not indexing the 55 Plus program. He tries to justify it by saying, well, in 1980 it had a substantial increase, in another year it had a substantial increase, and in an attempt of trying to be a good government they increased it one year by 4 percent and in another year by such and such percent, but the fact remains that there has not been an increase in the last couple of years, indexing to the 55 Plus program.

I would ask the minister, is it the policy of the government that whatever the program might be that it is a better policy to re-evaluate how much monies are going out for a particular program every so often as opposed to giving them some sort of an annual increase based on CPI or any other base?

Mr. Gilleshammer: Madam Chairperson, as the member may be aware after four years here, we do have an annual budget exercise and all government expenditures are looked at on an annual basis, and that has not changed.

Mr. Lamoureux: Madam Chairperson, the minister avoids the actual question. The question is: Is it better to wait every year—let us use an example.

The government chooses not to increase it whatsoever for the next three years and then, just prior to an election, give it a 25 percent increase; whereas on an annual basis, using as a guide or as an example CPI, cost of living index, increasing it 3 percent this year, 4 percent the next year or 2 percent, whatever. If it wants to use inflation as a guide, whatever it wants to use as a guide—but instead of waiting every so number of years that go by, then giving it the increase as opposed to giving it an annual increase.

Mr. Gilleshammer: Madam Chairperson, the government obviously has to make choices and decisions every year based on the income that government anticipates, the revenue, and the expenditures that government feels is warranted within every department and within that department there are difficult choices to make.

I say back to the member, if we had not created that program for the handicapped who are on social allowances, that \$60 a month—\$8 million—would the member sooner have seen us build a new highway with that? Would the member choose to use it on farm support? I mean these are tough decisions that have to be made year after year after year, and it is easy in opposition to ask government year after year to increase expenditures everywhere. Within this department we have to look at our expenditure levels.

I say to the member, in my opening remarks I referenced that this department deals with some 180,000 Manitobans. I say to him that most of them are vulnerable Manitobans. These are people who are on social allowances. These are people who are part and parcel of the child welfare system. They are people who are mentally handicapped, some of them in group homes, some in institutions—a tremendous number of vulnerable people. We had an increase in our funding of close to 9 percent. I think the government feels, and this department certainly feels, that we have fared very well in accessing close to 9 percent of additional spending for this budget year. Within that we have to make the choices of where that money is spent.

If I can just maybe give the member, with respect, a little history lesson, that if you go back 10 years or so there was a lot of concern and a lot of talk about the poverty levels with the aged, concern that society had tremendous responsibilities to people who were growing old and who did not have savings and did not have the ability to access income. Since then, since the '70s and the '80s, the reality is a lot of pension plans have kicked in and senior citizens, even though there is poverty there at all levels in all areas of the province and all levels of society, no longer are the seniors seen as the top priority.

Recently there have been studies tabled talking about child poverty and the need for new resources and new programs to deal with child poverty. I say to you, that is sort of the next frontier that this government, the Government of Canada and other provinces are going to have to face. We have had

some studies come forward on child poverty recently which shows, because of certain demographics in Manitoba, that a lot of Manitoba children are living below that poverty line. We have some programming and some ideas of how to make life a little bit better for them.

The federal government has recently recharted a course that they were on to put a lot of funding into daycare. In the last federal budget the federal minister, the Honourable Benoit Bouchard, is saying, we are going to refocus that money on the needs of young people. While the full-blown program has not been announced yet, I believe he has committed to spending some \$400 million to tackle the whole question of child poverty.

* (1630)

I guess what I am saying to the member is there are a lot of places for us to spend those tax dollars, and decisions and judgments have to be made. I think the member will see across the country and across North America governments being more concerned with dealing with those children who are living in poverty, those children who are living in inadequate housing, those children who are going to school hungry.

I am not sure just how the federal government is going to do that, but they are committed to a new payment to replace the old Family Allowance payment, and I think it is \$144 per child per month. They are also about to embark on a nutrition program and I am told will be largely targeted on reserves. So that \$400 million I think is going to be helpful in beginning this fight on child poverty. Maybe the pendulum has swung a bit about where government is going to have to focus its resources.

I say to you, given the numbers of people this department serves and the numbers of vulnerable people across the province, even though we have increased our budget by close to 9 percent we are not able to give everybody within the department that type of increase, and we have to make those judgments.

Mr. Lamoureux: Madam Chairperson, I am going to just try once again on this. I will try to be very clear.

In, I believe it was '74 since the program's inception, there was no increase until, I believe the minister said 1980. Now I could be off by a year. [interjection] I am right. Then in 1980, it was doubled. As a senior, living between those years, I

would hazard a guess that it would have made life a bit easier had I received instead of the doubling from '74 to 1980, receiving the doubling of the payment in 1980 from '74 prices, that it would have been more beneficial as a senior to have received a percentage increase as opposed every year whether it is two, three, whatever the percentage might have been, and then it would not have necessitated having the doubling of the program.

I would just ask the minister is that normally how programs within the department are handled, instead of an annual increase that it is more so a wait and see as the years go by, and then if we re-evaluate, well, it is massively underfunded, so we are going to give it a 20 percent boost in the arm. Is that how it is usually done within that department?

Mr. Gilleshammer: Madam Chairperson, I would concede that there is more than one way to do things. We have to look at what the departmental priorities are. In the past, this government has made daycare a priority by virtually doubling the amount of dollars that have gone into daycare in the past five years. Certainly, the shelter system has been a priority with a tremendous amount of new funding going in there, an extra \$500,000 this year.

I think priorities change from year to year. Some programs are adjusted. Some of our grants are increased. Some of our grants are decreased. Some of our grants disappear, new grants come into being. I think government is always going to reserve the right, because we budget on an annual basis, to make those decisions.

Ms. Barrett: If I may ask a couple of questions that are not specifically on this category but within the general purview of people. Again on social assistance.

Mr. Gilleshammer: Certainly.

Ms. Barrett: One of the recommendations that have been made by social assistance groups and other community groups in particular, but not narrowly defined by the people who are concerned about women's safety and security, has been the issue of telephones being paid for by social assistance. They have never been seen as a necessity—and the government has as a general necessity—although virtually every household in the province has access to a personal telephone.

I am wondering if the minister has considered, or will consider in the near future, the possibility of putting telephones in as part of the basic necessities

of life and adding basic phone rates into the amount of money that social assistance recipients get every month.

Mr. Gilleshammer: Madam Chairperson, this a challenging question that you ask on telephones because I am sure that you can make a case for an individual who does not have one that perhaps from time to time may find the need for one.

In looking at this—and it is something that we have looked at—I think on the provincial caseload, we have found that about 18,000 of our 27,000, which is close to 70 percent of those individuals, do have a telephone. Telephones are provided for medical reasons, if that case can be made; others will use exempted income for telephones.

I guess the member probably could make an excellent 40-minute speech on the need for a telephone in everyone's home, and given her past record, it would be tremendously interesting.

There is a danger that you start itemizing individual household appliances, or conveyances, or other things, and you know say that the next important item is that every household should have this particular appliance.

It is an issue that has been presented to the department and one that comes up for discussion from time to time. There are no plans today to make that sort of an add-on to the system. It is something we have looked at, and we are doing some more research on it as well.

Ms. Barrett: Madam Chairperson, yes, just a brief far less than 40-minute comment on this issue. I think the minister does himself and his department a disservice when he puts the idea of a telephone in as the opening wedge for additional "appliances," I believe was the word he used, being seen as necessities. I think that a very strong argument can be made that, in order for individuals to be able to have any opportunity to get off social assistance and into the work force, one of the specific things they need is access to a telephone so that they can respond to job requests, they can communicate back and forth.

* (1640)

The medical exemption is a very valid one, as is the exemption that I know is sometimes given to social assistance recipients who have proven that they are victims of abuse.

I think that the telephone serves the function in—to go back to the minister's comment about

expanding the definition of necessity too much by starting with a telephone is that I do not believe there is anyone who says that indoor plumbing at this point in the city of Winnipeg, given our climate, is not now a necessity; that access within one's lodging to gas or oil or electric cooking facilities is not now considered a necessity; that electrical lighting is not now considered a necessity.

I am making a very extreme case here, but I do believe that at a certain point in time in not beyond the realm of what we either know personally or our families know, in many cases those things were not considered a necessity. Times change. Our social system changes. The fact that we do consider those things necessities today means that we have changed and we incorporate into our basic definition of what is required, additional things as we move through our history.

I suggest that in the case of a telephone, we are well beyond—no government in Manitoba has yet done this. I think we on this side would very much applaud a change in that regard.

I would like to as well ask another question on something that I do not believe would cost the provincial government any money. So I am sure the minister will be very open to this suggestion. It is a suggestion that I am sure he is familiar with because it comes from the organization called WORD and one of their—[interjection] WORD, the Winnipeg Organization of the Responsibly Disadvantaged. Several members I know have discussed issues with this group.

One of their concerns and one of the recommendations that they have is in the area of transportation. My understanding is that disabled Manitobans can access transportation services if they get approval from their worker and are allowed two free trips a month if they get prior approval from their worker, which is 24 trips a year.

The recommendation that is being made by WORD, which I think has a number of positive aspects behind it, is that at the beginning of each fiscal year or anniversary date or some beginning that is agreed upon, the individual would have those 24 trips that he or she could draw on without asking for the prior approval of the worker, and this would also allow the individual the flexibility of determining when they would use those trips, rather than having it being narrowly defined as twice a month, if there could be without any additional cost a change in this

policy. I am wondering if the minister has given this any thought and if he would consider giving this recommendation some serious consideration.

Mr. Gillehammer: Madam Chairperson, I would like to go back to the telephone issue first. You know, there are many ways of looking at it, and I did not want the member to start comparing telephones to microwaves or fridges or stoves or other appliances. I did indicate that almost 70 percent of our provincial clients do have them.

I am saying that when you bring in a new program there is a cost. The estimated cost of making phone services available to all of those clients is in the neighbourhood of \$5 million. If the member is asking for five million new dollars, then we will be up above 10 percent in our spending and, again, there is a cost, or if the member would say the priority should have been telephones as opposed to creating a new program that cost an equivalent amount of money, that is a decision you have to make.

I do not know which the member would recommend, whether we should cut something else out to create a new program, but I am just saying that we have embarked on a number of new things that are a cost to government in the increased rates, in the new programming, in the liquid assets changes and so forth. I think we have done a good job in providing additional resources there. What the member is saying is, do more and provide more resources. I say to her that we have made our budget for this year and these are our limitations.

I recognize there are other issues that advocacy groups and critics bring forward in the social allowances area that we will take the next months to look at and perhaps be brought forward as ideas in another budget. Again, we have to balance that off against the costs.

If we forgo increasing the rates because we want to do it through a dedicated fund for telephones, that is a big decision we have to make, and again then we would be making a decision for all recipients, whereas by adjusting the rates then they have the freedom of choice within those rates where they want to spend their money. It is a difficult decision.

The transportation issue is one the member has brought up. Yes, we have met with advocacy groups, among them WORD, and I am just trying to think of the name of the president and the leader of that group. It just escapes me for the moment, but

we have met and I would not be surprised if the member has met with the president and other members of that organization.

I appreciate the apolitical way that they have always approached these suggestions and ideas that they bring forward. I know that they do represent a significant number of people out there. I was sort of pleased with the dialogue that we had from time to time with that organization, whether it was in my office or as I met them somewhere in the building, outside the Chamber here or on the front steps, that they do present some good issues, and I think have been able to move on a number of those issues, one being the recognition of the needs of the disabled, and the other the liquid assets. While I do not believe they represent all recipients, they are one of the groups along with MAPO and SACOM and others who bring forward ideas and help us to plan our priorities.

Along with the telephones, another issue is transportation. I think we are going to be able to do something in that area in the coming months that may allow for more flexibility and choice on how they use the funding that is available for transportation.

Madam Chairperson: Item 3.(c)(1) Salaries \$734,000—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$244,100—pass; (3) Financial Assistance \$13,405,000—pass.

Item 3.(d) Regional Operations: (1) Salaries \$20,582,300.

Ms. Barrett: Madam Chairperson, I have a couple of questions on the Salaries line for Regional Operations.

* (1650)

When I looked at the last year's Estimates as far as the staffing is concerned there has been a bit of a change from last year's Estimates to this year's adjusted to next year's Estimates, particularly in the managerial category where there is a reduction of seven for this next year. In the Professional/Technical where it was estimated at 379, there actually was 382 and it is now down to 379, a minor change, a continued, slow but steady reduction in the Administrative Support from 106 to 103 and now down to 101.

My question is twofold—one, work force adjustments, a definition, please; secondly, where particularly the managerial spots that have been eliminated through attrition or whatever cause—where were those SYs located?

Mr. Gilleshammer: The regional operations, of course, encompasses our staff in the Social Allowances office and other regional offices that provided some of the employment programming. We have downsized in some areas of Manitoba where there were regional operations and staff that basically were handling the CareerStart Program. As we looked at the work this department did, it was felt that we could provide that program with fewer staff as we add staff other places for things like the Children's Advocate. There are some work force adjustments and staffing adjustments that take place, so that there will be fewer staff in that area.

Ms. Barrett: Madam Chairperson, is the location of those staff in Winnipeg or are they in other regional locations? I am talking in particular the six, seven managerial positions that have been lost.

Mr. Gilleshammer: I believe all of those positions were located outside of Winnipeg.

Ms. Barrett: Can the minister share with us the exact locations of those managerial positions?

Mr. Gilleshammer: Yes, they would be located in Brandon, Winkler, Churchill, Killarney, Steinbach, Thompson, Dauphin, Teulon and The Pas.

Ms. Barrett: Those are the managerial positions that were decreased. Does that mean that there has been a sizable downsizing of those regional offices, or were there other managerial positions in those offices?

Mr. Gilleshammer: That varied from one community to another. In some of those communities, it was a free-standing office with one person in it that has been closed. In some of the larger centres where there was sort of a government building, they would have been housed within that facility.

Ms. Barrett: Can the minister very briefly say which of these locations meant the closing of an entire office then?

Mr. Gilleshammer: I think the one place where it was freestanding was probably Brandon, where there was a location on Princess Avenue that was apart from the government building. In all of the other centres I believe they shared space with other department staff or other government departments.

Ms. Barrett: So just to recapitulate this. These staff year decreases all were related to the rationalization, if I can use that phrase, of the CareerStart Program?

Mr. Gilleshammer: The change is made in the employment services areas of our department.

Madam Chairperson: Item 3.(d)(1) Salaries \$20,582,300.

Mr. Alcock: Madam Chairperson, I notice that the time is drawing to a close here, so I thought before the minister left the Chamber and we adjourned these particular proceedings, perhaps I could ask the minister for a few items that he could bring forward on Thursday, and then we will consider the review of this item and the passage of this particular line.

I just wanted to clarify with the minister, given his commitment earlier to bring forward stuff this week, by "this week" does he mean by this next Estimates period Thursday after Question Period?

Mr. Gilleshammer: Yes, I expect we are doing Estimates on Thursday, and when we meet then we would have some information for the member.

Mr. Alcock: I would note that this is Tuesday, five o'clock, so we have got a whole day. Nobody has to work all night. The minister made a specific commitment to have the grants list available this week. Does this mean we will see the grants list at the start of Estimates on Thursday?

Mr. Gilleshammer: I made that commitment earlier this afternoon and will abide by that.

Mr. Alcock: Well, the minister has made a lot of commitments that have tended to be a little more flexible in their execution than his initial statements might have indicated. I understood him to say that we will see in this Chamber at the conclusion of Question Period, at the beginning of the Estimates, the grants lists. I appreciate hearing that.

I would encourage the minister to take the next 24 hours and see if he cannot get his department organized and come back into the Chamber with the information so we can conduct a proper review of the Estimates of the department rather than having to help him shape up the information that he has provided.

I note, as the critic for a great many departments, that I have an opportunity to see other departments in action, and they do seem to manage to come forward with the information that they are expecting the House to pass on. I would hope that the minister can encourage this department to do the same.

Mr. Gilleshammer: Madam Chairperson, I have indicated that we would attempt to have that ready for Thursday when we meet. On Thursday I fully

expect at some point in the afternoon we will be able to provide the member with that information, but I must say, what a tremendous disappointment the member is to me when he refers to civil servants in such a negative way, people that I think work very, very hard for the government of Manitoba and the department. As a former civil servant himself, with a career of not much note, I would think that in his time when he worked with departments and other members of government he would have a higher regard for them.

I cannot help but reflect on his comments yesterday, when we talked about a new program that is going to provide some advocacy for children, and he referred to a civil servant as a political hack. That was his estimation of someone who is going to be hired to work with children and to protect the children of this province.

He continues to disappoint me in his reference to the members who work so hard for the government in Manitoba.

Madam Deputy Chairperson: Order, please. The hour being 5 p.m. and time for private members' hour, committee rise.

Call in the Speaker.

IN SESSION

Committee Report

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

I move, seconded by the honourable member for Sturgeon Creak (Mr. McAlpine), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS—PRIVATE BILLS

Bill 39—The Salvation Army Grace General Hospital Incorporation Amendment Act

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable member for Sturgeon Creak (Mr. McAlpine), Bill 39, The Salvation Army Grace General Hospital Incorporation Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi constituant en corporation "The

Salvation Army Grace General Hospital," standing in the name of the honourable member for Wellington.

Ms. Becky Barrett (Wellington): Mr. Speaker, I would just like to put a few remarks on the record in regard to The Salvation Army Grace General Hospital Incorporation Amendment Act, in particular a few remarks about the Salvation Army in general from a personal point of view.

Before I was elected to the House in September of 1990, I was executive director of a small organization called Women in Second Stage Housing, which provides services for women and their children who have left abusive relationships. I took over that position from a woman who had served in that position for over a year, who was a captain in the Salvation Army and who had done remarkable service for that organization and who then went on to work with the Catherine Booth Bible College in establishing a program for educating young people in the field of social work.

I have since that time had the opportunity to attend several of her classes in social work and listen to and participate in the process of education of those young people in the field of social work and have been very impressed with the calibre of those students, the dedication that they bring to the principles and philosophies that underlie the profession of social work and other helping professions and the commitment that they show, not to the least as a result of their participation in the work of the Salvation Army to the causes that we as social workers, and I hope legislators, all espouse.

So, Mr. Speaker, just a few brief words that I wanted to put on the record in commemoration and congratulation to the work that the Salvation Army has done in many areas, not just the Grace Hospital, although that has been a remarkable institution as well, but just some personal understandings of the work and the people who have lived and worked and followed the precepts of the Salvation Army. With those few remarks, I close my comments on this bill.

Mr. Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Question before the House, second reading of Bill 39, The Salvation Army Grace General Hospital Incorporation Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi constituant en corporation "The Salvation Army Grace General Hospital."

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion? Agreed? Agreed and so ordered.

SECOND READINGS—PRIVATE BILLS

Bill 52—The Pas Health Complex Incorporation Amendment Act

Mr. Oscar Lathlin (The Pas): I move, seconded by the member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett), that Bill 52, The Pas Health Complex Incorporation Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi constituant en corporation "The Pas Health Complex," be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Mr. Lathlin: Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to act as the sponsor for this bill concerning the operation of The Pas Health Complex. The bill is straightforward. It would allow for the expansion of the membership of the board of directors to add two new members so that The Pas Health Complex could be represented by a good cross-section of the community.

So, therefore, I would urge all members to support this amendment.

Mr. Speaker: The question before the House, second reading of Bill—the honourable Minister of Urban Affairs.

Hon. Jim Ernst (Minister of Urban Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Government Services (Mr. Ducharme), that debate be adjourned.

Motion agreed to.

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS—PUBLIC BILLS

Bill 16—The Health Care Directives Act

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable member for The Maples (Mr. Cheema), Bill 16, The Health Care Directives Act; Loi sur les directives en matière de soins de santé, standing in the name of the honourable Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard). Is there leave that this matter remain standing? Leave? It is agreed.

Bill 18—The Franchises Act

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway), Bill 18, The Franchises Act; Loi sur les concessions, standing in the name of the honourable member for Niakwa (Mr. Reimer).

Mr. Jack Reimer (Niakwa): It is my pleasure to stand today and talk on Bill 18, The Franchises Act,

as introduced by the member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway). In essence it is to regulate the sale of franchises in Manitoba. The concept of franchising and franchises is a very big and very complicated function in business and in all aspects of society right now. When we look at business, in a sense franchises have grown to become a very, very strong and very important contributor to the economy and to the work force of very many locations, not only here in Winnipeg and Manitoba but also right throughout the world.

The growth of franchises is well documented in the fact that right now they even have trade fairs where the franchises are put on display, if you want to call it, where people can walk around and they can literally shop for a franchise if they are interested in going into business. Franchising offers one of the easiest ways, if you want to call it, and one of the quickest ways of an individual to go into business, because they are taking advantage of a tried and true and a proven system of doing business because of the parameters and the guidelines that are put out in franchises. An individual has the opportunity to take advantage of the management, the marketing, the exposure, the buying power of having a franchise, and the availability of going to the public in the selling of a commodity, a service or a product.

* (1710)

So franchising becomes a very lucrative and a very big business in the sense that a lot of people have to be aware of what they are getting into. What this proposal is, that has been brought forth by the member, it is in a sense going to regulate the sale of franchises here in Manitoba. It should be pointed out that the reason how it would come into regulation would be that the seller of a franchise would have to clear a prospectus through the Manitoba Securities Commission. In essence what it would mean then is if a person was setting up a franchise or trying to sell franchises here in Manitoba, he or she would then have to go to the Manitoba Securities Commission, file a prospectus with it, and then the person that would be interested in purchasing that franchise and would get involved with that franchise, the franchisee, if you want to call it, would then have to make him or herself cognizant of what is in the prospectus.

The prospectus in a sense will describe the conditions of the contract between the franchisee and the franchiser, but it does in no way ensure that

the franchisee will understand the liability that he or she would be creating through the contract. In essence, the franchisee would still have to be aware of the legal contents and the contract that that person has been involved with in taking over that franchise for whatever that commodity is or service or product.

The franchisee or the prospective franchisee, in essence, would have to and should, you would hope, get strong legal advice or strong accounting advice as to the viability and the ramifications of what that person is getting involved with in the franchise. The franchise can be in various commodities.

One of the biggest ones that I guess we are very, very familiar with is naturally the McDonald's franchise, which is a world-renowned and worldwide franchise. It should be noted that is a relatively new franchise, because it has not been around that long. In fact, the man who started that franchise, I believe, started that after he retired from his job as a milk-shake-maker salesman. He got into that as an afterthought in a sense of having a burger franchise.

That is just an example of how things can grow, and how things can become very prosperous when a person sets about a certain amount of parameters and ideas, and it is a good idea and it works for itself.

In bringing forth this bill by the member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway), his intent is to really place additional burdens on the Securities Commission, and the fact that the prospectus being put forth cannot deal with all the details that can become part of a franchise.

A franchise agreement can be one page; it can be two pages. A franchise agreement can be actually the size of a telephone book at times, because of the requirements and the conditions and the guidelines that are set out between the two parties. It becomes an agreement of understanding in a sense that the two people or the two parties have to come to an understanding. The understanding is usually brought forth with consultation through lawyers or through accountants or through business advisers or through people who are in lending institutions to evaluate the franchise.

A strong franchise is one that a person would have a track record to look at and would know that the strength of it is more or less in the proof in the pudding, if you want to call it, because of the fact that if the franchise has been around for a while,

there is a track record. There is the availability of talking to people that are involved with the franchise or who have had experience or success with the franchise so that the franchisee can evaluate it much more readily than to look at a prospectus and think that that is going to tell him or her or the company that this is the only condition or the only parameter to make judgments on. The individual must look at his own or her own availability of getting the experience or getting the exposure and getting the advice that is made to make it happen, if you want to call it.

Here in Canada, there is only one other province that has legislation, in a sense, that is similar to what is being proposed. That is Alberta, it being the only province in Canada that does have this type of legislation. At the present time, Alberta in fact is reviewing this act because it has become—I am led to believe that the understanding is that it is not workable. It has become too cumbersome. It has become too unworkable in a sense of the interpretation of it.

So even Alberta, which has, like I say, as mentioned, the only type of legislation to this effect, is also looking at actually changing it. It is needlessly burdening the franchise industry.

What it does is put the burden too much into the bureaucracy, if you want to call it, with a misunderstanding of interpretation because of the prospectus that is required. A prospectus cannot provide the total wherewithal for the individual to make decisions on. In Alberta, where the legislation has been in effect, they are now looking at re-evaluating it and possibly changing it with a different type of direction on it.

Ontario is in the process of looking at some sort of direction regarding franchises because, as mentioned, franchises and franchising have become such a big, lucrative business venture that the government in Ontario is now looking at some sort of indication on that. What Ontario has done is going to provide money to Laurentian University to do research on the area of franchising, to give a better understanding not only to the government of Ontario but, I imagine, to all of Canada in the sense of which way franchising is compounding and affecting the business.

An Honourable Member: Look at Salisbury House.

Mr. Reimer: That is right. They did not franchise though.

Ontario, with their government allocating money to Laurentian University, will possibly give all areas of Canada a better understanding of franchising.

Australia as a country has franchise legislation and they too are reviewing it because of the fact that the ever-changing environment of franchising is something that they are concerned about. They have decided that the legislation does not provide the protection, but what it is doing is increasing the costing of franchising. I think there is an awareness, not only here in Canada but as mentioned in Australia, of the effect of franchising. The area has to be monitored in a closer evaluation but, at the same time, in not trying to overburden the industry with government and government regulations and government bureaucracy that would possibly add more cost to it, add more involvement that the people are not able to exercise their right to join or buy a franchise.

* (1720)

I should mention that the member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway) had the opportunity to bring forth legislation of this nature when he was in government, when the NDP were in government, but there was no movement at that time to be overly concerned about the consumer in a sense of franchise protection or franchise amendments. It seems that the member is now bringing forth this type of legislation for the sake of change only, without being able to even sell his own caucus when they were in power and had the opportunity to make changes. The government at that time, which was the NDP government, had the member in caucus with them and at that time it would appear that the bill had been brought forth before, but would not clear through their caucus. I would think that the member, he presented the bill in the previous session of this legislature to this government, and I would think that it had been proposed to the

government of the NDP when they were in power also, but I guess there was also a concern or other concerns that it did not get past the caucus and it is now being brought forth as a private member's bill for this government to consider.

This government is concerned naturally about the welfare of business and the welfare of all businesses, whether they be in the franchise business or all business. A healthy business climate and environment is very, very conducive to work, to jobs, and to the creation of wealth within this province which government exposes and gets its tax base from. Any type of tax revenue through any type of successful business has to be available to anybody who is interested. The business environment, whether it is franchising or private business, must work in a very co-operative way. So as the member for Niakwa I am very concerned that all my constituents are well served.

Mr. Gerry McAlpine (Sturgeon Creek): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Gimli (Mr. Helwer), that debate be adjourned.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 25—The University of Manitoba Amendment Act

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable member for Osborne (Mr. Alcock), Bill 25, The University of Manitoba Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'Université du Manitoba, standing in the name of the member for St. Vital (Mrs. Render). Stand. Is there leave that this matter remain standing? Leave? It is agreed.

An Honourable Member: Make it six o'clock, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Six o'clock? Is it the will of the House to call it six o'clock. Agreed. Okay, that is agreed.

The hour being 6 p.m., this House is now adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. tomorrow (Wednesday).

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

Tuesday, April 7, 1992

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Unveiling of Manitoba Quarter Coin Reimer	1920
Dewar	1921
Gaudry	1921

World Health Day Wasylycia-Leis	1921
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Matter of Grievance

Hiring of Director of Women's Directorate Lamoureux	1922
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ORDERS OF THE DAY

Committee of Supply

Health	1928
Family Services	1946

Private Members' Business

Debate on Second Readings - Private Bills

Bill 39, Salvation Army Grace General Hospital Incorporation Amendment Act Barrett	1961
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Second Readings - Private Bills

Bill 52, The Pas Health Complex Incorporation Amendment Act Lathlin	1962
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Debate on Second Readings - Public Bills

Bill 18, Franchises Act Reimer	1962
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