



**Second Session - Thirty-Sixth Legislature**

**of the**

**Legislative Assembly of Manitoba**

**DEBATES  
and  
PROCEEDINGS  
(Hansard)**

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Speaker*



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**MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
**Thirty-Sixth Legislature**

**Members, Constituencies and Political Affiliation**

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

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, April 18, 1996

The House met at 10 a.m.

### PRAYERS

### PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

**Madam Speaker:** In accordance with Rule 21, we will proceed with Monday's rotation for the first hour's business.

### PROPOSED RESOLUTIONS

#### Res. 1—Border Crossing

**Mr. Jack Penner (Emerson):** Madam Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to propose to you a resolution, and I would move, seconded by the honourable member for La Verendrye (Mr. Sveinson), that

WHEREAS Canada and the United States share the world's longest undefended border; and

WHEREAS both countries make extensive use of border crossings to ensure the smooth flow of goods between our nations; and

WHEREAS the provincial government has prioritized the establishment of our province as the major link to the central North American trade corridor; and

WHEREAS the provincial government has recently marked the completion of the twinning of the Lord Selkirk Highway that will result in a substantial increase in its usage; and

WHEREAS the need to work in close concert with our American counterparts to ensure efficiency in border crossings has never been so necessary.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that all members of the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba strongly urge the federal government to streamline customs clearance procedures and develop policy and regulations that will

be compatible on both sides of the border so that Manitoba may fulfil its customer service obligations that are integral in maintaining Manitoba's position in the global market; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that all members of the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba strongly urge the federal government to expand customs facilities in the constituency of Emerson in light of the twinning of the Lord Selkirk Highway and the anticipated increased usage.

#### Motion presented.

**Mr. Penner:** I think it is important to note that Manitoba has spent a significant amount of time and energy to ensure that the compliances that have been agreed to between Canada and the United States and now Mexico under the NAFTA agreement will not only enhance very substantially the flow of goods between the two countries, Canada and the United States, or I should say the three countries, Canada, the United States and Mexico, in both air traffic and the deregulation process in rail traffic. The deregulated process in truck traffic will ensure the requirements that we have initiated some eight years ago.

That is simply to conclude the construction of Highway 75 joining that with I-29, which will now become one of the major traffic routes in North America. That will accommodate the flow of traffic both from eastern Canada into the Winnipeg region and out of western Canada down No. 1 Highway into Winnipeg from the western region and therefore allow for a very significant increase in highway truck traffic into the United States and Mexico down I-29 and on into Mexico. That will be seen and designated in my view as the international trade route, trade corridor in North America.

I believe that the huge amount of money that Manitoba has spent in facilitating this now requires us to accept the fact that the 70 percent increase in exports that we have seen over the last number of years is an

indication of the need to expand the Customs facilities at the border at Emerson on I-29.

We believe that the \$3.3 billion or 88 percent of our imports and exports are going to come down this traffic route. We believe that the Pembina-Emerson border crossing is the second busiest commercial border traffic west of Sarnia, Ontario. We know that it is only the Vancouver-Washington port that is busier than this. We question the fact that Ottawa has now said that their first initiative will be a crossing in Alberta when this crossing here, anybody looking at the crossing coming from Winnipeg driving into the United States sees the mirage of trailers that have been set up to accommodate this proper staffing and flow of traffic through that port.

It really looks somewhat like a Third World country facility that is there at the time. We believe that because of the competitiveness and the nature of the traffic flow and the goods that cross the border here that we need to access and make sure that these goods actually reach destination on time, and that can only happen if the flow of traffic through good port facilities is initiated.

There are many other things that are going to impact to even further the increased traffic flows, and I think we have talked on a number of occasions about the establishment of the WINNPORT corporation, in other words, a group of trucking firms established to increase commercial traffic and have commercial traffic that now overflies us into the southern United States, land here, drop their commercial loads here and then continue on by truck and utilize Winnipeg as a distribution centre of exported and imported goods. That in itself will again demonstrate the need to increase the flow of traffic at the port of Emerson.

I think it is also important to recognize that there needs to be an initiative taken at that border point once the new customs are in place to further facilitate proper traffic flows that would accommodate the trucking industry, and that is to implement a joint weigh station at that site. That certainly can happen if the Province of Manitoba and the states of North Dakota and Minnesota would be willing to comply in those regions.

Manitoba is known in Canada as the area and the place where the cheapest manufactured goods emanating from our primary resources come from. The elimination of the Crow rate, of the \$720 million subsidy for transportation that has been paid to the railways over the last couple of decades that enhanced the flow of grain to ports such as Vancouver and Thunder Bay, have now been eliminated. This will, I believe, enhance the traffic flow in a north-south manner to a much greater degree than we have seen in the past.

There are two initiatives that need to be recognized here, both of them requiring proper customs clearance: that we should focus on targets and lobby the major railway companies to ensure that we have proper rail traffic north and south; and that we at the same time have proper truck traffic north and south, because north and south is where much of our traffic is going to head.

Churchill, I believe, is going to become a very important export point for raw goods out of Manitoba. Emerson will become a very important, probably one of the most important, ports in Canada, for processed and manufactured goods. This whole north-south corridor is the natural flow of products that needs to be accommodated.

\* (1010)

We know that under NAFTA the superhighway and the trade and the transportation down this corridor will be reflected because of the topographical nature of the traffic route. It is probably one of the flattest routes in all of North America, and therefore designating it as a corridor becomes ever more important.

At the Emerson facility we have seen the merging—or Canada Customs is talking about merging—the two facilities. The east facility will be closed, according to all information that we have. It is now open only on an eight-hourly basis, regardless. Those two facilities will be amalgamated I understand, at I-29. We believe that many of the firms that are now considering western Canada as their home and we believe that milling companies that had traditionally established in eastern Canada—and we have accommodated the flow of grain into those milling firms under the Crow benefit, under

the At and East program [phonetic], under the feed freight assistance act, and a number of other acts that have been used to subsidize grain movement into the Toronto-Montreal area and to provide the milling firms over there with product—will now move to western Canada. Manitoba, being the place in western Canada that has raised traditionally the highest quality milling wheat in the world, could very easily become the home of the milling, or be seen as the milling capital, of Canada simply because we are going to, by freight differentiation alone, be the cheapest place in Canada to acquire the milling products that are going to be needed.

We think that many of the systems that have been traditional will change very dramatically over the next number of years. We believe that some of the systems that have been used will change dramatically, and I talk about some of our corporative structures that are going to have to change in order to allow producers to become owners of their own processing plant. I will give you some examples, Madam Speaker. The sugar beet industry in North Dakota and Minnesota was always owned by corporations, some of them that were not even at home in the United States. Over the last two decades, the Minnesota and North Dakota sugar beet growers have taken full ownership of the five processing plants that grow, process, sell onto the store shelves directly, as farmers, their finished product. They will raise the products. They will manufacture the products. They will refine the products. They will market the products and put them right on the store shelf, farmer to store-shelf ownership.

I believe that these kinds of co-operative structures are the wave of the future. The Carrington pasta plant, the pasta plant that was built at Carrington, North Dakota, is a farmer-owned corporate structure which puts a finished pasta product on the shelf directly off the farm. The buffalo processing plant in North Dakota is a farmer-owned processing plant that puts a finished product on the shelf, Madam Speaker, right out of the farm gate. Similarly, we will see the emergence of those kinds of corporate structures in Manitoba that will see a vast increase in processed and finished goods flowing out of Manitoba into the world market, whether it be through WINNPORT, whether it be through Emerson and other customs crossings, but they

will head south. There is a vast opportunity to increase our exports, to increase the flow of finished goods out of Manitoba.

There is a vast opportunity for farmers to become directly involved in ownership of these processes, but it is important for our federal government to recognize their responsibility, Madam Speaker, and their responsibility is to ensure that we have proper border crossings; proper Customs and proper brokerage houses; proper weigh scales at these Customs facilities; that these trucks need not stop for days on end and wait for them to be able to cross.

So I urge all members of this Legislature to support this resolution, to urge the federal government to take their responsibilities seriously, to invest, as we have in this province, in infrastructure. Part of that infrastructure should include the establishment of a good, solid, massive new venture at Emerson, Manitoba, to increase and enhance the flow of traffic through Customs. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Mr. Gerard Jennissen (Flin Flon):** I rise to put a few comments on the record with regard to the honourable member for Emerson's resolution, and I thank the honourable member for that resolution.

It is true that Canada and the United States share the world's largest undefended border. It is a fact we take for granted. I know that it always was not so. In fact, I was also born in a country where there were defended borders, because I happen to be born during the Second World War. Certainly that was not very pleasant. So we can all be thankful that we have the world's largest undefended border. It is something we tend to take for granted. In many places of the world, borders are synonymous with barriers, and although all people of good will support the smooth flow of goods, as the member for Emerson suggests we should be supporting, from one country to the other, in this case from the United States to Canada and the other way around, we should remember that often more than merely goods flow across borders, also ideas and people and tourists and cultures.

I note with some alarm that the number of tourists coming to Manitoba is down. In fact, if I can just quote

this, in the last seven years, from 1988 to 1995, only Manitoba and New Brunswick had declines in nonresidents one or more nights trips to province. Only Manitoba and New Brunswick had declines in 1995 over the previous year. Meanwhile, Canada had a 5.6 percent increase in tourism, and most provinces had an even higher increase last year. So we certainly need to increase tourism, specifically in the North.

Also, Madam Speaker, I think we are well aware that there are some negative sides to the flow of trade, certainly to free trade and NAFTA, not to mention cultural erosion that takes place and the Americanization of the Canadian identity as our two nations become more and more intertwined. It is not that Canadians or Manitobans for that matter cannot be as rugged and competitive as the Americans are. We could be. The question is, do we necessarily want to be?

Because I think we have to remember that we are vastly outnumbered. It is not just a smooth flow of goods between one country to another, we are also talking about a relationship between a nation that is 10 times our size. That relationship by most people is seen as symbiotic but by a few is seen as parasitic.

\* (1020)

So we have to take a look at the fact that we are dealing with an elephant-mouse kind of relationship. It is not two equal countries in terms of size and power. But we do live at the edge of the 21st Century, and I am not advocating isolationism. We would be foolish not to support that which would bring more trade and tourism to Manitoba. We need all the jobs we can get, and we certainly need a lot of them in northern Manitoba. We need all the tourists we can get. When you do get them to Winnipeg, please ship them north, because we could certainly use more tourism in Lynn Lake and Leaf Rapids and Snow Lake and Flin Flon and so on.

I am pleased to note that the provincial government has prioritized, as the member for Emerson (Mr. Penner) said, the establishment of our province as the major link to the central North American trade corridor. Now, saying that is one thing and actually being it is another, but at least we are saying it. We are the Keystone Province, after all, that is true, and it makes

sense that that should be high priority, but we must remember that Ontario and Saskatchewan and other provinces will make similar claims.

I had the pleasure of attending several meetings of the central North American trade corridor. In fact, we set up a chapter in the North, and the meetings were held in Cranberry Portage. Although I listened with interest to the glowing reports of the potential benefits of trade with the United States and with Mexico, as the honourable member for Emerson has also pointed out, it always seemed to me that only the positives were put on the table and the negatives were ignored.

I listened with special interest not only to the American delegates at that particular meeting, but to a Mexican delegate, a trade delegate from the Mexican embassy in Ottawa, and she quoted only positives. Never once did I hear the word "maquiladora" or the free trade zones between the United States and Mexico on the Mexican side. I never heard about the low wage economy there, the pittance wages. We never heard about the fact that there are very poor pensions or very few benefits, that most of the workers are women. None of the negatives were touched upon. I think sometimes we have to put both sides of the equation on the table. Certainly, there are benefits, but there also are negatives.

Improved trade relations, I think, are important, yes. Streamlining customs clearance, of course, yes, but we need to be vigilant also to protect our workers and our environment and our culture and heritage. It is somewhat ironic, I suppose, that while the member for Emerson (Mr. Penner) talks about urging the federal government to expand customs facilities, the federal government is planning to close the Emerson east border crossing. In fact, apparently, they are going to do so this coming May, and that is after building a \$9-million bridge across the Red River.

The Winnipeg Sun called it the bridge to nowhere and maybe that is somewhat uncharitable, but I do know that even in the area the local president of the Chamber of Commerce has said: I do not want to call it a bridge to nowhere because it still comes into town, but it is basically a dead-end after this because you loop back into Manitoba. We will not wear that bridge out in a generation.

Madam Speaker, that concerns me somewhat because, boy, we could sure use \$9 million for bridges in northern Manitoba. I am thinking of Norway House and I am thinking Cross Lake. I am thinking even of South Indian Lake, where the road has not even been built according to the Flood Agreement, leave alone the bridge. That is a lot, \$9 million, and we could have done a lot with it in northern Manitoba.

That concerned me because northern roads are neglected and the \$92 million that was to be infused into northern roads because of the Repap deal in 1989 has been put on hold—no, it has not been put on hold; it has been cancelled. That concerns us. So, yes, we could do a lot with \$9 million in the North.

Something else bothers me. It is obvious that the province and the federal government do not always collaborate very well because you would not build \$9-million roads to nowhere if you were aware of each other's planning.

It seems to me that one hand does not know what the other hand is doing. It is also ironic that, when we are talking about facilitating north-south links to trade—and we should include Churchill, by the way, and I am glad the honourable member mentioned it—we sometimes seem to be a little weak on the intelligence links between Ottawa and Winnipeg.

I would not be happy with the bridge to nowhere, and we certainly could have used it in the North where we could have built bridges to somewhere, but I guess it is a fait accompli now. I would say to the member for Emerson, with our eyes wide open and fully aware of the other side of the coin regarding trade relations with the United States, a somewhat darker side that members opposite are prone to ignore, we do support the resolution because I think it is an important resolution.

In fact, to expedite this matter somewhat, I am willing to limit my time and the members in this House are willing to support the resolution from the member for Emerson. Thank you.

**Hon. James Downey (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism):** I rise to give support to this resolution

and make a few brief comments. I would fully endorse my colleague from Emerson's comments, Madam Speaker, and all the reasons why this resolution should be passed. I would as well like to make a further comment, as it relates to the first THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, I fully support it. The last one has more of a direct implication for one constituency.

I would like the application of the first THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED to apply to all border crossings in southern Manitoba, whether it is at No. 10, No. 83 Highway, and/or any of the other crossings across southern Manitoba, that I consider all of Manitoba to be essential and important to the accessing of people moving across the border. In fact, I read recently that I think there has been some listening done as it relates to the need for streamlining. I know there are some pilot projects taking place throughout some of the different ports across the southern part of Canada, and I would just continue to urge the federal government to further streamline that.

As well I think it is important to point out, because this has caused some considerable concern, that when some of the American tourists have arrived at the Canadian border, their lack of understanding as to what they can and cannot bring into Canada. Pepper spray has caused a considerable amount of difficulty, where American visitors have come in and have, in fact, been penalized and, in fact, sent home without being able to successfully fulfill their vacation. I believe it is a matter of information that has to be provided by the Canadian government and by all of us involved in tourism to make sure that the American tourists are fully informed as to what they can and cannot bring into Canada, and I think that is an obligation that they should carry out.

As well, I wanted to make sure, and I wrote to the federal minister responsible for the ports systems, that we be treated no differently than the way in which they treat pepper spray or anything else in the other parts of Canada. We do not need to be singled out as a jurisdiction that is more harshly or less harshly treating people coming to Canada.

I will conclude by saying, Madam Speaker, that I believe that with the trade that has developed between

Canada and the United States, the whole activity as it is related to NAFTA, that there have been trade increases by over 100 percent between Canada, and particularly Manitoba, and the United States since 1990, a tremendous movement of product into the U.S., which is extremely important to job creation and our economic long-term well-being.

We do have to, as the member said, streamline the process of getting that product through into the United States, but also be able to deal with the Mexican border crossings. There is a program in place; it is the organization known as the I-35 coalition which are working to further enhance those activities. We are being asked to be a part of it. North Dakota, South Dakota are asked to be a part of it. There is a cost which goes with being part of that initiative. It is now being assessed as to what the benefits would be.

I will conclude, I think we have to make sure the infrastructure is in place to now catch up to the actual activities that have taken place with trade between Canada, United States and Mexico. Free trade has truly demonstrated, that it is working, and I can assure you that the border activities have to be brought into line to make sure that it accommodates that activity.

Thank you.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster):** Actually, I am somewhat pleased in the sense that for the first time in the last number of years, the past eight that I have been involved, that there seems to be a general will to see more resolutions actually debated and passed. Hopefully, we will be able to even carry further rule changes in the future with respect to private members' business.

\* (1030)

Specifically on Resolution No. 1 that has been introduced by the member, I would like to add a few comments. It is interesting, Madam Speaker, that what we have is we have a provincial government that, on the one hand, is saying the federal government is cutting back on things such as transfer payments, the federal government has to give more attention to deficit control, and then we have in this resolution a request in

essence for the federal government to spend more money.

My colleague for The Maples (Mr. Kowalski) and I were having somewhat of a discussion on the role of advocacy groups and what in essence we are doing is we are turning this Chamber, if you like, into an advocacy group saying that we want to have additional funds and resources spent on the border crossing.

Madam Speaker, ultimately I would argue that there is nothing wrong with that, that in fact standing up for Manitobans is what we are here for inside this Chamber, making sure that Manitoba gets its fair share and that they are represented through this Chamber, and I respect that. When we look at the criticisms that this government levels at other organizations that advocate, such as home care and others, the government is very suspicious and imputes motives and so forth.

We are pleased to see this particular resolution come to the fore, and I guess ultimately what we would like to see the federal government do is to bring into the province of Manitoba a system that is going to address the needs of the province of Manitoba well into the future.

There have been a great number of individuals that come from the United States to Manitoba and vice versa, from Manitoba into the States, and if there are ways in which we can expedite and ensure that communities along the border can in fact be better facilitated, if you like, through enhancements in some areas, then we would be in support of that.

We, in essence, look at our main border crossing, which is the Highway 75, which goes into I believe it is Interstate 29—I have never been there myself personally and, hopefully, I will get the opportunity at some point in time at least to visit the site—but I understand that there is a considerable backlog at times where people are waiting and what we do need to see is some sort of overall plan going into the next century in terms of how we can best accommodate whatever traffic flow there is going to be, both commercial and personal, and anything we can do to facilitate that sort of positive discussion or planning is something which



we would be in favour of. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Mr. Frank Pitura (Morris):** I would just like to take a few moments to put a few comments on the record in support of the resolution that has been put forward by my honourable colleague from Emerson. As a member representing the constituency just north of my honourable colleague from Emerson, many of the things that he spoke about in the resolution directly have impact on the Morris constituency as well since Highway 75 transects right across the constituency on its way towards the border.

Madam Speaker, one of the things I would just like to put on record is the fact that Manitoba is fast becoming an export outlet into the United States whereby goods and services will flow through Manitoba into a population into the United States in excess of \$80 million people, and we have had this demonstrated to us through the people involved with the organization of WINNPORT, where 747 jet aircraft will be flying into Winnipeg with goods and services placed on container trucks and then transported into the U.S., into this large 80-million population market, and it will also come back that way, as well. So the important link there, of course, is the border crossing and to be able to facilitate a very fast, rapid transit right through the border crossing, so that those goods and services can flow that way.

Another thing to keep in mind, too, is the fact that in terms of a twinned highway accessing the United States, this is the only twinned highway going into the United States, particularly the midwestern states and towards the eastern states, between Toronto and Vancouver. So it becomes a very integral transportation link to the United States, and it is a linkage that we should try to enhance and encourage more use of.

So with those few comments, Madam Speaker, I would hope that all members in the Assembly would see fit to support this resolution. That is all I am going to say.

**Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River):** I would also just like to take a couple of minutes to make a few

comments on this resolution. As my colleague from Flin Flon (Mr. Jennissen) indicated, we are prepared to support this resolution. We all recognize the importance of trade between the United States and Canada, but, Madam Speaker, there has been a large controversy over this last winter about product moving across the border, that being namely in the farming community, farmers illegally moving grain across the border and bypassing the Canadian Wheat Board.

I hope, Madam Speaker, along with looking at moving product across the border, we will also recognize that there are laws in place with respect to the movement of grain and that this government in putting forward this resolution is not looking for a way to bypass and make it easier for people to move grain which comes under the monopoly of the Canadian Wheat Board into the United States.

I think that this trade is very important, but we also have to recognize that we cannot move too much of that grain into the United States because we will run into confrontation with the American farmers, and that may lead to tariffs being put on products and unpleasant discussions between Canada and the United States. So, Madam Speaker, the one point that I want to mention here is that although we support opening up the borders for the smoother flowing of goods between nations, we have to recognize that there are commodities that are under the jurisdiction of the Wheat Board, and the people who are trying to move those products have to follow the laws. I would hope that this is not an attempt to try to bypass that.

I would hope also that the government would recognize as they are improving roads in southern Manitoba and increasing that traffic and making it better for tourists to come into this country and our tourists to go that way, that we also recognize that in rural and northern Manitoba there are many roads that must be upgraded.

Hopefully, very soon, the government will recognize that responsibility, and we will start to see them fulfil commitments that we have heard for many years. Look at my constituency and many parts of the North where the government has made commitments but not upheld them.

Basically, my concern is with the agenda to try to open up customs and not an attempt to bypass the Canadian Wheat Board which has the real role in seeing the proper distribution of wheat in this country. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Madam Speaker:** Is the House ready for the question?

The question before the House is the resolution moved by the honourable member for Emerson (Mr. Penner), seconded by the honourable member for La Verendrye (Mr. Sveinson).

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

**Some Honourable Members:** Agreed.

**Madam Speaker:** Agreed? Agreed and so ordered.

\* (1040)

### House Business

**Hon. Jim Ernst (Government House Leader):** Madam Speaker, I would propose, by leave, that we move to Resolution No. 2 and that we debate Resolution No. 2 for an hour, as would normally occur, and then, at that point, we can consider perhaps second reading of Bill 200—The Health Services Insurance Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'assurance-maladie. [interjection] Well, no, then we will not be able to read his bill.

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please. Is there leave to debate Resolution No. 2 for now? We do not need leave to move to Resolution No. 2 because we have completed dealing with Resolution 1. Is there leave to debate Resolution No. 2 for one hour? [agreed]

Is there leave then to proceed to deal with Tuesday's rotation as proposed on today's—okay, we do not need leave for that, because we will just proceed. That will be the regular business dealt with under that hour of Private Members' Business.

### Res. 2—Port of Churchill

**Mr. Eric Robinson (Rupert's Land):** Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton),

WHEREAS the bayline and the northern seaport of Churchill are valuable assets of this province; and

WHEREAS the Port of Churchill last made money in 1987 when 17 ships shipped grain; and

WHEREAS shipments have been less than half of what was needed to make a profit every year since; and

WHEREAS in the 1993 federal election the Liberal Party of Canada promised to ship one million tonnes through the port; and

WHEREAS in 1994 the shipping season started a month late and ended on October 19 with just nine grain ships having visited the port for a total of 291,000 tonnes; and

WHEREAS in 1995 just seven ships were sent to the port; and

WHEREAS the Canadian Northern Gateway Transportation Company has proposed a workable business plan which can revive the port and the bayline; and

WHEREAS it is vital to the interests of this province that the port continue to operate.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba go on record as stating its strong support for the Canadian Northern Gateway Transportation Company proposal; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Assembly urge the federal government to support the Canadian Northern Gateway Transportation Company proposal on an urgent basis; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Clerk of the Assembly be directed to send a copy of this resolution to the federal Minister of Transport and the Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board.

**Motion presented.**

**Mr. Robinson:** Madam Speaker, I will be very brief in my remarks. I believe that we have discussed the Port

of Churchill at great length in this House on several occasions in the past. I recall, on June 9, 1994, we had a very extensive discussion, debate, in this House on a matter of urgent public importance regarding the Port of Churchill, and again we put on record some of the concerns that we had about the ongoing life of the Port of Churchill. So I do not question the support by members in this House of the possibilities that do exist for the Port of Churchill and, of course, most recently the northern transportation company and gateway north. I believe that the port repeatedly has shown its viability. In November of 1995, members in this House will recall that the port made history, and also made history for all of Manitoba by the arrival of the MV Federal Franklin on November 25. So this proves that the shipping season through the Port of Churchill is much longer than is commonly recognized, and we are very proud and we indicated our pride to the Gateway North people and also to the residents of Churchill by immediately sending a letter of congratulations to His Worship Mayor Michael Spence, who has over the years been a very strong supporter of the Port of Churchill. As well, we have had many supporters over the years. I appreciated the comments in past questions I have asked to the Minister of Highways and Transportation (Mr. Findlay) for this province who has always indicated a strong support for the Port of Churchill, including other members on the government's side.

We also have the people at the Hudson Bay Route Association. Unfortunately, because of a death in my family a couple of weekends ago, I was unable to be at the meeting that was held in North Battleford, Saskatchewan, but certainly people like Willis Arthur Richwood and others have been active supporters, and have continued to give good advice on the bayline and also the Port of Churchill itself.

The resolution we have tabled, Madam Speaker, is calling for support, not only for the Port of Churchill and also the Gateway North project, but it is also asking this province and the federal government and the Saskatchewan government to allow them the opportunity that this House is fully supportive of the ongoing life of Churchill. Many in this House will also know that last week Gateway North sent representatives to Russia and the project appears to be

proceeding with some momentum. We have made many commitments on this side of the House to the modernization of the port, for one thing, the extension of the shipping season, and we have also been with the Gateway North people in their meetings in Yorkton with the Saskatchewan government. The honourable member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk) and the honourable member for Flin Flon (Mr. Jennissen) and I went to a couple of meetings in the province of Saskatchewan last summer, both in Yorkton and also Regina. So our support is without question.

I appreciated the comments made by the member for Emerson on the possibilities that do exist, not only for the southern part of this province, but also the possibilities that exist in northern Manitoba, most particularly in Churchill. As you know, Madam Speaker, the most recent announcement made by the Gateway North and the Government of Canada has been the announcement of Terry Duguid, and certainly we in Churchill welcome the news of Mr. Duguid heading up the Gateway North initiative. We believe that he brings a lot of good attributes to the job and we feel that he will do a good job in promoting the viability of the Port of Churchill. Of course, in January of this past year, we were happy to hear the Honourable Lloyd Axworthy, Minister of Western Economic Diversification at that time, name the board of directors for the Gateway North marketing agency, and we believe that all these people are competent and they bring a wealth of experience to assure the people in Churchill that there are some possibilities for the port, and of course they include Donald Gibb, Doug Webber, who is the former mayor of Churchill, Siobhan Mullen, Costas Nicolaou, and Lillian Tankard, who is the president of the Tourism Industry of Manitoba.

As well, recently, I am talking less than two weeks ago, we welcomed the news of the appointments to add to those announcements made back in January by the honourable Dr. Jon Gerrard, now the Minister responsible for the WED. Of course, now Chief Norman Kirkness of the Fox Lake First Nation will join the board, and we wholeheartedly support that appointment. Of course, Mr. Ed Schreyer, who is the former premier of this province, Darrel Cunningham, the former Saskatchewan Minister of Agriculture, Ed

Hubert of the Manitoba Mining Association, and Hugh Campbell of Saskatchewan have been appointed to the Gateway North Agency.

Now, we believe, Madam Speaker, these individuals have shown by their commitment to this very important project that Gateway North is moving forward on its agenda of restoring the role of the Port of Churchill, and I am very excited about the potential of Gateway North in turning around eight years of declining shipments through that port. The potential of Churchill to ship grain and other commodities is well known, and, regrettably, opponents of the port have been able to stop Churchill from getting its fair share of grain over the past eight years by forcing the port into a deficit position. However, supporters of the port have been working tirelessly to overcome these obstacles, and with Gateway North I believe that their efforts will see success in the next little while.

But I do take this opportunity; I look forward to the support of all members, and I am sure that the people of Churchill will be anxious to see the support being extended by all members of this House with respect to the ongoing life of the Port of Churchill, the Gateway North Agency, and all the initiatives that are relating to the Port of Churchill. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

\* (1050)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster):** Madam Speaker, as the member for Rupertsland (Mr. Robinson) concluded his remarks, he was making reference to there being opponents, and I think that we have to acknowledge that in fact there are other vested interest groups that are out there no doubt, that are not within the province of Manitoba per se or the province of Saskatchewan, because a vast majority of Manitobans and individuals from Saskatchewan, or Saskatchewanites, see the benefits of an expanded, reliable, viable port out in Churchill, and in the last federal election what we had seen were Members of Parliaments today and all 14 candidates during the last federal election who saw just how valuable and important the Port of Churchill was to all Manitobans.

That is one of the reasons why that provincial body of federal candidates made a commitment to try to get

the number of tonnes increased through that Port of Churchill. I applaud them for making that commitment, and, hopefully, we will see that commitment realized.

One of the things we have to acknowledge is the efforts, if you like, from all of those that were involved in the establishment of the Canadian Northern Gateway Transportation Company and the individuals that are participating with this group of individuals to try to present not only to Manitobans, but to individuals, in particular within the federal cabinet, in other groups, whether it is in North Bay or wherever they might be across the country, the importance of the Port of Churchill because, ultimately, we believe as a provincial party that the Port of Churchill can be viable, and it is in fact in our best interest to do what we can to see that the federal government is at least being presented in the best fashion possible the positive opportunities that will be derived if we are successful in keeping the Port of Churchill alive.

By passing a resolution of this nature, I believe ultimately that it shows that there is that support for our members of Parliament that are fighting very hard for the Port of Churchill. The resolution, in a couple of the WHEREASES, some might detect it as being somewhat negative reflecting on some of our people that are actually fighting hard for this port, but I am sure that that was not the intent from the member for Rupertsland (Mr. Robinson), to reflect negatively on those individuals that are trying to fight for this port, survival if you like, but in essence the resolution is something which we as a provincial party do indeed support. Thank you, Madam Speaker, for the opportunity to speak.

**Hon. James Downey (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism):** I apologize for being a little slow on my feet here. I thought the member was going to give a long, long speech on the subject.

Let me at the outset, Madam Speaker, rise to speak on behalf of the Department of Industry, Trade and Tourism and as well make some comments for my colleague the Minister of Highways and Transportation (Mr. Findlay), who has been very much involved in the overall activities as it relates to Churchill and the

transportation as it relates to Churchill and the activities which we would like to encourage, a lot more utilization of the rail system. It is, of course, a very important piece of infrastructure for Manitoba and for all of Canada.

I have been involved in many debates as they relate to the Port of Churchill over the many years that I have been in office. I have to say that my personal position has not changed, that it is a very important piece of Manitoba and a very important piece of Canada. I think to some degree it has been the politics of eastern and western Canada that have been a lot of the deterring factors that have kept Churchill from maximizing its potential. I do not think I would have any disagreement from the member who introduced the resolution and/or other members of this House in saying that.

I want to as well indicate some of the work that this government has done as it relates to broadening the activities as they relate to the Port of Churchill, and I may be a little broader than what I should be as relates to the specific resolution, but I think it is important to put it in this context.

For far too long, we, the people of this country, have depended upon Churchill and the use of it has been certainly identified probably more for grain than anything else. Although grain is and will be and should continue to be a very important commodity, there are a lot of other activities that we believe can be put in place to enhance the Port of Churchill. This government I think wants to go on the record, certainly I want to put it on the record, what has taken place, whether it is the work through Arctic Bridge and the support of the Arctic Bridge project, the work that has taken place at the rocket range and the work that is being done to develop a satellite launching system by Akjuit. The fact that we have had several different ministers spend time, whether it was in Russia or dealing with potential transportation activities that would bring product in through the Port of Churchill, whether it be minerals or other activities. To this point, none of those other things has taken place.

I should also put on the record, Madam Speaker, that we have seen extensive work as it relates to the

development of a national park at Churchill, and of course we believe that will be a reality within a short period of time and will add to the overall diversity of that particular port. Dealing more specifically as it relates to the Canadian Northern Transportation Company, I just was talking to the member, and I think maybe there could be a little bit of a change to the wording. I think it either should be referred to as the northern transportation agency or the Canadian northern gateway—gateway north transportation limited. However, we are not going to argue over that.

It is a matter of us all wanting to get to the same objective that the Port of Churchill be maximized, that the rail line be maximized and how will that take place. I think it is clear that there have been some proposals put forward, both to CN and dealings taking place as it relates to the operation of the port. I think it will, in fact, take a different agency, a different organization to make something happen. There has to be, at the end of the day, a profitable operation in place, both for the operation of the rail line and the port.

There are those that would argue that the rail line will become very useful and very efficient and very rewarding to those owners if in fact—and now that the transportation costs of moving grain have become greater to the farm community, the Crow Rate is no longer with us, what will happen is the most efficient transportation system, the most efficient way of getting grain out of Canada will, in fact, be sought. There are many studies and reports in place that, in fact, clearly point out that Churchill will become one of those ports that will enhance that.

Madam Speaker, to stand here today and to say we give support to this resolution has, I think, brought all parties in this House—I do not think there has been any difference of general agreement—the Port of Churchill should be more used, it should be enhanced. It is a matter of how that will take place. We have seen some changes in the ownership of CN. We have seen a proposal made to CN as it relates to the overall activities and who will operate that portion of the line. We also know that to be part of that the export port system has to be as well controlled to the interests of that overall agency or company that is being established.

I am probably more positive today than I have ever been as it relates to the future of the activities at the Port of Churchill. Maybe I am being overly optimistic, but I think that there are some positive signs of at least some change, rather than just saying we are going to sit here and rail away at the federal government, say they have to put more grain through it, the Wheat Board has to put more grain through it.

The resolution as it speaks, saying that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba go on record as stating its strong support for the Canadian Northern Transportation Company proposal. It could be agency or company limited.

\* (1100)

Be it further resolved that this Legislature urge the federal government to support the Canadian northern gateway transportation for the proposal on an urgent basis. It is urgent. It has gone on far too long that this system has not been fully utilized. There are jobs. There is economic development. I think it is also important to show that we are doing something to further support what we want to do as it relates to the Northwest Territories and Rankin Inlet for the commerce that we can carry on between our two jurisdictions. It is important that this be sent on to the Minister of Transport and the Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board.

In supporting the resolution, Madam Speaker, I think that it is extremely important that this be moved on to the federal government, that there is a support for this resolution, that the future of Churchill, we believe, has an opportunity if the support is given from those ministers who are responsible. Again, I just will conclude by saying that I have been extremely pleased and proud of our Premier's (Mr. Filmon's) involvement in the activities as it relates to the support of Churchill. All of my colleagues, the Minister of Highways and Transportation (Mr. Findlay), the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Praznik), we have all worked with the same objective, and this resolution hopefully will get the desired results as it relates to the future prosperity of a major part of Manitoba and western Canada. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Mr. Oscar Lathlin (The Pas):** I would also like to offer a few comments to this resolution.

Firstly, I want to thank my colleague the member for Rupertsland (Mr. Robinson) for sponsoring the resolution. I would also go on to thank and acknowledge the hard work and dedication of a lot of people, a lot of them whose names I do not know, and I am not going to be able to mention them here in this short address. But I would like to acknowledge the work, for example, of the Port of Churchill committee headed up by Sue Lambert and others from The Pas. Also, the same acknowledgement should go to the Hudson Bay Route Association whose membership is comprised of people from Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta, Madam Speaker.

I would then also would like to acknowledge the dedication and the tenacity and the determination of people from Churchill, past mayors and councils, Mr. Webber, and now the current mayor of Churchill, His Worship Mr. Spence and his councillors. The same acknowledgement, of course, goes to the citizens of Churchill, Madam Speaker.

I also would like to acknowledge the work of the Minister of Highways and Transportation (Mr. Findlay). I remember one time in The Pas he and I were both at a hearing that was being held by the federal Liberal Party. The Minister of Highways and I were both in The Pas at the time to make presentations on behalf of the railway and the Port of Churchill, so I, of course, acknowledge the work of the Minister of Highways and Transportation for that.

I am also going to say, Madam Speaker, that it is nice to hear and listen to all the nice words that are being offered here today; very supportive. It makes me feel good to hear people being supportive at least in terms of words. I only hope that those words will also have the ability to translate into meaningful action, action that will mean the continued existence of the railway going to Churchill and, of course, the continued existence of the Port of Churchill. I believe that the support from this Legislature should be more focused, should be more aggressive. Nice words are fine, but in the end, when there is no action, those nice words can also be very hollow and not produce anything.

One of the reasons I support this resolution is that I believe the Port of Churchill and the railway, in the

words of the member sponsoring the previous resolution, is more than just moving goods and services on a system, Madam Speaker. It has to do with people, too. You see, there are a lot of people living along the railway going up to Churchill, and the majority of those people living along the railway are, of course, aboriginal people. They are indigenous to that area; they were born there and they are going to stay there.

When I was listening to the other speakers I started thinking of how ironic it is that we are debating on a resolution trying to make some positive influence on the part of the provincial and federal and private industry to ensure that the Port of Churchill continues to exist. A long time ago, when our people were living in that area, there were no roads, there were no highways or railways and certainly there were no ports, nor were there airports. As time went on, of course, that area, northern Manitoba, not unlike other areas of Canada, land was developed to the point where we have now become dependent on having a sound transportation system, in order that our people may continue to exist as well, Madam Speaker. That is why I found it a little bit ironic, because we are no longer able to live off the land completely as we used to before, because of the impact that settlement, that area and throughout the North, over the years, has had on the North.

I would like to end by saying, once again, that it is nice to hear the good words, but I would urge all members that we have to make sure that those good words, nice words, translate into something more meaningful for the people of not just Manitoba, but particularly the people living along the way, and also for the people living in the community of Churchill. Thanks very much.

**Mr. Jack Penner (Emerson):** It gives me a great deal of pleasure to stand and put a few words on record regarding the resolution put by the honourable member for Rupertsland (Mr. Robinson) before the House today. Having had a significant amount to do and discussions with some of the proponents and some of the better supporters of the Port of Churchill gives me some significant comfort, in standing in this House today. I refer to one Doug Webber, who is the mayor of the Port of Churchill, whom I have come to know

quite well and have a great deal of admiration for because he is what I call a true northerner. He is a true proponent of his community, and he is a builder of his community and a builder of the North. So I recognize the efforts that Doug Webber, the mayor of Churchill, has made to enhance the visibility of the importance of the Port of Churchill.

\* (1110)

There is one other person that I want to recognize, and his name is Eddie Johanson. He is probably one of the most dynamic speakers that the North has bred and raised. He is a very strong proponent of the Port of Churchill. He has travelled this country and, I think, lobbied and spoke to every politician that has ever had an involvement with the Port of Churchill and some that have not. But these are the kind of people that are able to influence the people that make decisions, whether in this House or in the federal Parliament or in the Legislature of Saskatchewan, and these two people have done a tremendous job in raising the visibility and demonstrating the viability of the Churchill line.

The Port of Churchill is not and should not be seen as one of the greatest ports to export grain out of. It is not. It is, however, an export point in the middle of a continent, and the province of Manitoba happens to be in the middle of the continent. I think it would be a travesty if the federal government walked away from its responsibility to maintain that export point out of mid-continent. It does two things. It gives access to other countries that are within very close proximity of our province and Canada. It allows the export of products, whether they be grain products, fertilizer, lumber, or anything else that you want to export, to be exported to those countries such as Estonia, Russia and others.

The then Minister of Highways and Transportation, Mr. Albert Driedger, met the first ship to come into the Port of Churchill three or four years ago, and that captain of that ship said he could haul four shiploads of grain out of the Port of Churchill during the short shipping season, as much grain as he could haul out of the Port of St. Lawrence all year. Now the time factor is the element here to move grain or other products into those countries, and time costs money, especially when

you are moving big ocean-going freighters. They are hugely expensive to operate. So I think there is a real consideration to be made, and the province of Manitoba, this government, has always been a supporter of the maintenance of that export position as a Canadian export position.

I have always believed that if our selling agencies would pay more attention to the value of the goods shipped out of that port, we would have a better export point at that position. Therefore I say to you, Madam Speaker, that it gives me pleasure to support this resolution, because it identifies clearly the need for Manitoba to lobby hard the federal initiative to maintain that position and to keep the federal investment current and expand it. We have a great opportunity to see the expansion of new technologies in Churchill because of one thing, and it is the one issue that Manitoba is probably best known for worldwide, and that is its clean environment and its clean air and its clean water.

Churchill has clearly been demonstrated as a selected site to launch rockets and to launch satellites. For what reason? Because it has one of the best clean environments anywhere in the world. We should not lose sight of that. Similarly, the agriculture products that we raise in this province are seen worldwide as coming near to or being the kind of products that people want to buy today, clean of chemicals, grown in a clean environment, grown on clean land, grown in clean air, and clean water used for the irrigation and the propagation of these products.

The manufacturing sector has a similar reputation as having the ability to produce foods that are pure and therefore acceptable in the world market. The Port of Churchill, whether it is simply used as a transportation route or the expansion for the use of other things such as the launching of rockets—and I believe there are many other potentials there—that can certainly enhance the viability and the credibility of northern Manitoba and many of the Northerners.

Our mining industry in northern Manitoba has a great opportunity to use the Port of Churchill to ship its products into the world marketplace. The mining community has been expanded very dramatically under

our governments and our government's policy, and therefore I believe that we will not only see the support of the province of Saskatchewan but I believe that the Americans, both in North Dakota, Minnesota and South Dakota will see the use and the viability of the Port of Churchill as an essential part of a North American transportation regime that needs to be supported on a much broader basis than we have currently seen. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson):** Madam Speaker, I want to speak very briefly on this because I know there are other members who wish to speak on this resolution, and I believe there may be a willingness to pass this as a statement of support, not only the specific proposal that is outlined in the resolution but also for the Port of Churchill. I want to indicate that I have been fortunate to have a long association in working on behalf of the Port of Churchill.

I am a former member of the Port of Churchill Development Board, and I think pretty well from Day One as a northern MLA I have taken every opportunity to speak out in support of our northern port. I want to indicate that I am very pleased to see the support today in the Legislature because in previous debates regrettably some time ago there often tended to be less than unanimous agreement.

There were members of this House who were not supportive of the Port of Churchill, and I consider it an historic evolution that I would sense today that there are 57 members of this Legislature that all support the Port of Churchill and the importance of the port. That is very important, Madam Speaker, because we are paradoxically at a crossroads now where there are two roads ahead. We see on the one hand a dramatic decline in the last number of years in the amount of grain shipped through the Port of Churchill. We have seen that the targets that we were set have not been met. We have seen some pretty dark clouds for the port in terms of that particular site. We have seen significant cuts to the bayline in terms of the maintenance of the bayline and lack of reinvestment in the bayline.

So, on the one hand, there are some very disturbing signs for the port, but, on the other hand, as has been



pointed out by speakers from all sides of this House, there is a great deal of potential. We are seeing discussions taking place about the possibility of not only shipping grain but shipping minerals into the Port of Churchill for refining, whether it be from Voisey Bay or whether it be indeed even from Russia, to use the smelting capabilities of Hudson's Bay Mining and Smelting in Flin Flon or Inco in Thompson.

I believe there is a great deal of further potential for the port given the establishment of the territory of Nunavut. I was somewhat disappointed, Madam Speaker, that the selection of the capital will mean that the capital of the new territory of Nunavut will be served out of Ottawa and Montreal, but I think there is a great deal of opportunity to get into Nunavut and use the fact that we have a seaport, we have a community of Churchill, which already does a significant amount of servicing of the health care needs and other needs, trade needs, of what is now the territory of Nunavut.

\* (1120)

I believe there is a great deal of opportunity to develop joint ventures with Nunavut and would encourage government members and all members in this House to be working actively to achieve that. If we can link in with Nunavut, I believe we have a tremendous amount of potential to developing northern part of Manitoba and also Nunavut itself, whether it be in terms of transportation, whether it be in terms of other activities, including trade. I believe, particularly in the area of education, there is a lot of potential in northern Manitoba.

I want to conclude by saying that I have always believed that the symbol of our Legislature, the Golden Boy, always significantly points in one direction, north. I know it was referenced by Ed Johanson, whose most favourite saying at any banquet is, *Vive le nord*. And I want to conclude by echoing that sentiment and saying that the future of Manitoba in many ways, I believe, still lies in the North, a great undeveloped potential, and the Port of Churchill is an absolutely key part of developing northern Manitoba and the province as a whole.

Thank you.

**Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Northern Affairs):** Madam Speaker, as Minister of Northern Affairs, it gives me great pleasure to join in this debate on this very important resolution put forward by the member for Rupertsland (Mr. Robinson), who represents the community of Churchill as well as many of the communities served by the bayline.

If I may for a moment, although there is a great spirit of co-operation, I think, in this House in moving towards passing this resolution today, I would like to take one issue with the member for Thompson's remarks. I, too, am an individual who has come to know Mr. Johanson very, very well. I thought, and perhaps it is my error, that his favourite saying was not *Vive le nord*; I thought it was his second favourite. I thought his first favourite saying was, *Keep the log to the saw*. That is one he has used on many occasions. *Keep the log to the saw*. To some degree, that particular saying of Mr. Johanson's is equally applicable to this resolution because it does just that. It keeps the pressure on those who have the decisions to make, to some degree.

**Mr. Ashton:** What are we, the log or the saw?

**Mr. Praznik:** The member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) says, are we the log to the saw? I am not quite sure, but I say that my comments are meant to be in jest, both of us knowing Mr. Johanson very well and his dedication to the North and its future.

If I may pick up for a moment on the comments again for the member for Thompson, when he did talk about the North and the future of the North and the Golden Boy facing the North and the symbolism of that, many of the changes that we are seeing now in the North American economy, many of which we have very limited ability to control, and some we do as Canadian people, the change in the Western Grain Transportation Act, the elimination of that particular subsidy.

Many of those factors are totally revolutionizing the way in which we do business. What we are discovering, particularly when you look at the trade figures for this province, when you look at some of the things that are happening, is that our economy now is

very much starting to line up being a north-south economy, as opposed to an east-west economy. Whether good, bad or otherwise, that reality is happening.

I would just share with members an experience I had in some dealings with the North West Company, and we are very fortunate as a province to have that company choose Winnipeg, our capital, and the province of Manitoba to locate one of the most modern warehousing operations in North America today. The North West Company, as members know, I think, very well, is the major retailer throughout much of northern Manitoba, throughout much of the Canadian north, throughout the Arctic. They have recently acquired a chain of retail stores in Alaska and either have acquired or were negotiating to acquire the sole retailing company in Greenland.

What is so exciting about that, of course, is most of the product sold throughout the Arctic regions of North America and Greenland potentially will be sourced or supplied out of our province. One of the factors in making that happen is having an efficient, competitive transportation system. As was explained to me by one of their vice-presidents, the farther north that they can move product before having to put it on an aircraft, the better it is. In an ideal world, I think their preference would be to have an all-weather road directly to Churchill on which they could move reefers of produce, in particular, from Winnipeg to Churchill in a 24-hour period, to load on aircraft to distribute to their stores throughout the Arctic. That is not quite possible today, but certainly the railroad is a link.

I asked them why this has not happened in the past, and one of the problems has been, I think, the lack of competitiveness on the part of the current owners of the railroad, CN, in accommodating that customer base. The former member for Flin Flon, Mr. Jerry Storrie, I remember a debate we had in this house, and we talked about moving people along that bayline. He told a story from his days being in cabinet when there was talk of a rail bus. What started as a small, efficient cost-effective little project to take a bus and structure it so it could move up and down and move people on regular service along that bayline, with the help of the bureaucracy and the federal government, turned into

a—I look to the member for Thompson—how many millions or hundreds of thousands at least. There were not proper steps; it was just a disaster. What could have probably taken \$30,000, \$40,000 or \$50,000 in public support to get started, and probably if it had developed as a business run by a few families or something, it would have worked and maybe required minimal public support, all of a sudden became a huge expensive trial project which at the end of the day had to be cancelled because it was too expensive.

The history of Churchill and the bayline and the North and the government, benevolent government support from Ottawa, to make those things work under whatever political party, quite frankly has led to a situation now where nothing really is adequate or supportive. This particular project, this particular initiative to set up this kind of a company, to take this on and make it work and accommodate the North West Company's ultimately additional customers—I look to my colleagues who represent northern Manitoba constituencies.

We all know that INCO's purchase of a majority interest in Voisey Bay presents some opportunities for us with the INCO smelter. As I get more into this as Minister of Mines, one recognizes even the Newfoundland requirement of that company to do a certain amount of processing in Newfoundland. The next step in the process of producing marketable nickel could be done in Thompson.

**An Honourable Member:** We would do the refining?

**Mr. Praznik:** The refining, and it does not have to be done all the time. It does not have to be done; it is another option.

If, from time to time, a certain amount of that product came through the arctic seas to be processed in Manitoba and we sold them the electricity and the jobs that go with it, it is a plus. We want that ability to compete, and that is dependent upon having a competitive, responsive transportation system. What CN has demonstrated to all who have studied that line is, for whatever reason, they are not capable of delivering that, whether it be their rules, their regulations or their corporate policy.

Here we are now with, I believe—and I have been an advocate of this since I became Minister of Northern Affairs and had a chance to look at the issue—if the current operators cannot do it, let us see the thing moved over in a way that it can survive and will take on those transportation challenges and fulfill those needs.

So I am very pleased that the local MLA for Churchill has brought this forward, and I compliment him. Many of the pieces of legislation and resolutions he brings to this House, I often find myself very supportive of, and I say that to him as a sincere compliment. I will be pleased to support this resolution when it comes to a vote earlier this morning.

Thank you.

**Mr. Gerard Jennissen (Flin Flon):** Madam Speaker, I too would like to speak to the resolution proposed by my honourable colleague from Rupertsland. I am not used to public speaking that much, and I spent till two o'clock in the morning writing 15 pages of diatribe against both the Liberal government in Ottawa and the provincial Tory government here, but in the newfound spirit of comradeship—I am feeling good—I think I will just have to wing it on a more positive note.

I do, however, have a few reservations. I do see a little bit of irony in Mr. Axworthy fully supporting the line, and I think at one point even promising \$27 million for the port and for the line, while at the same time the federal Liberal government seems to be hell-bent for leather, if you will pardon the language, to privatize, to get rid of the public transportation system that our forebears created. So I cannot resist putting a little bit of a jab in, but that is the only one. The rest is definitely positive, and I certainly have high regard for the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) as well as for Mr. Axworthy.

\* (1130)

Gateway North now has a group of people leading it. I think these are good people, Mr. Duguid, Hugh Campbell, Darrel Cunningham and others—people we know—Doug Webber, especially, from Churchill. I think it is a positive step in the right direction.

We all are aware that this country needs tourism. This province needs tourism badly, and I cannot think of a better place for tourism than going on the bayline going to Churchill. You know, Churchill and the bayline do not have to be a white elephant or a white beluga for that matter. We can make this thing pay. It can be a good business proposition. I personally would have preferred it, if it was run and owned by the provincial governments of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, in conjunction with wheat pools, farm groups and native organizations, but be as it may, we are now at this point where we have to support the Gateway North project.

I think we have to remember also, it is not just a matter of shipping grain to Churchill. There are bayline communities, which are good, which not only depend upon the bayline, but are great places for tourism. We have the Akjuit space centre, spaceport. How many places have their own spaceport, their own place to launch rockets? We have it in Manitoba.

**An Honourable Member:** It is in Orlando.

**Mr. Jennissen:** The next one is in Orlando, right.

I think Voisey Bay could be a real big winner for us if Inco decides to backhaul from Voisey Bay, you know, via ship to Churchill, and then transport that nickel ore to the smelter in Thompson.

I have heard people talk about the possibility of Russian fertilizers. Now, I do not know anything about fertilizers. We on this side of the House do not indulge in those matters. But fertilizers like phosphates and potash that sometimes, in order to be upgraded, need sulphur, and one of the big outputs of sulphuric acid, for example, could be HBM&S, because SO<sub>2</sub> used to be spouted in the air.

I think they pretty well have controlled it now. They have an acid abatement program, but I could see the possibility of hauling Russian fertilizers and then using HBM&S sulphuric acid to upgrade those fertilizers—all kinds of possibilities.

The Minister for Trade and Tourism (Mr. Downey) pointed out the Arctic Bridge Agreement. I hope it was just more than a junket to the Soviet Union or Russia.

I think there is real potential there, and I hope the government proceeds with that direction.

We have a unique seaport in northern Manitoba. We have a great rail line. Our forebears have worked hard to make it work. The link was made north-south then—we talk about north-south links now—there is a north-south link to Hudson Bay. I think we want to keep it intact. We want to utilize the natural catchment area in the prairies. We can make it a very profitable line. I think it behooves all of us to give it full and total support. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Mr. Frank Pitura (Morris):** Madam Speaker, I would just like to take a couple of minutes in support of this resolution from the member from Rupertsland (Mr. Robinson).

I have to admit that I am not very much of an expert on the Port of Churchill, however when I was actively farming, every time discussion activities came up in terms of exporting grain, somehow the Port of Churchill always got pushed on to the backburner and never got the discussion that it warranted, but I rise today saying that we are at an exciting time.

I think that we are probably the closest we ever are to getting something happening at the Port of Churchill, because it is an economically viable project, and it is also fast becoming a very important tourist attraction, not for Manitobans necessarily, not for Canadians, but for international travellers who would like to come to Churchill to observe the northern lights or observe the polar bears.

One of the things I would like to put on the record, Madam Speaker, is the fact that what makes it very exciting for me now is to find out that, not only can we ship product from Canada on a cost effective basis, especially with the Crow gone, but we can also ship product out of the northern U.S. cheaper, up through Churchill, than they can ship it either through Duluth or through the Mississippi River system. So we not only have a lot of Canadians taking a look at Churchill as a viable opportunity for exporting product out of Canada, we are also having Americans taking a look at it too, and I think that that lends and will support the viability of the project.

I would just like to finish off by saying that in terms of this whole project with the Gateway North project and the people that are working with it, having met some of them when we were out on the task force, we have a reason to be excited. I think we have the right attitude, we have the leadership, the vision is there, and I see that over the next little while, not only this resolution going forward for support, but all of us having a vision and getting out and really marketing this project to everybody else. So with those few remarks, I would like to sum up by saying we should support this resolution, Madam Speaker. Thank you.

**Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River):** Madam Speaker, I wonder if there might be leave not to see the clock for a few minutes while the last few people—there are a few short comments, two more people to make comments.

**Madam Speaker:** The hour actually expires at 11:42, so I am not certain how many more speakers there are. Are there two? Okay. Is there leave then to extend it beyond the agreed-to hour. Agreed? Leave? Leave has been granted.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. This resolution is a very important resolution. I am pleased that all members of the House are giving their support to such an important issue, and I want to thank my colleague, the Member for Rupertsland (Mr. Robinson), for putting it forward.

Madam Speaker, the Port of Churchill has long been supported by the New Democratic Party. We have brought forward many resolutions asking for this kind of support, and we are very pleased and hope that both the provincial and federal government will now recognize this.

I want to say that from the rural perspective, Madam Speaker, with the elimination of the Crow benefit and the increased costs that farmers are now going to have to pay to ship their grain, it is very important that we look at this opportunity and particularly in the region that I represent, the Parkland Region, going into Saskatchewan where farmers will be paying some of the highest shipping costs. We have to look at those opportunities as to how we can ship the grain.

The member for Emerson (Mr. Penner) said that it is not the most economical port to ship grain from. I tend to disagree with him. I think that it can be a very reasonable cost to ship the grain through that port, but I think a lot more work has to be done by the Canadian Wheat Board and by the grain companies to look for sales and offer this port to the buying countries, because it is the buying country that determines where their grain can be shipped from, but they have to be offered it by the people who are selling the grain.

Madam Speaker, I think that there is a real opportunity. We saw in the last year that shipping can go until November 22. We know that the season can be started off earlier than it has been, and we hear that ships may be coming in earlier. We know that if the federal government is very committed, that icebreakers can be brought into the port, so there are many opportunities. I believe our future is in the North. We have to have the bayline, we have to have the Port of Churchill developed, and we have to look toward tourism in the area. There are many opportunities for growth.

Other members mentioned the development of the territories, the development of the spaceport, the opportunity that may come through Voisey Bay to bring other products there, but we also have to think of the many people who live along that line and need the line to have access to their community. I heard one of the members say the ideal thing would be a road right to the Port of Churchill.

We know that that is never going to happen, so I would have hoped that we would have seen the bayline, when it was being let go, taken over by the provinces and the grain companies and farmers having some control on that line. It is not going to happen, so I commend the people who have worked very hard on Gateway North.

I attended some of their meetings, one in Yorkton, where I talked to many of those people and they do have a good plan. I think that by working together with the people we can have an opportunity for development and an alternate port for farmers which is very important to the people, and I am very pleased that members across the way are giving their support.

I only hope that along with their support we will have more than lip service, that we will have more support for this resolution than we did out of the Arctic Bridge Project or that we got out of promises made by the federal government during the election when they said that they were going to put money into the port and into the rail line and that never happened. There has to be a serious commitment here and development of this port. No other country that would have an inland port such as we have would let it deteriorate to the state that we have let the Port of Churchill.

\* (1140)

There has not been commitment on the part of the federal government, and there has not been enough commitment from this provincial government. When you look back to what the NDP did for supporting the Port of Churchill versus what is happening now, it is not a very good record, and I would encourage the federal government and this provincial government to not only support this resolution, as they said they will, but put their money where their mouth is. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East):** I just want to take a couple of minutes to add my support to this particular resolution. I must say that I am very pleased to hear of the support on both sides of the House, including the Minister of Industry (Mr. Downey), who relayed some of the activities in his department in supporting the port.

I just want to put a bit of historic perspective, because developing the Port of Churchill has been a long-time challenge for the people of Manitoba and for the provincial government, and I think back in the 1970s, when I was Minister of Industry and Commerce in the Schreyer government, we had a transportation advisory group in my ministry, in my department. We worked very hard to develop the support and get the support of the other western provinces. We were very successful, Madam Speaker, in getting the province of British Columbia, Alberta and Saskatchewan on side in helping us to lobby with the federal government to develop Churchill, and, of course, in turn, we helped B.C. in promoting the Port of Prince Rupert.

More latterly, we got Alberta and Saskatchewan Premiers Lougheed and Blakeney who, with Premier Schreyer, agreed to set up the Port Churchill Development Board, and indeed that operated for many years and was very successful in promoting the use of the port.

I think of some of the commodities, everything ranging from Scotch whisky that we brought, courtesy of the Manitoba Liquor Commission, a load of Scotch whisky from Scotland, and also, going out, we had shipments of sulphur. There were great big yellow mountains in Churchill in the '70s, and we had sulphur going out on an experimental basis.

There were these efforts that were made, and, as I said, we got co-operation. We also got co-operation with the federal government at that time, and I only wish we had another honourable Jean Marchand who was then Minister of Transportation, who has long since passed away, but he was very sympathetic to helping us develop Churchill. Among other things, and this is the '70s, we got the Churchill Port deepened, we got improvements to the port facilities.

In addition, we were able to get the Churchill resupply moved from Montreal to Churchill. There used to be a boat going from Montreal supplying the outports of Churchill every summer. We were able to persuade the federal government to channel that through Winnipeg up to Churchill and, using a barge and tug operation, to supply the outports of Hudson's Bay; that was a great move and certainly stimulated the use of the Port of Churchill.

Other things happened. We developed a lot of social housing for the population, and, of course, we developed this very significant major town centre, which still is very, very important in the life of the Churchill community.

I guess the most important point I want to make, Madam Speaker, is that then there was all-party support for these initiatives, as there is obviously today, and the point is, I guess it is almost a matter of economic philosophy. Do we want to develop Churchill as a matter of national economic development, provincial economic development, or do you want to take the

short-term approach which says, well, it is either going to pay its way or we shut it down. Either the line up to Churchill pays its way or the railway ceases to operate.

I think the federal government, especially, has a major responsibility to ensure the continued operation of the line and the continued development of the Port of Churchill, just as the federal government had back when this country was formed with the national economic policies. Through John A. Macdonald, the national government stimulated the development of railway expansion across Canada, not because the CPR was going to begin to make millions of dollars of profit a year after it was built. No, indeed, it was supported on a long-term basis. We supported the development of railways in Canada, the CPR and others, because we felt they were major instruments of national economic development. Similarly, we have to persuade the federal government today to see Churchill and the bayline as continuing in this role, and we have to continue to pressure the federal government.

The provincial government has to continue this responsibility of providing leadership and doing everything possible to persuade the federal government, in co-operation with the province and private enterprise, farm groups and others, to ensure that Churchill has a future, to ensure that Churchill continues to develop. As I said, there is a long history of the provincial government in this province supporting the enhancement of Churchill. I am glad to hear the remarks of the Minister of Industry today about his efforts and others, the Minister of Northern Affairs, that we should, in an all-party way, continue to promote the development of Churchill. With those few words, Madam Speaker, I am pleased to sit down and hopefully see this resolution passed unanimously, as I think it will. Thank you.

**Madam Speaker:** Is the House ready for the question?

Question before the House is Resolution 2, moved by the honourable member for Rupertsland, seconded by the honourable member for Thompson.

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

**Some Honourable Members:** Agreed.

**Madam Speaker:** Agreed? Agreed and so ordered.

**Hon. Darren Praznik (Deputy Government House Leader):** Just a point on House business. I understand the resolution does call for a copy to be forwarded to the national Minister of Transport. I take it that will be undertaken by Madam Speaker, on behalf of the Assembly, with the notation that this was unanimously passed by this Assembly? Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Madam Speaker:** In accordance with Rule 21, we now move to Tuesday's rotation. Private bills? Public bills by private members?

## SECOND READINGS—PUBLIC BILLS

### Bill 200—The Health Services Insurance Amendment Act

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster):** Madam Speaker, I would move, seconded by the member for The Maples (Mr. Kowalski), that Bill 200, The Health Service Insurance Amendment Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'assurance-maladie), be now read a second time and be referred to the committee of this House.

#### Motion presented.

**Mr. Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, it is indeed a pleasure for me to represent the provincial Liberal party and introduce this piece of legislation, in hopes that all members of this House will see fit to allow this bill to vote, in order to go to a committee, and ultimately even see royal assent. It is a bill that we have been most persistent on, as a political party, and genuinely feel that members from all political stripes inside this Chamber can, in fact, endorse.

To that end, Madam Speaker, I thought that one of the best ways for me to give a good idea in terms of what this bill is about is to read a resolution, if I may, which is completely relevant to this bill.

Madam Speaker, it goes as:

WHEREAS the Canada Health Act mandates the five fundamental principles by which the Canadian health care system is governed; and

WHEREAS the preservation and maintenance of the fundamental principles of the health care system is vital to its survival; and

WHEREAS Manitobans believe that the fundamental principles of the health care system must be protected; and

WHEREAS the First Ministers also directed Health ministers to initiate work to apply the broad principles of Canadian health care system to the objectives of sustainability, affordability, responsiveness and effectiveness of the system funded without destabilizing provincial and federal finances.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba request that the government of Manitoba uphold the five fundamental principles of health care system, namely, the public administration, comprehensiveness, universality, portability and accessibility and that the government of Manitoba manage Manitoba's health care system accordingly.

\* (1150)

Well, Madam Speaker, this particular resolution was No. 77 and received the unanimous support of this Chamber back on June 23, 1992, and the House, as I indicated, voted in support of this resolution. I guess, what I am hoping to be able to see is debate inside this Chamber on this particular piece of legislation and, ultimately, at the very least, allow for a vote. It is with some frustration over the last number of months that I have had regarding this bill's lack of progress through the Chamber.

The member for Sturgeon Creek (Mr. McAlpine), for example, had adjourned debate, and every day as this bill was called chose not to speak on it. No member in fact that I can recall—and I do believe that I spend a considerable amount of time, just as much time as anyone else inside here—cannot recall other members actually speaking to what I believe is a very important bill. Manitobans, I believe, ultimately would like to see this bill passed and being given Royal Assent. This Chamber in essence has supported the bill through the passing of a resolution, and if they are sincere in the

passing of that resolution, I would then ask and challenge them then to take this particular bill to heart and allow this bill the opportunity to be given Royal Assent and become law in the province of Manitoba.

Madam Speaker, no doubt if government members pick up the challenge and allow for this debate to occur, they will refer to different parts of that particular resolution, quite possibly, make reference to the commitment from the federal government, make reference to the financial situation that the province is in, make reference to the amount of dollars that this province currently allocates out to health care, and, ultimately, one could argue endlessly in terms of the monetary needs of the five fundamental principle health care system and what it is going to require. But ultimately I would argue that if the political will was within this Chamber to commit to those principles that we should be able to have effective health care reform that will take into consideration any sorts of restraints that the provincial government might have not only in the near future but, I would ultimately argue, well into the future.

Madam Speaker, so the finances of what it is that I am proposing, which the Liberal Party provincially is proposing, should not be a roadblock to the passage of this particular bill. What I would like to see is members talk about the principle of this bill and the merits of those principles, and I would ultimately argue that a part of that Canadian identity that many Manitobans feel very strongly toward is our health care system. They look at the health care system, and they compare our system to the Americans and possibly other countries.

Madam Speaker, they feel very good about being Canadian and what it is that we have in our country as a health care system to offer our citizenry. The member for The Maples (Mr. Kowalski) often makes reference to the phrase, there by the grace of God I walk, and he does not try to take claim for that particular statement, but in essence each and every one of us could have to rely on medical attention, not only in the short term but also in the long term.

Each and every one of us, I am sure, have individuals that rely or know firsthand, whether it is family or

friends, of individuals that need to have the support services of our medicare system.

That is one of the reasons why each and every one of us should be taking this bill quite seriously and at the very least participate in the debate on it. Again, if the government in particular does not feel that this is a bill that should pass ultimately, well, then, at the very least allow it to be voted upon.

I would highly recommend, and I am sure the member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns), the dean of the Chamber, who often talked about the importance of Private Members' Business, allow for the free vote, if you like, inside the Chamber on this particular bill to see if in fact the will of the Chamber is to see this bill passed.

I appeal to the government and any other potential member that is thinking in terms of adjourning debate only to prevent this bill from ultimately seeing a vote occur. I am optimistic in the sense that we just finished seeing two resolutions go through this Chamber, and both those resolutions went through this Chamber because the political will was out there to allow that to occur.

I am hoping that that same sort of positive gesture that we have seen with the first two resolutions will be carried on to private members' bills and public bills, that in fact at the very least we will see a vote that will occur so that I as an individual will know that it is just not a bill that is going to receive the amount of support in the future under this particular regime or under this grouping of MLAs, that we are not going to have that support, and then I am going to have to do a lot more work on those individuals that voted against it before I decide ultimately to reintroduce it.

Madam Speaker, there should be no doubt in the minds of members that we feel very passionate about this bill, and that is the reason why we have reintroduced it. I can assure members that I will continue to reintroduce this bill if it does not have some sort of a vote that will determine whether or not it will go to committee, and that is all I ask as a private member, to allow that to occur. If that vote does occur I can assure members that as long as there is no change



in the makeup of the membership of this Chamber that I will definitely think twice about reintroducing it but, ultimately, I believe that if there was a vote that the vote would be in favour of seeing it pass into committee.

Why do I say that, Madam Speaker? I say that primarily because I recall I was here when we talked and discussed. In fact, I was a part of the negotiations that led to that resolution being bumped. I was a part of those negotiations and the positive feeling about that resolution being brought forward in order to be debated because it required that leave was given. I was genuinely pleased to see the general feeling of the Chamber back then. I know there was a lot of dialogue with the then member Mr. Don Orchard and Mr. Gulzar Cheema regarding this particular resolution and we have seen the resolution pass. I would like to see that sort of participation again on this particular bill. Thank you very much for the opportunity to speak.

**Madam Speaker:** The hour being—are you finished debating?

**Mr. Lamoureux:** I would like to take the adjournment.

**Madam Speaker:** I was not certain if the honourable member for Inkster had completed debate, because he technically has four minutes remaining.

**Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Northern Affairs):** I thank the honourable member for Inkster. I would move, seconded by the honourable Minister of Labour (Mr. Toews), that debate be now adjourned.

**Motion agreed to.**

**Madam Speaker:** The hour being 12 noon, this House will recess until 1:30 p.m. this afternoon.

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

### PRESENTING PETITIONS

#### Home Care Services

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster):** Madam Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Joanne Pritchard, Robin Cordray, Rosana Corpuz and others requesting the

Premier (Mr. Filmon) and the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) to consider reversing their plan to privatize home care services.

**Ms. Diane McGifford (Osborne):** Madam Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Vinh Nguyen, Roland Sanchez, Kitouang Vong and others requesting the Premier and the Minister of Health to consider reversing their plan to privatize home care services.

**Ms. Becky Barrett (Wellington):** Madam Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Betty Ann Palidwor, Irene Martin, Sherry Bohonas and others requesting the Premier and the Minister of Health to consider reversing their plan to privatize home care services.

## READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

### Seasonal Camping Fees

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

**An Honourable Member:** Yes.

**Madam Speaker:** Yes. The Clerk will read.

**Mr. Clerk (William Remnant):** The petition of the undersigned citizens of the province of Manitoba humbly sheweth that:

WHEREAS seasonal camping has provided an affordable form of recreation for many Manitobans; and

WHEREAS the provincial government has announced increases in seasonal camping fees of up to 100 percent; and

WHEREAS this huge increase is far more than any cost-of-living increase; and

WHEREAS this increase will lead to many people being unable to afford seasonal camping.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly urge the provincial government

not to increase seasonal camping fees by such a large amount.

### Home Care Services

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

**An Honourable Member:** Dispense.

**Madam Speaker:** Dispense.

*THAT on at least six occasions during the 1995 provincial election, the Premier promised not to cut health services; and*

*THAT on December 16, 1995, a plan to privatize home care services was presented to Treasury Board; and*

*THAT this plan calls for the complete divestiture of all service delivery to nongovernment organizations, mainly private for-profit companies as well as the implementation of a user-pay system of home care; and*

*THAT previous cuts to the Home Care program have resulted in services being cut and people's health being compromised; and*

*THAT thousands of caring front-line service providers will lose their jobs as a result of this change; and*

*THAT profit has no place in the provision of vital health services.*

*WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba may be pleased to request the Premier (Mr. Filmon) and the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) to consider reversing their plan to privatize home care services.*

\* (1335)

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

**An Honourable Member:** Dispense.

**Madam Speaker:** Dispense.

*THAT on at least six occasions during the 1995 provincial election, the Premier promised not to cut health services; and*

*THAT on December 16, 1995, a plan to privatize home care services was presented to Treasury Board; and*

*THAT this plan calls for the complete divestiture of all service delivery to nongovernment organizations, mainly private for-profit companies as well as the implementation of a user-pay system of home care; and*

*THAT previous cuts to the Home Care program have resulted in services being cut and people's health being compromised; and*

*THAT thousands of caring front-line service providers will lose their jobs as a result of this change; and*

*THAT profit has no place in the provision of vital health services.*

*WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba may be pleased to request the Premier (Mr. Filmon) and the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) to consider reversing their plan to privatize home care services.*

### PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

#### Committee of Supply

**Mr. Ben Sveinson (Deputy Chairperson of Committees):** Madam Speaker, the Committee of Supply has considered certain resolutions, directs me to report progress and asks leave to sit again.

I move, seconded by the honourable member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Tweed), that the report of the committee be received.

**Motion agreed to.**

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS AND TABLING OF REPORTS

**Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister of Family Services):** I would like to table the Second Annual Report of the Children's Advocate for 1994-95, and I also have a statement for the House.

### Department of Family Services Initiatives

**Mrs. Mitchelson:** The legislation which established the Office of the Children's Advocate requires that an annual report of its activities be presented to the Minister of Family Services. I have received the second report for April 1, 1994, to March 31, 1995, and have tabled it today. I have met with the Children's Advocate both in his office and in mine, not only to discuss recommendations in his report but also to include the Advocate in the resolution of matters of vital concern to Manitoba children and their families. Recently the Department of Family Services has undertaken a number of initiatives as have agencies, the Children and Youth Secretariat, and various committees to ensure the protection and safety of children in this province.

We continue to search for ways to improve on the services we provide, especially to children and families in crisis. Madam Speaker, along with the creation of the Children's Advocate's office to ensure that children in contact with the Child and Family Services system have a voice in decisions which affect them, we established the Children and Youth Secretariat to improve co-ordination of services for high-risk children and youth. We introduced the Family Support Innovations Fund to test new ways to keep children in their families. This fund has also been used to provide support to developing the Manitoba Youth-in-Care Network which will serve as a support system for young people who have left the formal care system.

An adoption initiative has been undertaken, and we have improved training and support for the dedicated men and women who provide child and family services across the province. The department has recently undergone organizational restructuring which has resulted in the amalgamation of all our children's services within the Child and Family Services Division.

Finding better ways to serve children and families in crisis will continue to be the main focus of this division.

Child welfare services will place a stronger emphasis on compliance and community development. As we continue to review the Child and Family Services system, I can assure Manitobans we will look at all aspects of the current system, the legislation, child protection, adoption, services to families and the supports and programs they require to build strong, safe and stable communities.

\* (1340)

In the weeks ahead, I will announce the details for the review of The Child and Family Services Act. We plan to strengthen child abuse legislation and establish a risk estimation system as a fundamental tool in child protection situations, along with developing a process to ensure providers have the necessary skills to serve their clients. Officials have met with the Faculty of Social Work to provide input into the social work curriculum.

We are implementing the Child and Family Service Information System to track children at risk, and we are considering ways to respond to allegations of abuse of children while they are being cared for by government or its agencies. We are developing a written format for releasing noncase-specific recommendations from investigative reports on child welfare matters. We will continue to hold agencies accountable to government and the public through compliance audits of their services and monitoring and enforcing standards throughout the province to ensure that all children benefit from the same right to protection.

Consistent with the legislative requirement, an all-party committee of the Legislature will be established to undertake a comprehensive review of the Office of the Children's Advocate and will submit a report to the Legislative Assembly along with any amendments to The Child and Family Services Act which the committee recommends. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Ms. Becky Barrett (Wellington):** Madam Speaker, I appreciate the ministerial statement regarding the Children's Advocate report the minister has just tabled.

We look forward to seeing the actual report of the Children's Advocate. \* (1345)

### ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

#### Home Care Program APM Report Release

I would just like to say very briefly that while there are some positive statements in the ministerial statement, there are some areas that we have major concerns with that the Children's Advocate shares along with us. Again, I would reiterate for the minister's benefit, on behalf of the Children's Advocate of Manitoba and, to my understanding, Children's Advocates across the country, they see that their role in order to be truly effective as Children's Advocates, they must report directly to the Legislature, not to the minister.

I am sure that recommendation will be in the report of the Children's Advocate that is being tabled. I can assure the minister that when the all-party committee does meet, and I hope it is very soon, to review the three years that the Children's Advocate has been underway in Manitoba, I can assure the minister that we will again make that recommendation and I am sure, again, it will be strongly acceded to by the Children's Advocate. Thank you.

**Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Natural Resources):** Madam Speaker, I would like to table the Supplementary Estimates for the Department of Natural Resources for the year 1996-1997.

#### Introduction of Guests

**Madam Speaker:** Prior to Oral Questions, I would like to draw the attention of all honourable members to the public gallery where we have with us this afternoon thirty-two Grade 9 students from Grant Park High School under the direction of Mr. Norm Roseman. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Crescentwood (Mr. Sale).

We also have twenty-five Grade 11 students from Churchill High School under the direction of Mr. Lenzmann. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Osborne (Ms. McGifford).

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

**Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition):** Madam Speaker, my question is for the First Minister (Mr. Filmon).

On May 27, 1994, the Minister of Health said the work of APM with our department on home care projects arrived last year at certain recommendations. On April 15, 1996, the minister, when asked about the APM report said, I do not have it on me at this time. On April 17, the minister is now saying that there is no report, that it was just a process to, quote, facilitate decisions on home care.

I would like to ask the Premier, and I asked him yesterday in his Estimates and the day before in his Estimates, can the Premier please advise the people of Manitoba, when was the Minister of Health telling the truth? Was he telling the truth in 1994 when he said he had recommendations, or was he telling the truth in the last couple of days when he said there are no recommendations?

**Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health):** Madam Speaker, indeed there was no APM report, as I have laid out for honourable members.

The department Home Care program was involved in a project which was facilitated by the APM company and that project was to look at the Home Care program in the same way that the Price Waterhouse people looked at the Home Care program, in the same way that an element of the Home Care program was looked at by the Seven Oaks Hospital and We Care Home Health Services, and in the same way that it has been looked at in numerous ways by numerous people, including the Advisory Committee to the Continuing Care Program and the department itself.

Madam Speaker, so that the honourable member and his colleagues will no longer be confused about this, I will table today the contract respecting the home care demonstration project and I will table also the final

working group document presented to the steering committee.

**Mr. Doer:** I tabled the contract last week. I tabled it again on Monday, and it still does not explain the discrepancies from the government and the minister on this issue of recommendations.

I would like to ask the Premier (Mr. Filmon), in light of the fact that the contract that the minister may be tabling again today, in light of the fact that on 16 occasions, the contract says that it will present recommendations to the government on home care—on 19 occasions in the contract it says it will provide a report. In fact, on page 3 it says a final report of the findings will be presented to the government.

I would like to know how the minister has been able to tell us over the last couple of days that there is no report, when the contract clearly states on 19 occasions that the APM Connie Curran company is required to provide a report.

**Mr. McCrae:** The honourable member has a legal mind sitting right next to him, and he can maybe tell him what the contract says. The contract does not call for a report from APM, and we did not get a report from APM. We received, through the process, the working documents that I have tabled today, which are generated by the Department of Health.

**Mr. Doer:** Madam Speaker, we want to get the reports and recommendations that were contained in a contract that the government signed—[interjection] If the Premier wants to answer the question and end this cover-up, I would be glad if he would stand up and answer the questions—

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please. Would the honourable Leader of the official opposition, please pose his question.

**Mr. Doer:** Madam Speaker, my question is to the First Minister, the First Minister who yesterday in Estimates said, I can neither confirm nor deny whether there is anything in writing, after we know his staff have been meeting with the Ministry of Health on this damage control strategy of covering up the documents that the people are entitled to, on a number of occasions.

My question to the Premier is, in light of the fact that this document also calls on the APM Connie Curran consultants on three occasions to produce a, quote, action plan to the government, will the Premier now order the Minister of Health to release the APM recommendations, the APM reports and the APM action plan which was required in this contract which the taxpayers paid close to \$140,000 for? Will he please stop the cover-up and order the release of those documents?

**Mr. McCrae:** I have tabled today the work of the demonstration project, the report of the steering committee, which all our fellow Manitobans that were part of were on that project. I would ask the honourable Leader of the Opposition to table all of the papers leading up to the release of the Price Waterhouse report, which the NDP commissioned, which calls for user fees and for cuts in services, Madam Speaker. I would like the members of the New Democratic Party—they like tabling things. Let them table the background documents behind the—

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please.

\* (1350)

#### Point of Order

**Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader):** Madam Speaker, on a point of order, Beauchesne's Citation 417 is very clear that, "Answers to questions should be as brief as possible, deal with the matter raised and should not provoke debate."

The question was directly in regard to the Connie Curran contract. We were asking the minister to clear up once and for all the confusion that is surrounding it, the cover-up related to this. It has nothing to do with the document he is now quoting from.

I would like to ask, Madam Speaker, you either ask him to answer the question or not to waste the time of this Legislature and sit down and allow us to ask further questions.

**Madam Speaker:** The honourable Minister of Health, on the same point of order.

**Mr. McCrae:** Madam Speaker, on the same point of order, the problem that the honourable members opposite have is they search in vain for statements that say this, that or the other thing. The point is they and their union boss buddies have their minds made up. It does not matter what any of the myriad reports say. There are numerous reports. All of them are out there; all of them can be looked at. Honourable members opposite have their minds made up. They do not want to be confused with any facts.

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please. On the point of order, the honourable member for Thompson does not have a point of order. It is clearly a dispute over the facts.

#### **Home Care Program Privatization**

**Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan):** Madam Speaker, my question is to the Premier (Mr. Filmon). How does the Premier explain the comments and actions of the Minister of Health who set up an advisory committee on home care, rejected their recommendations to hold public hearings on privatization, refuses to make the report public and then is completely contradicted in public by a member of that committee who says that privatization appears to be a political decision? How does the Premier explain those actions of his minister?

**Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health):** Madam Speaker, it is now clear that the chair of the advisory committee on continuing care has no concern with the release of the comments made by the Advisory Committee to the Continuing Care Program in March of 1996, and I table that today. I also table a letter written by two members of the Advisory Committee to the Continuing Care Program, Myrna Fichett and Joyce Rose, members of the advisory committee on continuing care who say the following: Dear Mr. McCrae: We as members of the Advisory Committee to the Continuing Care Program are concerned with media reports regarding the committee's—

**Some Honourable Members:** Oh, oh.

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please. The honourable Minister of Health, to complete his response.

**Mr. McCrae:** Madam Speaker, honourable members opposite might condone threatening and intimidating actions against home care workers, but they will not threaten or intimidate me.

#### **Point of Order**

**Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader):** On a point of order, Madam Speaker, no one is threatening or intimidating the Minister of Health. I do not know what delusions the Minister of Health is suffering from at this point in time. We were simply asking the Minister of Health to answer a question.

Madam Speaker, I would like to ask you to have him withdraw his comments which are not only unparliamentary but are completely untrue. We were not in any way doing anything other than asking him to finally answer some of our questions.

**Madam Speaker:** The honourable Minister of Health, on the same point of order?

**Mr. McCrae:** On the same point of order, these sanctimonious members opposite would try to shout me down and then stand up under the guise of a point of order to talk about the way I answer their questions. These people cannot be bullies like we see out on the streets of Winnipeg, Madam Speaker. They cannot get away with that in this Chamber.

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please.

**Some Honourable Members:** Oh, oh.

\* (1355)

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please. During the course of Question Period over this last week, I have on several occasions requested all members in this Chamber to show more courtesy and more respect.

The Speaker cannot always hear the remarks, the insulting and inflammatory remarks, that are being exchanged across the Chamber. However, those comments are unrequired and they do indeed provoke debate, provoke emotions and cause severe disruption to the proceedings of Question Period. This is a very

sensitive issue, and I would request that all members posing their questions do so within the guidelines provided and that all members opposite respond according to the guidelines provided.

Now, on the point of order. I will take the point of order under advisement, I will review Hansard and I will report back to the Chamber, if necessary.

Now, I would like to remind all honourable members that the next time there is, in my opinion, an unnecessary disruption in Question Period, the House will be recessed until such time as members can be recalled and conduct Question Period in an appropriate manner to which all the public would prefer.

\* \* \*

**Madam Speaker:** The honourable member for Kildonan, to pose a supplementary question.

**Mr. Chomiak:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

#### Point of Order

**Mr. McCrae:** On a point of order, Madam Speaker. I was in the middle of an answer when honourable members interrupted to raise a point of order.

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please. The Speaker has decided that the response to that question is adequate and sufficient because a point of order was raised on it, on which I must report back to the House.

\* \* \*

**Mr. Chomiak:** My supplementary question is to the Premier.

Will the Premier finally step in, as we face a weekend where hospitals will be overloaded, where patient care will suffer, will he finally step in, put an end to this government policy of privatization and allow the patients—who we, after all, work for in this Chamber—to get access to the best quality health care?

**Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier):** Madam Speaker, regrettably, the decision to withdraw services from

those who need them most in this province has been made by the union representing the workers.

Madam Speaker, I find it very difficult to understand how you can help those who are most in need by withdrawing services from them when they need it. Those are circumstances that have been decided by others who are involved in this dispute. It has been said by their leadership at the bargaining table that this is strictly a philosophical issue, that it is one that clearly is supported by members opposite. If blind ideology is driving them to oppose any opportunity for providing competition, flexibility and opportunity to have services when people require them on a seven-day-a-week, 24-hour-a-day basis, I find that extremely regrettable.

I find it even more regrettable that the unions will not consider putting forth an emergency services agreement that would allow those most in need, those whose only option is to be hospitalized or put in personal care homes, to be provided that kind of service through the Home Care program. But if the members opposite want to support that kind of treatment and that kind of action, that is their problem and their decision and they will have to live with it.

#### Home Care Program Privatization—Public Hearings

**Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan):** Madam Speaker, my final supplementary is to the Premier: How can the Premier, who has absolutely no studies, no reports, no recommendations, no advice, no committees that recommend privatization, continue this mad course to privatization? Will he now do at least what his own committee on home care recommended and hold public hearings on the privatization, so that we can get back to having proper home care in this province?

\* (1400)

**Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Labour):** Madam Speaker, this is a government that continues to wish to resolve this issue. I would like to point out the union negotiating on the other side is a union that sent the government of Manitoba a letter setting out a negotiating schedule, and then did not show up.

Instead, the union took a strike vote and withdrew essential services.

This is a union that will not provide an essential services agreement, giving only essential services to less than 1 percent of these vulnerable people who need assistance from the government, and they have withdrawn the usual caregivers. The government is now providing these services in a reasonable manner as best as we can.

I would like to table the government's position in respect of what we propose as a reasonable essential services agreement and contrast that with the Manitoba Government Employees' Union's position, and let the public decide who is being reasonable.

#### **Home Care Program Privatization**

**Mr. Tim Sale (Crescentwood):** Madam Speaker, every economist who comments on the American health care system notes that administration, advertising and profit are the major causes for the big difference between their costs and ours. One of the major costs, of course, is advertising, such as this nice document which was delivered throughout south Winnipeg in the last day or so from We Care, the We Care News. Could the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) tell the House why he is prepared to spend millions of Manitoban's scarce dollars to support private companies' greed in advertising instead of supporting the family incomes of already low-paid, dedicated home care workers?

**Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Labour):** Madam Speaker, this is a government that is prepared to negotiate with the union. If the union believes that it can provide services in a more effective manner, in a cost-efficient way, in a flexible manner, this government is prepared to sit down and discuss it with them and, indeed, prepared to consider bids from the union as well.

#### **Point of Order**

**Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan):** On a point of order, Madam Speaker, I believe Beauchesne says that

ministers do not have to answer the questions, but the question posed bears absolutely no resemblance whatsoever to the minister's response. I believe if you look in Beauchesne's, it indicates the minister does not have to answer the question, but if the minister does not want to answer the question, which was about We Care and profit in the health care industry, then the minister ought to sit down.

**Madam Speaker:** The honourable Minister of Labour, on the same point of order.

**Mr. Toews:** On a point of order, the issue that has been raised in this House is the issue of private companies providing home care. What I am stating in the course of my answer, Madam Speaker, is that we have not limited this to private companies who are similarly profit motivated. That is the response and I believe it is right on point.

**Madam Speaker:** The honourable member for Kildonan does not have a point of order.

\* \* \*

**Mr. Sale:** Madam Speaker, can the Minister of Health tell the House why he supports private greed in the delivery of what he himself calls core health care services in the community when Canadians have long agreed that core services should be delivered by not-for-profit institutions, including all of Manitoba's hospitals, the VON, Arthritis Society and others?

**Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health):** Madam Speaker, honourable members opposite have done it again. Twice in the last week or so they have totally insulted the Victorian Order of Nurses, a private organization—albeit without tender—delivering nursing services to patients in the city of Winnipeg. Shame on the honourable members for the disparaging comments they make about the Victorian Order of Nurses.

A little while ago before honourable members shouted me down, I was tabling the report of March '96 of the Advisory Committee to the Continuing Care Program. In addition, I have an addendum to that because two of its members have written to me, and I will read the letter.



Hopefully, honourable members do not want to shout down Myrna Fichett and Joyce Rose who are participants in the Advisory Committee to the Continuing Care Program. They say: Dear Mr. McCrae—and it is dated today, Madam Speaker. [interjection] Unless it fits with their union bosses' friends' agenda, they do not want to hear it.

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please. I wonder if I could ask for the co-operation of the honourable Minister of Health in summarizing quickly the contents of that letter that he wishes to table.

**Mr. McCrae:** Madam Speaker, I would like very much to comply with what you are asking for, but I am not able to summarize what Myrna Fichett and Joyce Rose have said in two or three words. It is not a long letter.

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please.

#### Point of Order

**Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition):** Madam Speaker, two days ago you stood up five times and the Minister of Health continued on in his statements. You have just advised him of what was in order and he rejected your instructions with the word "but."

I would ask you to call the minister to order so that we can get order in this Chamber and ask direct questions and get direct answers, because Manitobans are very interested in finding out the cost, the quality of service and other issues related to the service to clients in this very important home care area.

**Madam Speaker:** On the point of order, the Leader of the official opposition indeed does have a point of order. The Speaker had requested the honourable Minister of Health to quickly summarize the contents of the letter or simply table it.

\* \* \*

**Mr. McCrae:** Madam Speaker, if I had the necessary skill to summarize somebody else's comments, I would do that, but I am not able to do that and do justice to

Myrna Fichett and Joyce Rose who are members of the—

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please. Would the Minister of Health just then table the document, please.

**Mr. McCrae:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. Here is the other report.

#### Core Services

**Mr. Tim Sale (Crescentwood):** Madam Speaker, is the minister prepared today to table a detailed list of core home care services which will be guaranteed to all Manitobans, without user fees, delivered under the intent and criteria of the Canada Health Act?

**Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health):** I think the honourable member mentioned the Canada Health Act. The Canada Health Act, for his information, does not govern the Home Care program.

#### Minister of Labour Great-West Life Position

**Ms. Becky Barrett (Wellington):** Madam Speaker, the Minister of Labour was an influential employee with Great-West Life Assurance Co. prior to his election last year. I would like to ask what the Minister of Labour's current status is vis-à-vis Great-West Life?

**Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Labour):** I understand the question to be as to what my relationship with the Great-West Life company is. I am an employee on leave from the Great-West Life company, and I am here to serve the public of Manitoba.

#### Conflict of Interest

**Ms. Becky Barrett (Wellington):** Madam Speaker, given that the 1995 Great-West Life annual report states that, and I quote, growth opportunities are being created by the shifting of health care costs, in particular, to the private sector in Canada—

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please. This is a supplementary question. Would the honourable member please pose her question now.

**Ms. Barrett:** Does the Premier not agree that there is indeed a clear conflict of interest for the Minister of Labour?

**Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier):** Madam Speaker, rather than engage in desperate, low-level politics, I invite the member for Wellington to put forth an allegation or a complaint under our legislation that governs our actions here.

We have a conflict of interest act with guidelines that govern the actions of each and every one of our members, and I can assure her that we take that seriously. We do not look upon it just for political cheap shots. So I invite her to make her allegations and to try and make her case. It is open to her, as it is to any citizen of Manitoba.

#### **We Care Home Health Services Funding**

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster):** Madam Speaker, in this government's drive to privatize home care services, earlier we asked in terms of if the government would be prepared to give special consideration to nonprofit groups, only to find out recently that there is preferential treatment. We Care is publicly financed or subsidized for training their employees.

My question to the government: How much money has We Care been given in order to train its employees to work for We Care?

\* (1410)

**Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Education and Training):** Madam Speaker, I will take that question under advisement. I do not know, but I will check any records we might have to see if there is any information that might be pertinent to the member.

**Mr. Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, I would refer the minister to look at Hansard, June 16, 1995, page 1853. My question is to the minister: Why are we paying these companies to train their workers and then continue to pay them in order to provide home care services?

**Mrs. McIntosh:** I think the member might be referring to the fact that we had a Workforce 2000 program,

which was making training available for companies all across Manitoba. As the member knows, of course, that has been altered now so that we are doing sectoral training as opposed to individual firm training.

I do not know if the firm he is referring to was one of the—some hundreds of thousands of people who received training under Workforce 2000, but I can have the records examined to see if they were one of the firms and let him know.

**Mr. Lamoureux:** My question to the Minister of Health is: Is the minister aware that We Care is receiving public dollars to train its workers?

**Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health):** Madam Speaker, I am aware that we have a public school system that is publicly financed and finances the education of the children in our public schools. I am aware that anybody who takes higher education, in one way or another, gets subsidized by government in their various training programs, and those programs are available. We do not discriminate against people in our education system.

The honourable member suggested the other day that there be some kind of uneven playing field when we get into tendering for projects in this province. It is an interesting concept. I certainly have not lent my support to it as yet, but the honourable member might try to convince me that it is the right thing to do.

#### **TransCanada Pipelines Stress Corrosion Testing**

**Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood):** My question is to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs.

Given the seriousness of the two gas explosions in Manitoba in the last few months, has the minister requested TransCanada Pipelines to expand the scope of the test program to test the entire system to ensure that stress corrosion cracking has not occurred in areas of high population density or in areas that would dictate the use of higher thickness pipe?

**Hon. Jim Ernst (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs):** Madam Speaker, the

interprovincial gas pipeline falls under the jurisdiction of the National Energy Board. The National Energy Board yesterday, and the day before that, and the day before that, were holding hearings in Calgary to discuss that exact issue, the question of stress corrosion cracking in the pipeline system, the level of safety that the current system provides, plus whatever they can do to ensure that the pipeline is safe within the jurisdictions that it falls in Canada.

**Mr. Maloway:** My supplementary to the same minister is this: Could the minister release copies of all stress corrosion cracks semiannual reports that are available in the past three years dealing with Class 2, 3 and 4 locations in Manitoba?

**Mr. Ernst:** I will have to look into the question of whether those reports are available. If they are available—I am presuming they are coming from the National Energy Board—I am sure they are available to anyone.

**Mr. Maloway:** My final supplementary to the same minister is this: Since this recent incident occurred using the thicker class of pipe, has the minister decided to have staff conduct an independent investigation?

**Mr. Ernst:** We have the National Energy Board with all of their experts looking into this matter. We have the transport safety committee, another federal agency, with all of their experts also looking into this matter.

Madam Speaker, that kind of irresponsible statement by the member opposite is exactly why he is on that side of the House, because for us to check up on the experts of the other two federal agencies would cost the Province of Manitoba a minimum of at least \$250,000, and I do not think that is a very effective use of money.

### Domestic Violence Case Prosecutions

**Mr. Gord Mackintosh (St. Johns):** Madam Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Justice.

Yesterday at the commission of inquiry into the Lavoie murder-suicide some very disturbing new evidence was presented by Professor Jane Ursel of the

Criminology Research Centre about the percentage of domestic violence cases her department, the minister's department, has been prepared to fold or stay between 1990 and 1994.

My question to the minister is, how can the minister reconcile this puffery from her publication called Stop the Violence which says, No margin will be afforded to abusers; the prosecutors have been so instructed and conduct themselves accordingly, with Ms. Ursel's evidence that there has been an increase of 114 percent of the percentage of cases her department has been willing to fold or stay?

**Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** Madam Speaker, I have met with Professor Jane Ursel a number of times, examined her work, which is in fact extremely positive to the working of the Domestic Violence Court in Manitoba.

Let me remind the member, I think perhaps he has forgotten that, thanks to the efforts of the now honourable Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) when he was Minister of Justice, he led this country in the establishment of the very first Domestic Violence Court in this country, which still is the only court dedicated to the areas of family violence. With that Family Violence Court, I can tell you that cases are vigorously prosecuted, and evidence is required in order to complete that prosecution.

The evidence the member did not speak about that was testified yesterday by Professor Jane Ursel is the dramatic increase as well in the number of cases. Recent Stats Canada statistics also said that in Manitoba more women are likely to report cases of sexual assault than any other place in Canada because of the action they receive.

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Will the minister then explain why, although women may report and while the police are generally bringing these abusers to her department, her department is then just sending away about one-half of the cases being referred? Her department is doing what she told the police not to do.

**Mrs. Vodrey:** The member seems to have an extremely limited understanding of what occurs in the area of domestic violence. Let me just tell him that a

number of individuals who have been victims of domestic violence do not wish to testify. The member across the way, members of the NDP, might find it important to revictimize victims and require them to testify, subpoena them to court, have them refuse to testify, have them found in contempt. The member across the way would like to revictimize victims.

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Madam Speaker, if the minister is saying that there has been an increase of 114 percent in the women unwilling to testify—

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please. Would the honourable member please pose his question.

**Mr. Mackintosh:** The question to the minister is, if the minister is so concerned about victims, why is she now putting the onus on women as to whether a case proceeds or not, which means then that the abusers know where to go if they are going to get their case to fold?

**Mrs. Vodrey:** The member continues to indicate how very little he knows about the issue of domestic violence. We, Madam Speaker, have commissioned the inquiry into the Lavoie murder-suicide. We are looking for ways to continue to improve our system. However, there is a reality in that many of the victims do not, for whatever their reasons, wish to testify. However, the zero tolerance policy established by this government is one which immediately allows the police to attend, to attend seriously to the incident, to separate the participants at that time and to provide safety for the woman. At times, there is not evidence readily available if the individual is not prepared to testify. However, the police work vigorously and our Crown attorneys vigorously prosecute and the courts vigorously attend to it.

\* (1420)

### **Family Dispute Agencies Funding**

**Ms. Diane McGifford (Osborne):** Madam Speaker, yesterday at the Lavoie inquiry Ron Thorne-Finch, co-ordinator of the EVOLVE program, testified regarding the effects of the 2 percent cuts to family disputes

funded agencies. He said the cuts would result in less access to service, increased staff burnout, an inability to cope with clients' needs, both those of the abused and the abusers, and an end to the necessary program expansion. In view of the deleterious and potentially tragic results of these cuts, I ask the Minister of Family Services to reconsider cuts to family dispute agencies.

**Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister of Family Services):** Madam Speaker, I thank my honourable friend for that question because it does allow me the opportunity to indicate that decisions that were made in the Department of Family Services were made in order to protect those who needed the protection most. If we look at our welfare reform announcements, we know that we have protected the rights for those who are in abuse shelters and their children, for single parents with children under the age of six, for seniors and for the disabled.

Also, on the issue of abuse and shelters and services provided to women and children who have been abused, we are second to none across the country with the support that we have developed and put in place and stabilized in this province. Since we took government in 1988, we have a formula in place that does allow for the services to be provided much better than anywhere else across the country, and we will continue to improve upon those services.

**Ms. McGifford:** Cutting funds is an interesting—

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please.

**Ms. McGifford:** I want to ask the Minister of Justice (Mrs. Vodrey) how she, as self-proclaimed champion of ending violence and promoting women, can at the same time by her presence in the cabinet sanction a decision which might have deadly results for Manitoba women.

**Mrs. Mitchelson:** Madam Speaker, without accepting any of the preamble, I do thank my honourable friend for that question, because we as a government have taken the issue of wife abuse very seriously.

If you will look at the funding for abuse shelters, the change that was made was a very small change in the

operating grant, 2 percent of the operating grant only, no change in the welfare payment supports for abused women and children, no change in the per diems for the shelters in order to serve those women.

In discussion and dialogue with the shelters throughout the province of Manitoba, they believe that they will be able to manage because with the funding formula that we have put in place, the money can flow based on the priorities of the shelters and the services that they need to provide for women and children.

### **Enhanced Crop Insurance Program Benefit Reduction**

**Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River):** Madam Speaker, the Minister of Agriculture recently announced an enhanced crop insurance which is supposed to be better, but in fact producers are finding when they look at the costs and benefits of the 70 to 80 percent coverage, there is very little benefit for the cost and they are opting for the 50 percent coverage.

Will the minister agree that there is very little improvement in this enhanced crop insurance program, and instead of moving forward with coverage, we are moving backward with protection for farmers in crop insurance?

**Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Agriculture):** Madam Speaker, what is evident in the first instance is that through those years that grain farmers faced extremely low grain prices, this government, my predecessor, brought forward a program to help tide grain farmers through that period. That program was a revenue insurance program known as GRIP. It paid out in excess of \$800 million to Manitoba grain producers during the five years of its operation. It should not be confused with the basic crop insurance program that is, and always has been, offered to Manitoba farmers.

Thankfully, the recovery in grain prices is such that that insurance or that government support for poor grain prices is no longer necessary. I am satisfied that the Enhanced Crop Insurance Program that is being offered, and by its reception by producers, demonstrates that it is among the best in the country.

### **Wildlife Damage**

**Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River):** I would like to ask the minister if he realizes that farmers are being penalized on their premium and their coverage because of wildlife damage, over which they have no control, and in fact are being denied the 80 percent coverage? What steps is the minister going to take to correct this problem which farmers have no control over?

**Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Agriculture):** Well, Madam Speaker, I knew that if I just gave the honourable member sufficient time, there would be an issue that she and I could both agree on. I do accept the premise that while society, all of us, like to see healthy wildlife herds, whether it is ducks or geese or big game, deer or elk, it ought not to be done so at the expense of the farmer, and over the years, we have introduced support programs. The crop insurance people have the program under review. The current support price covers upwards to 75 percent of the actual loss suffered by farmers. I would like to see it moved somewhat higher and will work towards that end.

I do not support the concept of 100 percent coverage because there has to be some ongoing onus or responsibility on the part of the farmer to help minimize or to help manage the loss. These are discussions that are taking place with Ottawa; Ottawa shares in some of the programs. It cannot be done overnight.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Will the minister agree that farmers should not have their IPI reduced because of wildlife damage which is happening now? Will he take steps to ensure that those producers who are feeding wildlife on their land do not have their IPI reduced because of claims of wildlife damage?

**Mr. Enns:** Madam Speaker, I would have to take that question as notice and consult with Manitoba crop officials if in fact that is taking place.

I remind the honourable member that my understanding is that our Estimates of the department are coming up sooner, rather than later, and the

officials of the corporation, of course, will be present for her to ask these questions directly of them.

\* (1430)

### **Post-Secondary Education Enrollment**

**Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley):** Madam Speaker, yesterday the Minister of Education told us that she believed that enrollments at universities and colleges in Manitoba were increasing. Yet, a couple of weeks ago, on April 3, in the Winnipeg Free Press, she is quoted as saying, in reference to her cut to universities: I think a 2 percent cut, given that the enrollment is down, is not out of line.

Could the minister tell us whether enrollments are going up or down?

**Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Education and Training):** Madam Speaker, I believe the member has misquoted me because I indicated yesterday colleges, and there is a difference between a college and a university. However, I would indicate to the member, that which I have already stated probably, that enrollments at universities right across this nation, the trend is downward in terms of year over year and, in many cases, that is because of increased job creation. In Manitoba's case, the enrollment at the university is down slightly this year, and as I indicated and I have indicated in the past, that is because of two factors, one, more job opportunities in the economy and increased interest in the courses and training being taken at colleges and in the workforce itself.

**Ms. Friesen:** Madam Speaker, could the minister confirm for us today that prospective enrollments at the universities in Manitoba are down comparable to last year in the region of 20 percent? Could she tell us whether there will be a comparable 20 percent increase in community college enrollments?

**Mrs. McIntosh:** No, I cannot give those figures today, Madam Speaker. I know the member does, though, if she is trying to link it to funding, which I believe is her ultimate intent, that she knows, as we know, the amount of money we are putting into new scholarships and those types of things, and she is fully aware of the

mammoth impact of the federal transfer cuts to health and education in Manitoba.

**Madam Speaker:** The time for Oral Questions has expired.

## **MEMBERS' STATEMENTS**

### **St. Vital Brainstorming Session**

**Mrs. Shirley Render (St. Vital):** Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to report today that well over 220 residents from the riding of St. Vital came out to a brainstorming session that I sponsored last evening, April 17. Our topic was keeping our community safe. A panel composed of representatives from seniors, parents, students, the old St. Vital BIZ group, the community police and the Citizens for Crime Awareness told of some of their concerns. After the panel presentation, the audience enthusiastically participated in discussing possible solutions.

What made the evening so successful was the fact that all segments of the community were there—seniors, parents, young people, business people, representatives from community clubs, churches, schools, St. Vital and St. Boniface School Divisions, plus many resource people such as volunteers from the St. Vital Youth Justice Committee, Wyman Sangster from the Justice department.

Many in the audience, Madam Speaker, were unaware of CFCA, Citizens for Crime Awareness and the youth justice committee, so the evening gave them an opportunity to learn more about these organizations and also gave these organizations a chance to let people know that they needed more volunteers. I should tell you that the St. Vital Youth Justice Committee has a 95 percent success rate, the highest in Manitoba.

One of the highlights of the evening was the presence of young people and their very active participation in brainstorming. One of the strongest messages that came through from the residents was the need to strengthen the Young Offenders Act. However, perhaps the strongest message of the evening was the great community spirit that was shown by the huge

turnout of residents to discuss crime prevention strategies that they could undertake themselves. I want to thank St. George School for providing their gym, the panelists, and all the people who came out to support the evening, the concept of the evening, or who were unable to come out who phoned and gave their support for keeping our community safe. Thank you.

### Healthy Flin Flon

**Mr. Gerard Jennissen (Flin Flon):** Madam Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to draw the attention of all the honourable members in this Chamber to an organization of which I am most proud, Healthy Flin Flon. I am pleased to announce that Healthy Flin Flon has been awarded the health care forum's prestigious international award for healthy communities and even as I speak, a small delegation of representatives for Healthy Flin Flon is in San Francisco to accept the award, and I believe it is today.

**An Honourable Member:** And you wish you were there with them.

\* (1430)

**Mr. Jennissen:** And I wish I was there, right.

Healthy Flin Flon has for the past six years been instrumental in the promotion and implementation of the healthy communities movement, and its efforts are applauded not only within Manitoba and Canada but now throughout the world. Since its inception in 1990, Healthy Flin Flon, under the motto, community well-being hand in hand, has orchestrated action by more than 80 groups.

Healthy Flin Flon has established seven indicators of health and quality of life. These are cultural harmony, economic diversification, food security, environment, community participation, healthy individuals, and families and community.

Two of the project's key initiatives are: Project Smoke-halt, an education and smoke cessation program, mainly targeted at youth, and a race relations conference that explored cross-cultural issues related to area residents.

Other project successes include establishing a centre for community-wide recycling; developing educational programs about family financial management; opening a food bank and community garden; the reinstatement of an outreach program for chemotherapy patients; and implementing a youth service program in community schools.

Madam Speaker, I invite all honourable members of the House to join with me in congratulating Healthy Flin Flon, and wishing Healthy Flin Flon best wishes in future endeavours.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

### Provencher School—90th Anniversary

**Mr. Neil Gaudry (St. Boniface):** Madame la présidente, grâce à la détermination et à la volonté des pionniers qui jadis se sont établis à Saint-Boniface afin de bâtir ce que nous appelons aujourd'hui le Manitoba, nous nous trouvons en 1996 une nouvelle fois au coeur de l'histoire à l'occasion du 90e anniversaire d'existence de l'école Provencher.

C'est dès 1818 que la chapelle du premier évêque de l'Ouest canadien, Monseigneur Provencher, servit de première école de la Rivière Rouge. En 1854, Monseigneur Taché invita les Frères des écoles chrétiennes à assumer la direction de cette école. En 1855, l'école Provencher voyait le jour et c'est en 1906 qu'un édifice scolaire fut construit sur l'avenue de la Cathédrale, lieu de la présente école. Malheureusement, un incendie détruisit l'école en 1923. En 1924, elle fut reconstruite sous l'image que nous voyons aujourd'hui au coin de l'avenue de la Cathédrale et de la rue Saint-Jean-Baptiste.

C'est de façon personnelle que j'ai pu au long des années reconnaître et apprécier les valeurs humaines et académiques qui sont enseignées dans cette institution scolaire. Non seulement mon épouse Léona et moi-même avons vécu la qualité de l'éducation que nos trois enfants Roger, René et Nicole ont reçu de la maternelle au grade 9 à cette école, mais j'ai eu le privilège de servir 10 ans sur le comité de parents. Et, Madame la présidente, je tiens à déclarer publiquement que mes dix années de service au sein du comité de

parents de l'école Provencher furent pour moi dix années d'enrichissement qui me font dire dans la Chambre aujourd'hui et sans aucune hésitation que la société de demain est le reflet de l'éducation d'aujourd'hui.

Par conséquent, Madame la présidente, j'aimerais inviter tous les membres de cette auguste Assemblée à se joindre à moi en ayant une pensée spéciale la semaine prochaine à l'occasion des différentes activités qui célébreront les 90 ans de l'école Provencher.

Merci, Madame la présidente.

**[Translation]**

Madam Speaker, thanks to the determination and the will of the pioneers who in times past settled in St. Boniface in order to build what we today call Manitoba, we find ourselves in 1996 once again at the heart of history on the occasion of the 90th anniversary of the existence of Provencher School.

It was beginning in 1818 that the chapel of the first bishop of the Canadian west, Monseigneur Provencher, served as the first school for the Red River region. In 1854, Monseigneur Tache invited the Brothers of Christian Schools to assume the management of this school. In 1855 Provencher School was born, and in 1906 a school building was constructed on avenue de la Cathédrale where the present school is located. Unfortunately, a fire destroyed that school in 1923. In 1924 it was rebuilt in the image in which we see it today at the corner of avenue de la Cathédrale and St. Jean Baptiste.

It is on a personal basis that I had the opportunity over the years to recognize and appreciate the human and academic values that are taught in this educational establishment. Not only did my spouse Leona and I witness the quality of the education that our three children, Roger, René and Nicole, received from kindergarten to Grade 9 at this school, but I also had the privilege of serving for 10 years on the parents' committee. Madam Speaker, I would like to state publicly that my 10 years of service with the parents' committee of Provencher School were for me 10 enriching years that lead me to state in the House today

without any hesitation that the society of tomorrow is the reflection of the education of today. Consequently, Madam Speaker, I would like to invite all members of this august Assembly to join with me in having a special thought next week on the occasion of the various activities that will celebrate the 90th birthday of Provencher School.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Annual Rural Forum—Brandon**

**Mr. Frank Pitura (Morris):** Beginning today and continuing through Friday and Saturday, Brandon's Keystone Centre will be host to the fourth annual rural forum. It is expected that attendance could exceed 5,000 for this event, which will have over 300 exhibits. The purpose of the rural forum is to celebrate the success of rural Manitoba small business.

It has been so successful that attendance is expected to double that of last year. It has become rural Manitoba's largest nonagricultural event. Changes to this year's rural forum include a new emphasis on attracting families and the general public. This rural forum provides the opportunity for Manitobans to showcase the products and services that they are proud of and which have, by extension, benefited all Manitobans.

Accordingly, Madam Speaker, the Working for Value task force that I co-chaired will be sharing the results of our seven-week tour through rural Manitoba earlier this year. We received a lot of innovative suggestions and people were as eager to contribute as they are now to hear what the results are. Rural Manitobans want to discover ways to add value to their businesses and this is the event of the year in terms of meeting that need. There will be a wide range of presentations as well as representatives from Manitoba's eight rural regions who will be showcasing their communities' products and services. Forum '96 will also feature more than 400 students from around the province who are being sponsored by either Manitoba Junior Achievement or the Manitoba Chamber of Commerce Youth Business Institute. Some of the youth will also be involved in profiling the products that they have personally developed.



Our economy is benefiting from efforts such as these. I invite Madam Speaker as well as all members of the Manitoba Assembly to come and sample what rural Manitoba has to offer, and, by the way, there will also be 32 restaurant-and-food exhibits in case anyone needs that final nudge to decide in favour of coming. Thank you.

### **Transcona Collegiate—Sticks and Stones Conference**

**Ms. Marianne Cerilli (Radisson):** I would like to make a member's statement. I want to begin by congratulating the Transcona Collegiate on a conference they are having today. It is called the Sticks and Stones Conference, a youth conference speaking out against violence in our community, and it is sponsored by the Transcona Collegiate natural helpers program.

The conference is a result of staff and students in the school recognizing the number of young people in the school who are having difficulty achieving their learning goals and their academic studies because of the number of problems facing the school. I think that a number of these problems are a struggle for the school to cope with because of the cutbacks of the government in the areas of education, family services and community agencies.

They have recognized that these students need to have attention to these more personal problems so they can have their needs met so they can achieve success with their studies. The conference is a result of a survey that was done with the entire student body where they identified the following topics as concerns among the student body: gangs, depression and suicide, dating violence, substance abuse, family violence, harassment, racism, anger, and youth in the welfare system. They are having speakers and presentations with resource people from the community to try and make the students aware of resources in the community and to try and assist students in coping with issues that are affecting them and in some ways limiting their ability to be successful.

I attended the session this morning on welfare and youth and also on substance abuse, and one of the

students made the comment that people should not have to make a choice between violence and poverty and economic exploitation. I think that is an important statement to make for all members of the House to hear. Thank you.

### **Committee Changes**

**Mr. Edward Helwer (Gimli):** I move, seconded by the member for Sturgeon Creek (Mr. McAlpine), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts be amended as follows: the member for Charleswood (Mr. Ernst) for the member for Pembina (Mr. Dyck); the member for Sturgeon Creek (Mr. McAlpine) for the member for St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau); the member for Riel (Mr. Newman) for the member for Emerson (Mr. Penner); and the member for Fort Garry (Mrs. Vodrey) for the member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Tweed). [agreed]

### **ORDERS OF THE DAY**

**Hon. Jim Ernst (Government House Leader):** Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Education (Mrs. McIntosh), that Madam Speaker do now leave the Chair and the House resolve itself into a committee to consider of the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty.

**Motion agreed to,** and the House resolved itself into a committee to consider of the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty with the honourable member for La Verendrye (Mr. Sveinson) in the Chair for the Department of Health; and the honourable member for River Heights (Mr. Radcliffe) in the Chair for Executive Council.

### **COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY (Concurrent Sections)**

#### **HEALTH**

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

When the committee last sat, it had been considering item 1.(b)(1) on page 71 of the Estimates book. Shall the item pass?

**Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan):** Mr. Chairperson, when we ended yesterday, I had asked the minister a question, so I completed my question.

**Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health):** Mr. Chairman, when the strike is over, it may be appropriate for me to respond to the honourable member's question. He is asking questions about the conduct of the contingency plan and staff are extremely busy trying to make sure that clients of the Home Care program get service at a time when friends of the member for Kildonan are abandoning their clients. That takes up virtually all my energy and I am not able to provide that, but after the strike is over, I will look into it and see if I can find a response for the honourable member.

**Mr. Chomiak:** Mr. Chairperson, I wonder if the minister can outline for me—I do not have any friends that are abandoning clients, so I wonder if the minister might clarify for me what he was referring to in his last statement?

I have a lot of friends in the system who are both clients and in fact I have a lot of—I talked with a patient this morning who, very eloquently, expressed to me his concerns about the lack of understanding of the program by the government when they put in place their contingency plan.

I have friends that deliver home care, and I do not know a single person that is abandoning. I just wonder where the minister got the erroneous idea, and he might name for me those people, because I am very, very surprised that the minister would make a statement like that.

**Mr. McCrae:** Well, Mr. Chairperson, I do not think I could answer this any better than Kelli Paige has already done, and I will read into the record a letter that Kelli Paige has written to the Winnipeg Sun, the Winnipeg Free Press. I have not seen it on the pages of those newspapers yet, but I am sure that will be happening—

**An Honourable Member:** It is in the Sun.

**Mr. McCrae:** Is it in the Sun? Good. I know I saw a story in the Sun, but I do not know if her letter has appeared there, and, of course, the radio station CJOB covered this matter. But the honourable member has asked a question, and I think Kelli Paige, who works in the Home Care program, would like to work in the program, and except for the threats and intimidation that she is being subjected to by the friends of the honourable member for Kildonan, she would be out there providing more services to her clients.

I should not leave the honourable member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) out of this because he seems to be making indications that he supports those who would abandon clients too, and I am very disappointed if that is the position that the honourable member for Inkster takes. I can only assume it is because he does not maybe understand what it is like to be a client of the Home Care program.

In any event, this is what Kelli Paige had to say, and it is written to the news desk as follows: I have been fortunate enough to have been a continuing student in health care over a period of time, and have always maintained employment at the same time. In some of the courses I took and lectures I attended we were aware that our health care system as is was going to have to change in the future in order to be able to continue servicing people. However, this is not what I want to elaborate on, so I will get to the point of my letter.

\* (1520)

I am fed up with the media's coverage and advertisements on the MGEU strike over contracting out health care services by Jim McCrae. All the advertisements clearly state that the government home care workers are the only people qualified for the job of caregivers to the thousands of sick and disabled clients out there, and that staff from private companies are untrained, unqualified, and incompetent as caregivers. The staff from these private companies are being humiliated daily because of the union's strategy plans to acquire public backing and support. First of all, if you watch the advertisements these private companies

are running or talk to them, you will find out that all but one of these private companies require trained, qualified, licensed, certified staff with a minimum of Grade 12. They are also reputable companies that have been established for a long time.

I am an MGEU member who voted no to strike action. Why? First of all, Jim McCrae is taking responsibility for his actions. Now the union and its members that choose to strike should take responsibility for their actions instead of trying to tell us that this is also Jim McCrae's fault. You do not turn your back and walk out on thousands of sick and disabled clients—you just do not do it—and then turn around and blame someone else for it.

There is a line you draw, an unwritten rule for humanitarian reasons, because nothing you can say justifies what you have been doing to these clients. A job I can get anywhere, but my principles and standards, along with the morals that I have acquired through my life, do not belong to the union to use for their sham they are trying to pull off on the public. They are good, I will give them that, but I am hoping that the public, especially the seniors, start to realize that there is something wrong with this picture. If you have what it takes to be able to walk out on all your clients that you are saying so desperately need you, you do not turn around and in the same breath tell them that you are doing it because Jim McCrae made you, or that you are mad at the government, or there is no other alternative, and then expect the public to buy that garbage.

Please do not start with your slogan of we care about the quality of care our clients will receive from private companies if the government contracts out home care. I have sat at your union meeting when you found out home care was planning on being privatized. I sat with staff who were predicting deaths of clients in the event of a walkout. I talked continually to union reps and volunteers who phoned continually leading up to the strike. I am saying to you, this strike has nothing to do with privatization or the quality of care clients will receive as a result of privatization. This strike is about wages, benefits, jobs, and that is all. The union is using all these seniors as pawns in their game with the government to keep from losing their jobs.

I wonder if the public knows that the government home care system uses untrained, unqualified staff as HCAs for our clients. Our head office at 189 Evanson Street has in the past and has presently held one-week courses, three hours a day, to train people as HCAs and then put them out to care and work with their clients. Sure, there have been some clients who have complained about a worker they might have been sent from one of the private companies, but I can assure you that there are many, many clients who have complained more about the government home care workers they are sent. I have heard these complaints from clients. I have been called in to replace them, and I have watched other government employees complain also about them.

In the time that I have been employed with our provincial government Home Care program, I have been double booked with clients, involved in mixups from the office and seen clients forgotten about completely. None of this was done deliberately, nor was it the government's fault. What it all boils down to is that there is good staff and bad staff in every health care facility in Canada. Some places are better screened for staff than others.

I have heard people say that Jim McCrae is just lining the pockets of the private companies with privatization while the taxpayers have to pay for it. What about the phenomenal amount of taxes you are paying for a health care system that is set up and structured to allow for horrendous abuse by every level of employee? You do not think this is being done? You are paying more taxes now than you ever will by having a private company care for our clients.

I had a union rep who worked with us as an HCA in the block project we do. She is sitting alongside Peter Olfert on the union panel right now. I was told by her to bill for full time allowed even if it is not required because it will ruin it for everyone else. Another time I received a page from her on my pager, telling me that someone was cancelling but it was not going through the office so to still bill for it and get paid.

We get generous time for safety checks, bathroom calls, baths, et cetera, that do not require anywhere near the time we are allowed, but I was told to bill for it

anyway. This was brought to my supervisor's attention. Nothing was ever done about it to my knowledge. We have clients who no longer require the amount of care or time originally allotted them but are not being reassessed. Why? Well, one reason is that all this keeps all of us casual classified employees employed full time right from HSWs to supervisors and case co-ordinators while you as taxpayers pay for it.

There are hundreds of us home care direct service workers who want to work and are not intimidated by the threats and intimidation tactics of a corrupt system organized by these union bosses and inside staff in professional positions that are working together to further confuse the emergency plans trying to be set up, all this to put pressure on Mr. McCrae in the public's eye and shift the blame on him in the eyes of our clients again. I told my employer right from the start that I did not back a walkout in this area of work we do. I never once turned down an assignment from her. I worked 14-hour days for her, any shifts, and was available whenever she called. She told me how much she appreciated me and how I have helped her greatly and if I ever needed a reference there would be no problem whatsoever. That was before I would not back the strike action.

I asked her to work. I asked her for a schedule. I asked her for a reference. All I got from her was I do not know. I called Jim McCrae's office and asked them for help because I wanted to work during the strike. They helped me, informed me and told me what would be happening and that I would continue to work with all my clients still, but I am sitting at home this morning with no work. My supervisor either moved all my clients into the hospital or brought in their backup service, Central Health, to take them at a higher cost to the government than what it would cost for me to continue giving them care. At the same time that I was telling them--my clients--that I would continue to work through the strike, my supervisor and case co-ordinators were telling them that I nor anyone would be working during the strike.

\* (1530)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster):** Mr. Chairperson, it has been an interesting process thus far in the Health

Estimates. I do not know in terms of how productive, but it has been interesting.

The home care services issue has been a priority for us within the Liberal Party because we recognize the importance of the client. We also recognize in terms of where the problem has been and the reason why we are at this current state. I do not believe it is appropriate for the minister and other government members to attempt to lay all the blame on the union. We do not feel that is appropriate whatsoever. Having said that, my attempt this afternoon is going to not necessarily focus on the home care but rather go to a different issue.

Prior to doing that, I wanted to ask the Minister of Health if he can indicate--today he tabled a couple of documents. What I am interested in knowing is, because information flow is absolutely essential whenever we go through a change, and in order to make valued decisions, as much information that can be made available is indeed beneficial for those individuals such as me to be able to go over and see if in fact this is a good decision. In essence, primarily because of the lack of information that has been made available, we as a party do not understand the direction the government is taking and what we do understand we really have a tough time with. That is again primarily because we look at the current system and it is quite effective.

The minister can refer to a letter, and I am sure that we could get a letter from the private sector, where there is excessive abuse that the Minister of Health implies, and that sort of debate could go on virtually indefinitely. You know, it is interesting in the sense that the government has been in office over eight years and, supposedly, given the endorsement that the minister has given this letter, one has to wonder why he never acted upon some of the things, or this government has not acted upon some of the concerns that he is currently expressing, because he often makes reference to the other report that was commissioned, the Price Waterhouse report, and he is very quick to make reference that it was a New Democratic report.

Well, Mr. Chairperson, whether it is a New Democratic report or this government's report, I think

that having information is absolutely essential. I am wondering if the minister can indicate to us what reports were used in essence—or not in essence, in entirety if you like, that were used in the government coming up with the decision to privatize. If he could state which reports were and, in particular, which reports then the minister is prepared to share with Manitobans through this Chamber, if he could do that, it would be much appreciated, and then we will take that information and, hopefully, in about an hour or an hour and a half possibly get back to home care.

To add to that, Mr. Chairperson, so that he can incorporate this into his answer also, if he can indicate again what groups, if any groups, were consulted prior to the privatization. I mean, when I am referring to consulted, what I am referring to is those groups that were indicated that the government is looking at the privatization of home care. Which individuals or groups were aware of this prior to the government or the New Democrats releasing or leaking this information to the public?

**Mr. McCrae:** Mr. Chairman, I appreciate having the participation of the honourable member for Inkster, who very often helps bring some moderation to things and very often attempts to be constructive in his approach, and I certainly have to—[interjection] I think it is appropriate to say so once in awhile.

Obviously I disagree with him sometimes and he knows when, but I certainly cannot accuse him of putting himself into the pocket of the union bosses like we can with members of the New Democratic Party where they have been ever since their beginning.

Mr. Chairman, the organic fusion began when the CCF was formed, which was a combination of—[interjection] The honourable member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) says were you not in the union. Yes, I was a member of the MGEU, a card-carrying, dues-paying member of the MGEU in the years that I worked for—[interjection] They took money out of my pocket. I felt I should be a member. I did not have any choice.

**Mr. Deputy Chairperson:** Order, please. The honourable member for Kildonan has had considerable

time to ask his questions, and the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) sat through that very patiently and has now asked for an answer, and I would ask the minister to do that.

**Mr. McCrae:** Indeed, the honourable member for Inkster has been patient and I appreciate that. It is just that when you get your money confiscated, you have no choice in the matter. My uncle told me, you know, they are going to take your money anyway, so you might as well sign up. You might want to have a say at some point.

But the union did not like my particular unit. We made too much money, I guess, because we had salaries plus transcript fees, and it was always felt that the union turned their backs on us as employees, too, and they have done a lot of that.

Anyway, Mr. Chairman—[interjection]

**Mr. Deputy Chairperson:** Order, please. I am having trouble hearing the minister.

**Mr. McCrae:** The fusion is completely organic. There is no question about it.

Mr. Chairman, the honourable member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) talks about information. You have to read the information that is put in front of you, I say. There is so much information out about home care that it is apparent that the honourable member for Inkster is unable to find the time to read it all or digest it.

Indeed, he says that the Home Care program is quite effective. So I guess he agrees with the honourable member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) who says with respect to home care, go back to the system we had in the first place.

Well, we have report after study after report after study pointing out all the problems that there are in the home care system, a good system. To say that does not mean there are not problems. I mean, let us be realistic about this. We have a good program. We need to make it better. It is not good enough, is my point. It needs to be better. So he says it is quite effective, and I guess by extension—[interjection] Mr. Chairman, I

cannot really hear myself think. The members of the New Democratic Party are extremely disruptive.

**Mr. Deputy Chairperson:** Order, please. The honourable minister is attempting to answer the question of the honourable member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux), and if other members would like to carry on a conversation, perhaps they would like to do so at the back of the room or perhaps out in the hallway.

**Mr. McCrae:** So I just say to the honourable member there is lots of information. Read it. You cannot not read it all and then come in here and say there is not any. I mean, that is not fair. All I ask from the member for Inkster is that he be fair.

We have talked at length. I do not know if he has read the Price Waterhouse report. Maybe he did, but I do not know if he has time yet to read the work of the work restructuring which I tabled today.

I dare say he might not have had time to do that which would be a fair comment and the comments made by the minister's Advisory Committee to the Continuing Care Program which, by the way, is composed of chairperson Paula Keirstead who is a Bachelor of Social Work, a community activist with respect to disabilities and women's issues. Ms. Keirstead is presently employed with the Independent Living Resource Centre as a consultant, and she is involved with community development and volunteerism, and she is a resident of Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Mrs. Cindy Brown is a consumer of the Home Care program and a resident of Winnipeg. Mrs. Myrna Fichett is a registered nurse with a certificate in gerontology, director of care at Red River Valley Lodge, a resident of Morris, Manitoba. Mrs. Elaine Prefontaine is a retired registered nurse and a resident of Winnipeg, Manitoba; Mrs. Joyce Rose is a former member of the Manitoba Council on Aging, first seniors co-ordinator for the Support Services to Seniors program at Stonewall, a resident of Stonewall, and Dr. Elizabeth Watson is the department head for geriatric medicine at Seven Oaks General Hospital. She is an assistant professor at the University of Manitoba, a resident of Winnipeg, Manitoba.

I released earlier today, tabled in the House, the report or comment of the Advisory Committee to the Continuing Care Program complete with the letter that members of the New Democratic Party—they shouted me down; they did not want to hear the letter from two of the members of this committee. Mr. Chairman, Myrna Fichett and Joyce Rose wrote me a letter today because they read the newspaper and they were very concerned with what was reported in today's newspaper about the work of their committee, and I will read that into the record.

\* (1540)

Dear Mr. McCrae, We as—and I read it. Now hopefully honourable members will not shout me down this time, but we will see. They only want to hear what they want to hear. They do not want to hear both sides, ever.

We, as members of the Advisory Committee to the Continuing Care Program, are concerned with media reports regarding the committee's response to the strategic redirection of home care. We feel the committee's intent may have been misrepresented in the media. It is our understanding that this committee did not advise against contracting out a portion of present services. We did recommend that standards development and quality monitoring programs be in place prior to transfer to the new system.

The purpose of the meetings held last fall with direct service workers was not to give assurance to the workers. It is our understanding that we met hoping to gain greater insight into problems within the existing system. As committee members, we feel that the advisory committee has no role in the labour problems related to this issue. Our role, in spite of media interpretation, is to advise the Minister of Health. Sincerely, Myrna Fichett and Joyce Rose, members of the Advisory Committee to the Continuing Care Program.

The honourable member asked about reports. We have got the Seven Oaks project report, I think the honourable member is familiar with that one, which involved a private, for-profit organization, an extremely positive report. If perhaps the Page could assist, there

is a report respecting the Seven Oaks Project. My office at Room 302 probably has a copy, and if the honourable member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) could be provided a copy, I would appreciate that.

So the honourable member says no information, and he has not looked at the information. It has been out since January of 1995. That is over a year now, and to say there is no information is simply incorrect. The Price Waterhouse report has been out since 1986-87. To say that has not been out there and available to him is just simply not correct.

I have tabled more information for the honourable member. There is lots of information, lots of opinion. There is lots of opinion about the concept of contracting out. It always comes back to a straight philosophical, and nothing to do with clients. It has to do with union power, and that is where we are at today. That is why the NDP keep asking about the home care, because they are interested in preserving power for their union boss friends. That is where we are at, Mr. Chairman.

So we have the Price Waterhouse report; the report on work restructuring. We have consulted numerous groups. In fact, with respect to the work restructuring, people involved in that are Frank Maynard, former Deputy Minister of Health, Jeanette Edwards, executive director of the Health Action Line, Dr. Ken Brown, registrar of the College of Physicians and Surgeons, Betty Havens, former ADM in the Department of Health, Marilyn Robinson, former interim director of Home Care Branch. Marilyn Robinson is presently the president of the MARN, Cathy Lussier, Winnipeg Home Care supervisor, Dr. Evelyn Shapiro, Department of Community Health, University of Manitoba, Anne Ross, former executive director of the Mount Carmel Clinic, Marion Suski, president of the Victoria General Hospital, representing the Urban Health advisory committee, Tammy Mattern, then the director of finance and administration at Manitoba Health, and Raymond Wall, the chairman at Bethel Place.

These are the kinds of people who were helping us and giving us advice. What is missing for honourable members—[interjection]

**Mr. Deputy Chairperson:** Order, please. The minister's time has elapsed.

### Chairperson's Ruling

**Mr. Deputy Chairperson:** Before the honourable member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) goes on with his questions, I would like to bring in a ruling.

On April 16, 1996, during the sitting of this section of the Committee of Supply, the member for Crescentwood (Mr. Sale) raised a point of order about language used by a member opposite in that the member had reflected on the motivation of the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak), who had been speaking. As the words in question had been said off the record, and as I was not certain what the words were or who had said them, I took the matter under advisement in order to peruse Hansard. Having had the opportunity to check the Hansard record, it indicates that a member, not identified in the Hansard record, said the following words during remarks being made by the member for Kildonan: "What? Be honest, Dave."

Although the context is not clear, the words themselves are similar to words that have been ruled unparliamentary in the past, or there was caution given on the language. In my opinion, these words do come close to imputing motives, and I would caution the use of such words. However, because the record does not attribute these words to a specific member, I must rule that the member for Crescentwood (Mr. Sale) did not have a point of order. I would, however, request, as I have on several occasions during these Estimates, that all members choose their words carefully, keeping in mind the respect due to all members and to the parliamentary process which we are engaged in here.

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**Mr. Lamoureux:** Just prior to moving on, and in his comments the minister does not have to feel obligated to respond to these two comments, the first one being, when we talk about communicating and trying to get a better understanding in terms of the need for change, we have to consult with the different experts who are out there. I think that the minister will acknowledge that there is a need whenever you change, that you

should consult. I do not recall the minister making any suggestions or any inferences, I should say, to the worker themselves or having some sort of a workshop on where those improvements could occur other than a letter that he reads. I think that when you have a workshop, for example, there are recommendations that come out of the workshop, generally speaking.

When I talk about reports, there are no doubt piles and piles of information that could be gathered from one coast to the next coast in Canada regarding home care services, much like what the Minister of Health has, who has a fairly significant size of civil service that is there to ensure that the minister is kept abreast on the different issues. I believe, and I would challenge the minister in terms of his ability to be able to read every little document that is out there regarding home care services, but what we are looking for is the information that specifically suggests to the minister that the privatization for profit is the way to go.

That sort of information we trust the minister will have at hand, as opposed to my finding somewhere in Alabama or in Nova Scotia a document that says, hey, look, privatization is the way to go. We trust that the minister has already done that and, in order to justify his actions, should be prepared to provide that type of information, not send a critic who does not have the same sort of resources that the Minister of Health has to go out and find that information that he so called, or at least he tries to give us the impression that it is there because he made that decision. Anyway, having said that, the minister can digest on that possibly and reflect, if he so chooses. I would like to see that information, very specific information, that was used.

(Mr. Frank Pitura, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair)

If he feels that the Price Waterhouse reinforces it, then fine. It is a legitimate report. Yes, we will have to look into it, try to get where in there it suggests that privatization for profit is the answer to those problems that he makes reference to. I thank the minister for the Seven Oaks General Hospital We Care Home Services report.

\* (1550)

What I would like to move on to, in an attempt to see if we can make more progress on another very important issue, that of course being what is happening within our hospitals, the health care reform package suggestion and recommendations, if you like, that has been brought forward by the Urban Health System Management Committee which is chaired by the Deputy Minister.

One very short but important question, and that is to the minister: Does the minister himself believe that there are other options that are worthy of being looked at that would allow for the continuation of community hospitals in the city of Winnipeg that will, in fact, incorporate some form of acute care? Do our community hospitals have to lose acute care beds in his vision of health care reform?

**Mr. McCrae:** Yes, Mr. Chairman. It is because there are options that the design teams, the urban planning partnership, are very carefully reviewing all those options. We are very sensitive to the points that the honourable member has been bringing forward, and we are very sensitive to the petitions that have been signed and the expressions of preference by the various citizens of the city of Winnipeg. It is because we are very sensitive to that that we are looking at all options that might be available to us.

The honourable member must know that it is not fun or it is not easy to have to address finding ways to deliver health services with so many millions fewer dollars. The honourable member knows that no matter how you slice it, our transfers from Ottawa with respect to health, secondary education, social services, are reduced. The honourable member knows we have a balanced budget legislation. I do not think he supported it, but we have that. It is a reality. The people will support it even if the honourable member does not, and the fact is that we have those difficult, difficult decisions to make.

I wish, frankly, sometimes that I did not have to be involved in making such hard decisions that frankly do cause people concern and cause them to question and sign petitions. I would prefer it if we were, without having to borrow the money, in the kind of position the



previous New Democrats were in where they could just lay their hands on money. They never seemed to be able to get their hands out of people's pockets. The greatest tax grab in the history of Manitoba was at the hands of the Doer-Pawley people, and my colleagues around the table some of them remember very well how we as a nation demanded from governments, and New Democratic ones especially could not, would not say no.

They just borrowed and taxed and spent, and borrowed and taxed and spent, but they spent a lot more than they could tax, and so the borrowing has now resulted this year in about \$600 million or more not being available to us because it is going to bankers and people like that in the form of interest for the debt that we are trying to carry in our province.

I think it is responsible that we do something meaningful for this and future generations by saying enough of that profligate sort of approach to governing our people, showing no backbone whatsoever and just saying yes to every group that comes along. Every special vested interest that comes along, oh, we will jump on their bandwagon because maybe they will vote for us. You know, this is the sort of mentality we get especially with the New Democrats. It is almost pathetic to watch, but you have it, Mr. Chairman. New Democrats do not care about people. They care about those who they can buy with their own money.

So I would say to the honourable member that indeed we have been and will look at options. Why do you think no decision has been made yet? If I took the first recommendation that came, Seven Oaks Hospital would be turned into a geriatric centre. Maybe that is the right thing to do; maybe it is not. I do not know until I do a proper cost-benefit analysis, and certainly the experts are saying we should find a way to make provision for our senior citizens.

I am sometimes led to think that those who speak the way they do about geriatric issues should show a little more respect for our senior citizens, I believe. To say that looking after our senior citizens is not a very high and noble calling does not really distinguish the person who says it, and I think it is one of the noblest things we can do, is to try to make appropriate arrangements

for senior citizens rather than warehousing them in inappropriate hospital beds throughout the city.

That does not mean that I am saying that the present design team recommendations are the ones that I am attached to, but I am saying to the honourable member, it is not good enough, even for a member of the opposition, simply to petition the government and say do not do it, do not do it. Surely they have some ideas. I have not heard them, but I would like to. If they have good ideas, we would be happy to review them, cost them and all of those sorts of things, but I have not heard any. All I have heard said, members like the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) and others is, oh, go and reform somebody else; if you are going to make a change, close Misericordia Hospital, do not close my hospital, or, if you live in another corner of the city or in the centre of the city, oh, we do not really care what happens at Seven Oaks or Concordia or somewhere else; just leave Misericordia Hospital alone. This is where the member for Inkster does not do the whole thing much service because he kind of comes down on everybody's side if it is a question of sides. I mean, where does the patient fit into all this, is what I always ask. Where does the patient fit?

So, yes, indeed, there are options, and those are the kinds of things that are looked at. People who do not want change in their particular area, where there are suggestions that change ought to happen, ought to come forward with some ideas too. It is not good enough simply to say, oh, everything is skewed against community hospitals. That is not true. The design team's recommendations have to be subjected to the appropriate tests before they become the policy of the government, and those appropriate tests are all about patients. They are all about patients, and they are all about care and, yes, ultimately all about fairness too.

Maybe the member for Inkster should go to Halifax, talk to the Liberal Minister of Health there, Dr. Ron Stewart. He is busy trying to make five hospitals into one. It is okay for Halifax but not for Winnipeg, cannot talk about that for Winnipeg. Go to the Conservatives in Ontario who now have to face the prospect of closing 12 hospitals in Toronto. If you can still find Bob Rae, go and ask him, why did you choose to close 10,000 hospital beds? Go to Roy Romanow in

NDP Saskatchewan and ask, well, why did you have to close down 52 hospitals? Did you not have options? It is a legitimate question, but help; do not just criticize, help. That is what constructive opposition is all about.

So, Mr. Chairman, the honourable member's point is indeed legitimate and appropriate, and the answer is, yes, we are looking at all the appropriate things that one should look at, but is he wanting us to do that so that we can forestall decision making virtually forever? So let us hear his recommendations today. I mean, he has been working on this file for a long time now. He has been working with his constituents and others and doing a good job. I am not saying he is not. I am just saying, if you do not like the ideas that are out there, give me another one where you will find similar cost savings and where you will get results for patients, and I will look at it. Until you have something better, you know you are going to have to go with what is going to be going. If you have nothing better to offer, then really your input, your contribution is not quite as valuable as it should be.

(Mr. Deputy Chairperson in the Chair)

**Mr. Lamoureux:** I would assure the minister ultimately that we feel fairly comfortable in coming up with a position that would be an alternative to what this particular recommendation is. That is one of the reasons why it is that we have invested so much time and effort in this particular issue, because fundamentally we do believe that the government is moving in the wrong direction with respect to community versus the teaching or tertiary hospitals in the roles that they might play. Ultimately, Mr. Chairperson, I do believe that the government is hoping to be able to save on acute care beds, so it is a question of how many acute care beds does it want to take out of the system.

We have, at least in November of 1995, approximately 2,543 acute care beds. If the government is looking at chopping a number or closing a number of acute care beds, a lot depends in terms of exactly what number that they are looking at before individuals are really in a position in which they can say, you know, here is an alternative to what is being proposed. The government, again, has relied very

heavily on the Urban Health systems management committee and the recommendations that have been put through.

\* (1600)

Now, as a result of those recommendations, you have community hospitals, in particular Seven Oaks and the Misericordia Hospital, that there are things that are happening as a result of this government's inability to make a decision. If by ultimately putting off a decision, we get a good decision, well, then it is worth the wait, Mr. Chairperson. What we should be doing is trying to facilitate the government in making that decision as quickly as possible.

A specific example of the consequences of not making a decision is one of personnel. There is tremendous amount of pressure and uncertainty for those individuals that work, whether it is at the Misericordia or the Seven Oaks Hospital, in terms of their future.

I do know that other individuals within those two community facilities have been pursued and asked to leave that facility for another facility, and this pressure is there primarily because there has not been a decision that has been made by this government.

Now, I believe the minister is sincere when he says that he has not made the decision, so on that point I would ask the minister that the Urban Health system management committee put forward a number of recommendations dealing with a multitude of usages for our different community and teaching hospitals.

There were not, for example, a number of recommendations in terms of the Seven Oaks Hospital in terms of it should be allowed to retain acute care beds while at the same time convert some for long-term care.

Rather, its recommendation in this particular case is to convert it into long-term geriatric expertise centre, if you like. With the Misericordia, it is somewhat of a glorified, if I can use the word "glorified," clinic. You always take a bit of a risk of overly simplifying things when you make statements of that nature, but, so that

Manitobans understand, it will have some specialty areas, but, in essence, a glorified clinic.

There do not appear to be other options that were put on the table or made available to the Minister of Health from this committee, which is absolutely essential and has a tremendous amount of influence with the Minister of Health. I am wondering if in fact the minister believes, given his opening statement, there are other viable options that would see community hospitals possibly even enhanced with acute care beds.

What is being done to ensure that those other options are in fact being given consideration? In particular, has the Minister of Health requested the deputy minister to bring forth, if you like, another so-called vision that would allow for the expansion of community hospitals in the city of Winnipeg, or does he not believe that that is something that is viable?

**Mr. McCrae:** Mr. Chairman, the honourable member at the end of his question talked about the expansion of community hospitals. I will ask him how many additional hospitals he would build. I will leave it at that.

What I am really trying to get is in order to have a reasoned debate there ought to be maybe another proposition on the table, and so let us get the honourable member's proposals on the table and how he is going to deal with all these senior citizens in Winnipeg and what he would be proposing.

Let us stop wasting time talking about recommendations that are not the subject of the government decision. I have told honourable members many times what we are doing with those recommendations. We are carefully reviewing them. If the honourable member is against them, what is he for?

**Mr. Lamoureux:** The Minister of Health is quite right. I am against them in a very strong and passionate way, and that is one of the reasons why I had sent the Minister of Health a letter requesting the opportunity with other health care professionals to sit down and do just that, have an opportunity, if you will, to cross-examine some of the individuals that have put forward

this recommendation with the idea of coming back with an alternative.

The minister wants an alternative. The Minister of Health could check with the former Minister of Health in The Action Plan. I know the minister has that particular document, and on page 26 there is an interesting reference that is made to the benefits of the community hospitals and the type of care in other areas of The Action Plan. What I will do maybe is come with a couple of specific quotes from the document.

First, let us go to page 15 where it talks about the costs. These are obviously outdated costs, but in essence nothing has changed. It is more in a tertiary hospital than it is in a community hospital. On page 15, it says, \$775 a day compared to \$410 a day. If you turn to page 26, there is again reference made, and I quote: "Although the teaching hospitals are the most expensive, most high-tech institutions, they appear to admit many patients with uncomplicated disease who may well be better served at community hospitals."

You can go on to page 27, as I alluded to: "Once these services have been identified, resources will be moved—from teaching hospitals to community hospitals or long term care facilities, and from institutions to the community-oriented services where that is appropriate. In the process, each hospital and each kind of hospital will define its role more clearly and this will lead to improved quality of services and to a reduction in duplication and inefficiencies in the system.

"Where it can be substantiated that alternative services are required, there can be no reduction in hospital or institutional health services in Manitoba until and unless appropriate alternative services have been identified and made available."

Mr. Chairperson, ultimately, I would argue that The Action Plan, the Don Orchard and Frank Maynard action plan, and the discussions that were around our caucus at the time when we had supported this document, our health care critic indicated that the role of our community hospitals can, in fact, be expanded. We are not necessarily saying build additional community hospitals. What we are saying is let us look at the role of our community hospitals and how can

they be enhanced. There is the health group policy, if you like, that the Minister of Health often refers to in a number of the reports, and I am referring to the Manitoba Centre for Health Policy and Evaluation where, again, they reinforce the fact that the community hospitals do have and should have a more significant role.

In one of the more recent reports it talked about tonsillectomies and the procedures of tonsillectomies. It showed from 1989 to 1993 at our teaching hospitals, it increased from 45.4 percent to 52.3 percent; while at the same time in the urban community hospitals, there was a decrease from 29.2 percent of the caseload to 20.4 percent of the caseload. Now the minister might ultimately argue, well, that is because of the children's centre, pediatric care, and this is the reason why it was done. Well, Mr. Chairperson, if you check with many of the different workers within the health care field, there is general belief that there are many things that the teaching hospitals could be handing off to community hospitals.

If there is going to be a need for saving dollars on institutionalized care, I would suggest to you that it is a way in which you service our clients, our patients, in which you can achieve the type of cost that the minister is hoping to achieve by converting, or this particular committee is hoping to achieve by the conversion of these two facilities, both the Misericordia and the Seven Oaks. So, what I would suggest to the Minister of Health is that they have to go back to the drawing board and come up with other options.

\* (1610)

What we have here is one option. That option is status quo virtually with the teaching hospitals and the conversion of two community hospitals, and for all intents and purposes, there might be people out there that will support that option. Some might argue that it is a valid option.

What I would argue, Mr. Chairperson, is that there are other options. I just referred to the decentralization of some of the services from teaching hospitals to community hospitals as one of those other options. Another option is more of the status quo. These are all

options that should have been considered. There should have been dialogue.

I do not believe that the Urban Health system management committee did what it should have done, and that is, provide options to the Minister of Health with information that would substantiate those number of options.

Had this particular committee been provided the time to be able to do this, what would have happened, is we would have seen, I believe, a better report or a better listing of recommendations towards options in which we would be able to evaluate and have some sort of an idea which direction to go, because, quite frankly, the current option is not ultimately viable for the simple reason that the capital costs alone will far exceed any potential savings in the short term that this minister is hoping to be able to achieve.

The minister talks about the seniors. Let us not say that the seniors, if you will, are not being taken into consideration. Mr. Chairperson, I would strongly recommend that the Minister of Health take a walk through the Seven Oaks Hospital currently, and take a look at the type of long-term care or geriatric type of treatment centre and the types of costs that are going to have to be absorbed in order to do the conversion of what is Manitoba's most modern hospital facility within the city of Winnipeg.

I am not too sure in terms of what the Minister of Health was wanting to do. We have a different minister that is actually sitting in the chair. I trust that Hansard will be made available and that the minister will respond to it. I will pause at this moment in case there is some comment coming or direction from the Chair.

### House Business

**Hon. Jim Ernst (Government House Leader):** Mr. Chairperson, the Estimates of the Executive Council have been completed in the Chamber. Pursuant to the list, as filed in the House, Health will now move to the Chamber, and Education will start here in the committee room. It does not seem to make a lot of sense, but the way the rules are, we have to either

change the list or move the committee. It seems, at this point, easier to move the committee.

So I suggest, Mr. Chairman, that the committee recess for 15 minutes to allow the conversion from one to the other and resume again at 4:30 p.m. in the Chamber.

\* \* \*

**Mr. Deputy Chairperson:** As the government House leader has announced, Executive Council has finished in the Chamber, and the Health Estimates will resume in the Chamber in a short period of time. The minister, at that time, will have the opportunity of answering to—pardon me, the honourable member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) has approximately a minute left in his 10-minute estimation of time, and then the minister will have the opportunity to answer.

We will recess for a few minutes until things are set up, and we will resume in this committee room with the Estimates of the Ministry of Education at 4:30 p.m.

*The committee recessed at 4:16 p.m.*

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#### After Recess

*The committee resumed at 4:30 p.m.*

\* (1630)

### EDUCATION AND TRAINING

**Mr. Deputy Chairperson (Ben Sveinson):** Will the Committee of Supply please come to order. This section of the Committee of Supply will be considering the Estimates of the Department of Education and Training. Does the honourable Minister of Education and Training have an opening statement?

**Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Education and Training):** Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to be able to provide opening remarks for the department's Estimates for the 1996-97 period. The Manitoba government, as you know, is strongly committed to education and training. Despite the tough fiscal realities, coupled with the harsh federal cuts in funding

to provinces, the 1996-97 Estimates will reflect this government's commitment to education.

In setting the stage for this year's Estimates debate, I wish to present the following: one, a brief descriptive overview of Manitoba Education and Training, the breadth of its mandate, the education partners and the clients that are served; two, the department's mission, the principles that guide the department's activities and the priorities for 1996-97; three, an overview of the key initiatives and the significance of these initiatives to Manitobans; four, the highlights of the 1996-97 funding allocation through which this government has endeavoured to ensure that available resources are provided in the fairest and most effective manner possible.

As we proceed with the Estimates process, we must keep in mind that the Education and Training system is large, complex and affects thousands of Manitobans across the province. The system includes at the present time 54 school divisions and districts with a total student enrollment of nearly 200,000; 55 independent funded schools with a total enrollment of over 13,000; four universities which offer well over 350 degree and certificate programs; three community colleges which serve students across the province and deliver a wide range of programming; many ongoing programs and services delivered through youth programs, literacy, student financial assistance, private vocational school administration, employment development programs, Access programs, apprenticeship and others.

Given the breadth of the system, the responsibilities of the minister are broad and diverse. For this reason, Manitoba Education and Training is managed by two deputy ministers, one for Education—kindergarten to Senior 4—and the other for Training and Advanced Education. It should be noted, however, that these responsibilities are shared with elected school boards and appointed college and university boards. In fact, over 90 percent of departmental expenditure is allocated to schools, capital facilities, post-secondary institutions and ongoing training programs such as Literacy and Access.

This government believes in focusing resources at the institutional and community level. Particularly in times

of severe fiscal restraint, government itself must become as efficient and lean as possible. We want a cost-effective bureaucracy. As reflected in the 1996-97 Estimates process, the department has been streamlined further from last year. Particularly at the post-secondary level, branches have been amalgamated in order to direct as many resources as possible to programs, and this also helps, Mr. Chairman, to offset the decline in federal transfer cuts to post-secondary education in this province.

The department has also continued to develop an infrastructure designed to encourage partnerships and cost-effective joint ventures. This has included the creation of a council on Distance Education and Technology. This council was established just one year ago and is an important initiative to enhance the use of technology in education and training, support improved access to educational opportunities, and foster partnerships among post-secondary institutions and school divisions.

The establishment of an interim transition committee to expedite the creation of a council on post-secondary education. This council will focus on co-ordination and articulation of universities and colleges and effective funding, governance and accountability structures.

The establishment of the Children and Youth Secretariat. The secretariat supports effective and efficient interdepartmental co-ordination of services. One example from that particular secretariat is the protocol for students with emotional and behavioural disorders.

Working closely with other jurisdictions to maximize ways of developing and delivering programs. Examples of this are the Western and Pan-Canadian Protocols for collaboration and basic education, the forum of labour market ministers, and partnerships, where possible, with the federal government, such as the Winnipeg Development Agreement and the Canada-Manitoba Infrastructure program.

The recent creation of the business advisory group on education—through business education partnerships, exciting possibilities of joint ventures can emerge.

Through partnerships and creative cost-effective approaches, we will endeavour to offer Manitobans the kind of education and training programs they deserve. However, throughout the entire Estimates debate, let us keep in mind the harsh and unprecedented reductions in the federal support for social programs, post-secondary education and health that must be dealt with, not only this year but in future years. While we will continue to work with our education partners to seek cost-effective ways of delivering programs, we must also, at the same time, seek ways of encouraging our colleagues at the federal level to carry out their responsibilities, readjust their priorities and preserve support for social programs.

An educated citizenry and a skilled and adaptable workforce are the province's most important assets in a knowledge-intensive society. The mission of Manitoba Education and Training is to ensure high quality education and training programs for Manitobans to enable them to develop their individual potential and contribute to the economic, social and cultural life of Manitoba.

In carrying out its mission, the department is guided by the following principles:

**Excellence**—providing a climate for education and training that fosters dedication, determination, creativity, initiative and high achievement.

**Equity**—ensuring fairness and providing the best possible learning opportunities for Manitobans regardless of background or geographic location.

**Openness**—being receptive to ways of thinking and acting that result in ongoing renewal and meaningful involvement of people in decision making.

**Responsiveness**—meeting the education and training needs of individuals by taking into consideration personal background, individual characteristics and geographic location.

**Choice**—providing alternatives to meet diverse learning needs and interests.

**Relevance**—providing education and training that is current and meaningful to students.

Integration—connecting components within and between education and training and social and economic systems in order to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of programs and services.

Accountability—ensuring that the expected educational outcomes are realized through effective and efficient use of resources.

The primary responsibility of Manitoba Education and Training is to facilitate the improvement of learning at both elementary, secondary and post-secondary levels. Emphasis is placed upon enhancing learner performance, delineating roles and responsibilities across the education and training systems and facilitating the development and sharing of new knowledge. Priorities include: improved quality and relevance of programs; greater accessibility; more accountability in reporting to the public; enhanced curricula; well-trained teachers; defined standards and assessment tests; increased choice; effective use of technology; more parent, student and community involvement; improved co-ordination program, articulation and credit transfers among institutions, both secondary and post-secondary; enhanced business and education partnerships; strengthened linkages between Education and Training and the province's economic and social development initiatives; improved program rationalization and overall efficiency and effectiveness.

The education and training system in Manitoba is currently undergoing significant renewal. Virtually every aspect and level is affected by this renewal—kindergarten to Senior 4, post-secondary, program development, program delivery and governance structures. Initiatives across the education and training system are extricably intertwined and stem from the department's priorities. As the 1996-97 Estimates will show, resource allocation decisions support the following initiatives, and I shall outline them for you.

Curriculum development and implementation: Work continues in curriculum development and implementation for language arts and mathematics. Social studies and science curriculum frameworks have been deferred for one year to align Manitoba curriculum development with the Pan-Canadian and western curriculum projects. This will provide more

time for teachers to implement the new program. Multimedia resources are being integrated into curriculum.

Senior 3 social studies, Canadian history, will continue as a compulsory course until new social studies curricula are implemented. Specific support material for teachers has been developed and distributed to assist them as education renewal is implemented. Some examples include: Native Peoples: Resources pertaining to First Nations, Inuit and Metis; School-Based Planning: a continuous process for effective education; Senior 1 Mathematics (10G): Curriculum Document; Towards Inclusion Documents; Locally Developed Curricula: School-Initiated Courses and Student-Initiated Projects; Renewing Education: New Directions, A Foundation for Excellence; K-4 Mathematics: Manitoba Curriculum Framework of Outcomes and Grade 3 Standards.

Modifications have been made to subject area time allotments that increase flexibility for educators in time tabling. This was based on responses to the department's survey of principals. A letter communicating these modifications was sent to educators in February 1996. This is just one example of how the department, working with the field, can arrive at practical and effective decisions.

\* (1640)

The implementation schedule for new curriculum has been modified with the introduction of an implementation year and a phase-in of senior years curriculum frameworks. The introduction of an implementation year will allow teachers and administrators more time to become familiar with the new curriculum frameworks prior to testing being conducted. This should facilitate the introduction of new curricula and provide for more co-ordinated planning and scheduling.

At senior years, where curricular changes are more extensive, incremental phase-in of each senior year's curriculum framework will allow senior year students to develop new knowledge and skills one year at a time so they can build the learning for each new course in

succession and can more successfully achieve the outcomes that have been identified.

A western Canadian institute of reading recovery is being established to train teacher leaders. The purpose of the program is to provide early intervention for children at risk re: literacy. The department is excited about this initiative, given its success in other jurisdictions in our pilot schools and the high level of support from our education partners.

**Assessment and evaluation:** Testing outcomes in the core subject areas at Grades 3, 6, Senior 1 and Senior 4 will be key to ensuring consistency and greater accountability of the school system for the benefit of students.

Provincial Senior 4 examinations in mathematics and language arts will continue in 1996-97. The first Senior 4 English language arts exam in 25 years was recently administered to 7,400 students in January of 1996. The provincial mean mark was 63.6 percent, and the provincial pass rate 81.3 percent. This kind of information is very important to benchmark and monitor student performance in Manitoba.

More than 150 teachers are now trained markers. The marking process was considered to be a highly valuable professional development experience by Senior 4 English language arts teachers. This government wants to ensure that student evaluation is carried out in a fair, reliable and professional manner.

The first provincial standards test, Grade 3 Mathematics, will be piloted in June of 1996. In conjunction with this pilot, the reliability of local marking versus central marking will be studied. The pilot will also help develop a meaningful way of reporting student test results. We want to ensure the test results are used appropriately.

**Parental and community involvement:** Advisory councils for school leadership were up and running successfully across Manitoba. Supports, example, school-based planning document advisory councils for school leadership handbook orientation training will be in place to ensure effective community input into the school planning process. Implementation of

requirements for school planning will begin with pilot schools in 1996-97, and all schools will submit the first phase of their school plans to school boards during the 1997-98 school year.

The third Parents' Forum was held April 13, 1996, just this past weekend, in support of the government's commitment to ensure meaningful parental involvement in the education process. The forum was very useful, and many comments and suggestions were made by parents as to how schools could continue to be more effective through planning. Teachers support professional development and training. As reflected in New Directions, teachers are key to the success of education renewal. This government is committed to ensuring that teachers have the necessary skills and supports. [interjection]

I am wanting to listen to your conversation because it sounds so interesting. I always find the little conversations that go across the table so much more interesting. I shall carry on.

In-service training for teachers is a major thrust of the department. The department will work with teachers and other education partners to ensure opportunities for professional development. Planned for 1996-97 are a variety of workshops, curriculum orientation sessions, training in the use of technology, and others. To ensure that Manitoba has high-quality teachers, teacher education is currently being reviewed.

The Board of Teacher Education and Certification, which we call BOTEK, made a number of recommendations, including the length of training to 150 credit hours versus the current 120 credit hours and practicum experience. Recently, the department engaged Dr. Bernard Shapiro, Principal and Vice-Chancellor of McGill University, to do an analysis and formally report his suggestions for teacher education reform. It is pleasing to know that Dr. Shapiro is returning to Manitoba for a second round of consultation with education partners.

**Distance Education and Technology:** This government is committed to ensuring that technologies are used effectively in education and training. This initiative is critical to enhancing accessibility, program



relevance, cost-effectiveness, and overall quality of programs. Over 1,700 teachers have received professional development in Distance Education.

Three technology initiatives which support curriculum delivery and learning are: (1) Curriculum Multimedia Integration Project for Senior 1, Senior 4 science, (2) Computer-Guided Learning, we call it CGL, a project for the delivery of Senior 1 math, (3) Interdisciplinary Middle-Years Multimedia Project.

Support has been provided for 10 more pilot projects in Innovative Distance Education and Technology initiatives. Results from the first 13 projects have been positive and informative. Technology and Science Resource Centres, TSRC, are designed to provide fundamental high-technology applications to traditional industrial arts and vocational education. [interjection] You are right. We need a special course in what all these initials mean.

Pilot projects include another 25 sites that will engage in the process of establishing the program. The infrastructure works project was approved for establishment of an education network capable of two-way video linking 80 Manitoba high schools.

MERLIN has been in place for one year now, and we are beginning to see significant benefits from this agency. Examples include school division savings through bulk purchasing of technology and services, greater co-ordination and compatibility in development of educational networks, assistance to schools and post-secondary institutions in technology selection and planning, co-ordination of the infrastructure works project, effective negotiation of tariff and regulatory changes to benefit the education and training sector. MERLIN is also working with vendors and other agencies to find affordable methods of access to Internet for all schools in the province.

Education information system, EIS: EIS will provide centralized data on Manitoba's students and the education system which will allow for better informed decision making. In September 1996, divisions will be offered an opportunity to participate in submitting school and division-based data electronically. This will streamline the administrative processes for school divisions and department, reduce paperwork, and

increase efficiency. For this year we expect to collect enrollment information on approximately 100,000 students. By 1997-98, all schools will be submitting enrollment information electronically, and all of us here had better learn how to use our E-mail if we do not know it now. A unique student identifier is being assigned in this process. Through the steering and implementation committees, the department is working closely with education partners in developing policies as to how this information will be used and disseminated.

Aboriginal education: Aboriginal perspectives are being integrated into curriculum frameworks in all core subjects. A native education steering committee with representation from aboriginal groups is currently being established to oversee this development. The department is partnering with the University of Manitoba and aboriginal teachers circle to hold a summer institute on native education. The development of curriculum framework for aboriginal languages has been initiated with our Western Protocol partners. We have established a partnership with the Manitoba Association for Native Languages to strengthen language instruction in the province. The Apprenticeship branch has been working on the aboriginal apprenticeship initiative. This proposal has been successfully negotiated with all relevant partners. Pilot delivery of two community-based programs is under way at Sandy Bay and Norway House. As aboriginal self-governance unfolds, the department looks forward to working with the First Nations and seeking opportunities in education and training.

\* (1650)

Choice: Choice of schools within a school division and between divisions will be finalized to take effect in September of 1997. Enabling legislation will be introduced this spring, the spring of 1996.

The youth program: This initiative is targeted to Manitoba students and youth aged 16 to 24. Specific projects include CareerStart. This involves a wage incentive of \$2 an hour to prospective employers to provide meaningful summer jobs. Urban and Rural Green Teams provide grants to support environmentally focussed projects which employ

youth. Partners with Youth involves grants to support student hiring.

It is anticipated that 330 youth will be placed in 1996-97. This project also includes a grant for youth to start their own businesses.

**Revitalization of apprenticeship:** Government continues the revitalization of apprenticeship as a critical thrust. Progress has been made in the following areas: updating the skill requirements of apprenticeable trades; strengthening the linkage between high schools and apprenticeship training through the introduction of a high school apprenticeship option; addressing skill shortages in northern, remote and aboriginal communities through the introduction of the aboriginal apprenticeship training initiative. The elimination of federal funding for apprenticeship training will have a major impact on apprenticeship training in Manitoba and on the province's ability to meet the labour market demand for skilled human resources and apprenticeship trades.

**Literacy programs:** In recognition of the importance of literacy, the government has committed additional funding of over \$80,000 per year for the next five years to literacy programming. Beginning in '95-96 and continuing in '96-97 with the restructuring of training and advanced education, a close linkage is being forged between literacy and employment development programs. Increased access to literacy programming for social assistance recipients is an important assist for re-entry to the workforce.

**University education review:** Since the release of the Roblin commission's report, government has invited universities and colleges to respond to the challenges by exploring and/or establishing program priorities, potential centres of specialization, new management arrangements, opportunities for resource sharing and program rationalization, communications and learning technologies, et cetera.

Government has also taken steps towards implementing the recommendations of the Roblin report. These steps include the establishment of the interim transition committee to pave the way for the council on post-secondary education. This committee is developing the legislation, examining fee structures,

program rationalization, the use of technology, institutional articulation and exploring potential partnerships, ensuring post-secondary participation in the Distance Education and Technology Council, which advises the minister on all matters related to the incorporation of technology and education and training, ensuring post-secondary participation in the business advisory group on education which will make recommendations to strengthen business education partnerships; initiating the consultation process necessary to establish Keewatin Community College as the post-secondary education co-ordinator in the North. For example, responsibilities for Inter-Universities North is being transferred to the college.

We are developing partnerships, Mr. Chairman, to strengthen linkages between business and education. We have the business advisory group on education developed and the members selected. Parents and other community members are key partners, and formal mechanisms are being implemented to enable their fullest participation. The regulations are now in place for advisory councils on school leadership. Through the Western Protocol, we have a partnership between the four provinces and two territories. Each of the provinces has content developers working on the senior math courseware; Nelson Canada, the industry partner, is contributing \$2.8 million and is the project manager.

During the past year over 800 educators have participated on departmental advisory committees, on development teams, and on reaction panels to prepare and review curriculum frameworks courses for distance delivery and school plan guidelines, and in the development and scoring of provincial examinations for senior for English language, arts, and mathematics.

Parents, students, staff and members of the deaf community have joined the department on an implementation committee to develop renovation plans for the new Manitoba School for the Deaf. Consultative mechanisms of various stakeholder groups are ongoing and are being strengthened. We have an implementation advisory committee now, of great assistance to the minister, from all of the stakeholder groups including parents to give advice on the implementation of educational change. The council on Distance Education and Technology and the education finance advisory committee are a few.

Regional consortia are working to ensure business and industry are thoroughly involved in identifying local lifelong learning needs, and the strategies for meeting them in order to develop educational technologies which support sustainable economic development in Manitoba. Working in partnership with businesses, schools, and government, employability skills portfolio kits were developed to assist students in making course decisions and correct choices by compiling their skills and experience in a portfolio to increase their chances for job opportunities.

The 1996-1997 Estimates funding specifics, as I indicated earlier, despite the harsh fiscal realities coupled with the significant reduction of funding from the federal government, Manitoba Education and Training continues to ensure that available funding is provided to the fairest, most effective manner possible. As we go through the Estimates debate, let us keep in mind the following. Approximately \$1 billion will be spent on education and training this year. This is a significant portion of overall government expenditure.

Manitoba's funding of public schools has generally compared favourably for that in other provinces. For example, Alberta and Saskatchewan have announced zero increases after several years of decreases or frozen funding. Ontario continues significant reductions in funding with a 9.9 percent decrease. Only British Columbia, with its favourable economic position on the West Coast, has had funding increases from '93-94 to '95-96.

We will ensure that all Manitoba post-secondary students have the means to invest in their own education; a \$12 million dollar Manitoba learning tax credit will be implemented for the 1996 taxation year. This refundable provincial tax credit is the first of its kind in Canada and fulfills the promise made in the last election. Refundable Manitoba learning tax credit covers 10 percent of all eligible tuition fees and will be delivered through the income tax system.

An additional \$1.7 million has been allocated for education renewal in '96-97. As well, the government recognizes the importance of assisting teachers in the classroom as they work towards implementing educational renewal through professional development.

As a result, 750,000 has been earmarked for use in key curricular areas and to promote the development of technology in the classroom.

In order to encourage advanced education institutions to focus on marketable skills and innovation, the Post-Secondary Strategic Initiatives Fund will be targeted at \$3.5 million. Of that amount, \$2.5 million is targeted to community colleges and \$1 million to universities.

In '95-96, community colleges added 500 new seats to community college training capacity using Strategic Initiatives Fund resources. In '96-97, another 360 full-time equivalent training positions are expected in our community colleges.

The Apprenticeship Program is being restructured and merged with Workforce 2000 to bring together and strengthen those two workforce-based training initiatives. The Workforce 2000 element of the program will continue to provide support for strategic industry-wide training partnership and province-wide special courses.

Grants to universities are being reduced by nearly 2 percent this year, which is significant considering the federal cutbacks. Provincial support to colleges is maintained at last year's level. \$745 million is allocated for public schools in 1996-97, a 2 percent reduction from last year. The ESL education support levy is maintained at last year's level.

In addition to the formula changes, the flexibility component was introduced with a base support to allow school divisions more discretion as to how they use base funding. I am going to stop because my time is up and I have been asked to make a summative concluding statement and I will in that summative concluding statement indicate, Mr. Chairman, that I express sincere thanks to the men and women who work in education and training. They have put in exceptional commitment to their tasks over the past year, an extremely challenging and busy year. They deserve an awful lot of credit and I wish to publicly acknowledge their efforts, without which the department would be far the lesser for, so I thank my staff and I will add any other comments I have to make during the course of questioning.

\* (1700)

**Mr. Deputy Chairperson:** We thank the Minister of Education and Training for those comments.

Does the official opposition critic, the honourable member for Wolseley, have any opening comments?

**Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley):** Yes, I do want to put some comments on the record.

**Mr. Deputy Chairperson:** Order, please. I hate to interrupt. I just wanted to note that under the new rules the minister and the opposition critic both have 30 minutes for an opening statement. Thank you.

**Ms. Friesen:** I do not think I will take that long, but we will see. I thank the minister for his statement and I particularly note her thanking of her staff and I know that her staff have had a very difficult year. In fact, I think they have had a difficult series of years, and I think it is important to recognize the extra work that I know the staff have done. There are many of them who have been working weekends and evenings to deal with the kinds of pressures that the government has brought on education and so I think generally the people of Manitoba recognize the particular contribution that the staff of this department have made.

I think one of the things that I see happening in Education now is that it has become a battleground. I would not have said that five years ago. I would not have said that seven years ago, but I do think that education has become an area of crisis. My sense is that it has been a crisis which has been, in part, created by this government, not so much perhaps in the sense that the Harris government deliberately set out and said they were going to create a crisis in education, and I cannot tell whether this government set out to do it deliberately, but do it they have.

And they have done it I think by dividing and confrontational tactics that they have used with parents, with superintendents, with teachers, with trustees. It seems to me wherever you look in education that people have been pitted against each other. Whether this was the governments intention or not I do not

know, but I think that that level of conflict is what we see in education and it is certainly what I am hearing from so many areas of the education community.

If you talk to the trustees, to parent councils, to school board employees and superintendents, I think what you hear is the many strands of what I see as a single story. The Filmon government and this minister and previous ministers have brought about rapid changes in education and they have done them without very much consultation. They have had very rigid deadlines and I note that the minister has backed off from some of those deadlines and that she included those comments in her introductory remarks.

My lament is that that kind of common sense, that willingness to listen to the community partners in education who for two years have been telling the minister this I think has led to many of the problems, so I welcome that willingness to listen to people, that willingness to be more flexible in the kinds of deadlines, because I think there have been enormous pressures put on certain parts of the school system that were quite unnecessary, whether or not one supports the kind of program that this particular government is putting in place. So I am glad to see that finally, after in some cases 18 months to two years, the government has finally listened to what people were telling them about the middle schools curriculum, about some of the aspects of standard testing, about some aspects of the advisory council on school leaderships, about Canadian history, of which I am sure we will have the opportunity to discuss more later.

Certainly I think that backing off, that back pedalling on so many of their rapid introductions of very rigid deadlines has been welcomed by a number of areas in the education community. But what has been wrought by those two years of division and confrontation. I think, are very serious and long-term concerns to Manitobans, because what we have seen is a loss of trust, and I do not think the minister intended to set out to do this. I do not think previous ministers did, but the combination of all of the forced and rapid change which has come from on top, from on high, not beginning from the grassroots, not through consultation, I think, will have long-term implications for education in Manitoba.

I have heard people say to me that, you know, some years ago it used to be that we looked upon the department and its staff as our assistants, not to say that there were not conflicts. Of course, there were, and, again, it was not Utopia, but there was a sense that teachers in the field or superintendents or parent councils believed that they had a friend in court. They believed that they had assistance and resources in the department. They believed that they had field workers who would help them. They believed that the libraries and all of the facilitators in the department were on their side.

My sense is that that automatic assumption has gone and that it will be difficult to return to that kind of level of trust. I do not think that it is something that can be regained very quickly. It is something that I draw the minister's attention to, that it is something which is going to have to be regained over a long period of time, but I think regained it must be, because that fundamental level of trust between teachers and superintendents and trustees in education and the kinds of roles that staff have had to play in the last few years, I think, have really led to some serious difficulties.

This is, by no means, a criticism of staff. I do not make any of my comments personally. I do think that they have been required to play roles which have unnecessarily brought them into conflict, and I do think that level of trust has to be returned to education.

It is possible that the minister's greater flexibility on some of the time deadlines, for example, or some of the other areas where she says that she is more willing to listen to parents and to teachers or trustees in certain areas of policy, perhaps that will begin to re-establish the level of trust that I think we did have in Manitoba.

I think we also need to be very aware of the impact of this on school morale. There are many areas affecting school morale, but I think the relationship between the department and school divisions have become very, very strained, whether it is in the area of boundaries or whether it is in the area of Advisory Councils and school leadership or, as one of the trustees wrote from southern Manitoba, the government's seeming intent to trustee-proof education.

I thought that was quite a startling letter. It was one of the ones that was submitted to the Boundaries Commission. Here was somebody who recognized very clearly that what the government was doing was attempting to bypass the trustees in so many areas, whether it was in curriculum, whether it was in the changes in the position of principles or whether it was, of course, in the treatment of school board recommendations to the Norrie commission. So, again, there is another area, the role of the trustee and the relationship between the Minister responsible for Education and the trustees, the locally elected officials who every day have to face their constituents and deal with the changes in education. And, of course, trustees are facing one of the most serious areas of change in education, and that is the continuous cutting of funds to education.

Again, we saw this year a minus 2 in public education, and the minister believed that quality can be maintained with this. It seems to me it is the constant cutting that I am hearing about that is making people despair, that is making people give up the kind of enthusiasm and energy that they have put into education in the past. It is that sense of being constantly undermined and constantly undervalued, of which the minus 2 and perhaps the minister's committee on enhancing accountability are only two of the most visible elements.

But it is the trustees who have had to face their constituents with, in some cases, tax increases, some of which have gone as high as 17 percent. It is the trustees who have had to deal with the \$43.5 million that has been lost from public education over the time of this government. It is the trustees who have had to face the loss of over 600 teacher positions in education over the last number of years of this government, the trustees who must juggle tax increases, the spending of reserve funds as required by this government, the cap on their ability to tax, as this government required, and of course, in many cases, the so-called Filmon Fridays that were also introduced by this government. It is the trustees who must face the implications of service reductions, and it is they who must meet their constituents on the street every day.

\* (1710)

So the relationship between the minister and trustees is, I think, a very important one, and I know the minister herself has been a trustee, and I know she understands some of this. So I am drawing it to her attention as an area of great concern where I think government policies have truly made a difference, that I think the kind of relationship between trustees and the government that might have been there 5 years ago, or perhaps in other decades, whether they were NDP decades or Conservative decades, is being quite rapidly eroded. I do draw that to the minister's attention as a concern, and it was one that was very strikingly made for me in those submissions to the Boundaries Review Commission from particularly southern Manitoba.

The Boundaries Commission, as well, is obviously an area of concern for the government, for its caucus and for all Manitobans. One of the problems is that we have seen a great number of delays, and this leads to continuing uncertainty in many parts of Manitoba. Now, there are some areas in Manitoba that are prepared to amalgamate. There are some areas, indeed, that are prepared to try pilot programs. Those areas and those trustees who are interested in that and prepared to move on that, and there are some, I have read those submissions to the Boundaries Commission, and there, indeed, is a willingness in one or two areas to do that, and we believe that they should be encouraged.

We believe that the minister, who has had the report of the Norrie commission since September—remember that very short time period that we had between, I think, was it early June and August, when the minister reopened and extended the deadlines for the Norrie commission, could only be done until August 15 because the report had to be in by September. So we assume it was in in September, but since then the public has heard nothing. Again, I draw to the minister's attention—I probably do not need to; I know she is hearing from trustees as well—the additional insecurity that is being created by the continual delays in the government's response to this. So we are looking in these Estimates for some sense of the government's direction on this, or perhaps even a timetable, of the kind of level of decision, or even of consultations or pilot projects that the government might be looking at in this area.

The government has also, I think, introduced a level of confrontation and division in Manitoba education that perhaps is unparalleled. My experience does not go back, obviously, as long as some members of this Legislature, but the document *Enhancing Accountability, Ensuring Quality*, certainly, I think, created in Manitoba's teachers and parent councils and superintendents and trustees a level of hostility that I do not think I have encountered in education before. I know that we have some members of the commission with us, and I am sure that they will testify to some of the passion, some of the anger which was expressed to them.

We have some questions about that. We certainly have a lot of concerns that we will be expressing throughout this session on the ideas and proposals that were there, as well as the processes and procedures of that particular commission. It is something that I continue to get letters on every day, and I am sure the minister is as well. It is coming, I think, from an anger and frustration of people in public education who are continually seeing their position undermined and the support for public education undermined as the government continues to erode and cut the funding for public education.

Their anger and frustration, I think, is added to by the government's choice, the government's decision to increase the funding to private schools and, of course, this year, we do not quite know yet how much it is. We know that the government has changed the formula for funding private schools, and they did announce that in the budget, but subsequent questions in the House seem unable to persuade the minister to put that agreement, the new agreement, the new funding proposals, the new numbers that we should be looking at on the table. So again, and I am sure the minister anticipates this, we will be pursuing that in the Estimates.

I draw the minister's attention to it now as another area of division within society and within the community. The continual cuts to funding of public schools at the same time as the government is increasing and we believe increasing in ever larger amounts the funding for private schools is of very serious concern, not just for education, but for the future of Manitoba.

It seems to me, as I look at the government's plans in so many areas, whether it is in legislation, whether it is in curriculum, whether it is in the development of school choice, whether it is in boundary decisions or whether it is in the fundamental issues of funding that what we are looking at in Manitoba is an increasing inequality, not just in the society generally, through funding cuts to people on welfare, changes in so many areas of society. The attack on public sector workers generally, the reduction of salaries and the use of legislation in effect to create greater inequalities within society, all of that is context, but within education what we are also looking at, of course, is a kind of policy which in the end, I believe, has a very high potential to create much greater inequality in Manitoba, and that gives me great cause for concern.

The individualization of schools and the creation of a market in education I think are the government's end goals. I do not know if the minister is prepared to discuss things in those terms, but it seems to me that that is the direction the government is going. We can look at examples in the United States. We can look at the 1988 Education Act in the United Kingdom. The government is following many similar steps with much of the same kind of ideology behind it.

The government's goal I think is as in health care, to create a market in education, because this particular government is based upon an ideology which believes that the market should rule, that the market is the most effective and efficient distributor of resources. Mr. Chairman, I think there is reason to argue that the market is an efficient, perhaps not an equal, but it is an efficient distributor of some goods, perhaps consumer goods.

I think there will be fundamental differences between us and this government on the issue of marketizing, of creating a market economy in areas of health and education. I do not believe that the market distributes fairly or equally those kinds of social goods, and I think fundamentally those are the differences that we are talking about, and I do believe in education, by incremental changes, that is the direction the government is going. The creation, the widespread creation of school choice has been existent in the city of Winnipeg for quite a long time, or parts of

Winnipeg, I should say, but is in itself, perhaps, relatively innocuous. It has the opportunity to benefit some areas of the community and may provide difficulties for small schools in other areas, and we have talked about those elements of that policy before and we will be raising them again in these Estimates.

I think when you add to that the decline of public funding for public education, the increase in public funding for private education, when you add to that the requirement of the government for schools to seek corporate sponsorship, which I think is increasingly happening, you are moving to a situation which does exist in other parts of the world where conservative ideology has run its full force.

You are leading to a situation where some schools will thrive, those who are able to have access to corporate sponsorships, those who have active and wealthy parent groups and who are situated in areas where it is possible to create the kind of community support for schools that we would like to see in all communities.

There are great inequalities in our society which are reflected in education, but the goal of education over the past number of decades in this province seems to me both under Conservative and New Democratic administrations to have been to try to equalize those opportunities, to distribute resources so that there are monies for special needs students, so that there are monies that are distributed equally across the system.

\* (1720)

My sense of the direction of where this government is going is that the individualization of schools, the introduction of market principles in schools are going to undermine that long-term policy of Manitobans to equalize access and to equalize opportunities to Manitobans.

So those are my concerns in the public education system, and I see it happening incrementally. I do not think we are there yet, but I think there are fundamental changes that the government is making which will lead schools to essentially a situation where those who will have access to wealth and power will survive and those

who do not will not. That is putting it perhaps crudely but I think those are the issues that the government must look at as it moves to this kind of competitive market scenario.

I am concerned obviously about post-secondary education, as well, and share with the minister—I have forgotten how you expressed it now—but certainly share with the minister her concerns about the withdrawal of federal funding for post-secondary education, and there may indeed be areas there that we can support the representation, the letters, the negotiation—well, I guess I cannot even say negotiations—that the minister may be having with the federal department over this.

Obviously, Canada as a nation needs a strong national presence in post-secondary education, and I think now more than ever we are moving into an area of very high cost with the expansion of distance education, which obviously has a very large place to play nationally in post-secondary education. I know that the minister will be attending the Council of Ministers of Education meeting coming up in Edmonton. I know that those kinds of things are on the agenda.

The presence, the strong federal presence in post-secondary education is very important to us, both for I think the maintenance of a nation and a sense of nation, and we will be looking at issues dealing with French language, monies for education there, both for St. Boniface College and for the public schools of Manitoba, as well.

So I see the loss from the federal government both in national terms and in provincial terms, and, of course, the loss to the provincial budget is considerable. It is considerable in areas where, perhaps, Manitoba has not always been the strongest—apprenticeship, for example, an area where we need to be expanding our activity and expanding the opportunities for young Manitobans. It is also federal withdrawal.

Of course, we have seen in earlier years the withdrawal of the Canadian job strategy and the implications that has had for the community colleges. Again, that has fallen very harshly upon communities

like Manitoba, Saskatchewan and, I would expect, some of the Maritime provinces as well.

So we do have great concerns about that, and we are looking for some long-term plans. I know some of the ones that Saskatchewan is putting in place. I have looked at some of the ones that Alberta has done over the last three to four years as they have looked at long-term planning for post-secondary education, and I would say in criticism that is something that we have not seen from this government. We did press for early establishment. If the minister remembers, I talked about this in the last Estimates and asked for dates and deadlines as to when that interim committee would be established so that we could begin to get some kind of planning underway for some very serious changes, some of which are being forced upon us, some of which this government is choosing to make, and so I do lament the late appointment of that and will be asking the minister some of the questions about the next stages of that and what the schedule is for that.

In community colleges, again, we agree with the government that the section of the Roblin commission that argued for the expansion of programs—the doubling, I believe, of community college diploma programs—was an area that we were very supportive of. I continue to look for improvement in that area.

I notice that the minister made a reference to the number of new places. I am not sure that those are in diploma programs, and it is the diploma programs that Roblin pointed to. Again, that is something, I think, that we want to underline our concerns about and want to discuss with the minister as we get to that area of funding.

I should perhaps also point out that it is the post-secondary area of the department which has taken the largest cut. The minister has talked about it in terms of efficiencies, and it is possible there are efficiencies there. We certainly look forward to discussing that, but at a time when the federal government is reducing so rapidly, both in apprenticeship and in the support for post-secondary education, it makes it very difficult for institutions in Manitoba to look at those changes in funding to colleges and universities. I think the



minister said that—well, we will leave that for later; sorry, I digress.

But it does make it very difficult to look at the priority that the government is establishing for post-secondary education when we see those kinds of cuts within the department and those kinds of cuts which have also come for universities and may indeed be there for colleges as we examine the implications of the governments changes last year to the grants in lieu of taxes.

With that, Mr. Chairman, I think, perhaps suggest that if the minister is willing, I had suggested to the Liberal critic that they might want to make some opening remarks.

**Mr. Deputy Chairperson:** At this point I do not see a Liberal critic. We thank the critic for the official opposition for those remarks.

Under Manitoba practice, the debate of the Minister's Salary is traditionally the last item considered for the Estimates of the department. Accordingly, we shall defer the consideration of this item and now proceed with consideration of the next line. When we resume at nine tomorrow morning, we will ask the minister to introduce her staff.

The time being 5:30 p.m., this committee is recessed until nine o'clock Friday morning.

## EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

\* (1440)

**The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Mike Radcliffe):** Would the Committee of Supply please come to order. This section of the Committee of Supply has been dealing with the Estimates for Executive Council. Would the minister's staff please enter the Chamber. We are on Resolution 2.1, page 11.

**Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier):** Mr. Chairman, I just wanted to respond to the Leader of the Opposition's (Mr. Doer) questions regarding the various issues that he left with me yesterday.

The first question was with respect to the contracts that have been entered into with respect to communications for the Department of Health, and Biggar Ideas, Inc. As I indicated yesterday Treasury Board has approved a contract with Biggar Ideas, Inc. to the amount of up to \$75,000, and Treasury Board has made no specific approval on any value for any campaign that may ensue from that particular contract.

Secondarily, I will quote from the letter that was sent by the Minister responsible for the Telephone System (Mr. Findlay) to the New Democratic critic for the Telephones, the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton), dated April 17, 1996. Dear Mr. Ashton: This letter is in response to your question in the House on April 10, 1996, respecting a contract between Biggar Ideas, Inc. and the Manitoba Telephone System. MTS entered into a contract with KPMG to do the reorganization initiative in early 1995. KPMG then hired Biggar Ideas, Inc. on a subcontract basis in September 1995 to assist with the communications activity surrounding the reorganization. KPMG was responsible for remuneration to Biggar Ideas, Inc.

The Leader of the Opposition also asked a question respecting the tabling of any documents emanating from the APM work that was done with respect to home care analysis and reorganization in the province, and that documentation has been tabled today by the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae). I understand, secondarily, the question was asked about the report that was presented by the Home Care Advisory committee chaired by Ms. Paula Keirstead, and I understand that document was tabled today by the Minister of Health.

**Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition):** First of all, I thank you for the information on Biggar Ideas and the campaign in the Department of Health.

Point No. 2, I am disappointed in KPMG that they would not release the amount of money Ms. Biggar has received, and if we have to pursue that with the minister on KPMG to find out how much—I mean, it is the Premier that had the Speech from the Throne that talked about lifting the veil of secrecy and disclosure and all these other things in December, and I hope this lifting the veil of secrecy starts with the Premier.

I want to thank the Premier for the release of the Keirstead report. I would ask him to ask his ministers—I tell our caucus people, and the Premier knows that when I table something in this House he gets it from the Clerk's desk immediately, because we are required to table three copies. I think it is absolutely inappropriate, and we found this out in the last couple of weeks where we on this side and the Liberals do not get the courtesy of a copy. Then we have to ask the staff at the Clerk's table to get us a copy, and they are lengthy documents, so that we can read it, especially documents we have been asking for for weeks. We should not have to read it in two minutes or have to ask the Clerk's staff to make copies when the minister has the resources to table documents.

I notice, when they were tabling letters that they thought were advantageous to their position yesterday, you could not walk out of this building without having a flurry of them hit you in the hallway. So I think that I would ask the Premier to use the same principles with his own ministers as we use with our critics.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, we have a discrepancy again on the Connie Curran-APM contract. The contract is dated January 5, 1994, and the minister tabled a document not from APM but a health care demonstration project from Manitoba Health that is November 9, 1993. Then, in his document that he tabled from Keirstead, it had a recommendation signed in November of 1994 dealing from APM that said, do not contract out. So we have not had enough time to read all the documents, but certainly, unless there is clerical error or tampering with the dates, there is a discrepancy. I do not think we have the APM document. If we do have it, then the minister who stood up in this House for the last week and said there is no report, I think that is a serious matter for him, the Premier.

If we do not have the report, then what the Premier just said now about supplying the report, I do not think is correct. Now, I know the government has put out a flurry of documents out there, and I thank him for the Keirstead document, but I want to say to the Premier, the difference between the APM report and the Keirstead document is, the Keirstead document is advice to the minister after the March 1 press release of the government, where they announced the

privatization. It is a piece that reacts to the government's announcement. The APM report makes a recommendation to the government not to proceed with contracting out as from what we can read in the November 1994 recommendation which was contained deep within the contents of the report that was released from Keirstead today.

\* (1450)

So what we are trying to get at is, is this a political ideological profit-driven decision of the government, or is this a decision based on sound research? We are going to have to dig through all of this, but we still think we are missing one report which is required in the contract on 19 occasions, and the recommendations are required in the contract that we paid for, the taxpayers paid for, on 16 occasions. On three occasions, it says an action plan will be produced for the Department of Health. Now, we have a demonstration project that pre-dates the dating of the contract. So we will have to do some more work on this. We are not so sure. Can the Premier advise us whether we have in fact—has he assured his staff and can he assure us that what happened in the House here, in the flurry of questions and the flurry of paper that we could not read until the last four minutes of Question Period—and I want to thank the Clerk's staff for giving us some of that material. I really appreciate it, and I want to thank the people at the table personally for that. But I want to know from the Premier, is he confident now that we have the report from APM, from Connie Curran, that was required in the contract that his government, his ministry, his Treasury Board approved and his government signed on behalf of the people.

**Mr. Filmon:** Mr. Chairman, I will be the first to acknowledge that it is very, very difficult to sort out all of the reports and information that are in the files with respect to anything, including this particular issue on home care.

The member opposite does not need to believe me. All I say to him is I will try and share with him my perspective on it. I know he has strong feelings about this. I know that this is a subject of extreme conflict between his ideology and his party's ideology and our government's position.

I can tell him this that throughout the past 10 years, there is probably nothing that has been the subject of more study and perhaps more conflicting ideas and opinions than the provision of home care. I can only think that it is because it has been the most rapidly growing area of the health care budget in Manitoba, No.1, and the fact that it serves, if memory serves me correctly, some 17,000 individuals per year. It is a huge area of service.

It has been a subject of great controversy, great criticism. He knows better than anyone that we have gone through a situation in which we have had literally hundreds of complaints about the delivery of home care, yet at the same time he and his colleagues are arguing that it is the best system in Canada. That may sound as though it is conflicting, but one could make an assessment that says, well, even though it is a subject of hundreds of complaints a year it is still the best system in Canada. That I can understand. I could make myself see the logic through that.

At the same time, I might say, those very, very people that have been condemning the system and causing us to continue to study and evaluate and look for options and alternatives are now defending it as it is saying, do not make this massive change. Firstly, I would argue, this is not a massive change; secondly, I would say—and the member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett) gives me a look—and I will say why it is not a massive change. It represents 25 percent of the home care attendant work in the city of Winnipeg, which is a sliver of a sliver, because the work is in three categories as she knows: home care attendants, home care support and the home care nursing component.

We are taking a sliver of a sliver. Having said all that, I will acknowledge that they and their friends and cohorts are making this a huge life-and-death struggle, which, I would argue, is not in the best interests of those receiving the service and not in the best interest in service. Suffice it to say that there are so many different analyses. The Price Waterhouse one, initiated and completed under the New Democrats, in which their recommendations, among many things, said, bring in user fees, cut back the services to the recipients of home care and put them on a waiting period when they are going to get home care so that they pay their own

way for a while before you decide whether or not the government should pick up the tab on a longer-term basis, recommendations that clearly have not been followed by this administration.

I can also say that the so-called leaked Treasury Board document that he and his colleagues put forward was not followed to the extent that the proposals were in there. We have not got a Crown corporation. We have—what was the other aspect of it that was not followed? There are a number of areas in which we did not follow that particular policy decision because of changes that were made in the process of approval.

Certainly, I can tell him that there are many conflicts in the recommendations but, for instance, the Advisory Committee to Continuing Care chaired by Ms. Kierstead indicated, and I quote, they are not opposed to contracting out, so this decision is not inconsistent. Their appeal was for clearer standards, setting of standards for delivery of this service, and the fact of the matter is, again, I find it very, very confusing to be told that this is the best program in Canada and then to be told it does not have standards. Of course, it has standards. Of course, it has standards, standards that are being maintained, that are being judged each and every day, and if they are not being met there is an appeal body that people complain to and have their appeals reviewed so that, indeed, they do meet the standards and the requirements of the care under the program. So this is confusing and is conflicting, I might say.

The third area is the Connie Curran review and analysis, the APM review and analysis, and this is an organization, and I know that the member opposite understands this because it was the subject of extensive, heated debate in this Chamber and throughout the province that their method of operation is not to do an analysis and a report but is rather to work together with those who are doing the analysis work and they guide a process. They work, in effect, as team leaders working with other people who are coming to the recommendations and conclusions and delivering them to government, task teams and all those things that worked in the St. Boniface Hospital, Health Sciences Centre and so on, in the original major chunk

of the APM process that had to do with our tertiary care hospitals.

\* (1500)

My understanding is, and again, you know, I mean, I am taking a risk even trying to discuss it because I am not the Minister of Health, but I try to as much as I can understand the process and I am, therefore, imparting my limited knowledge to the Leader of the Opposition. My understanding is that they engaged in the same process with those involved in the continuing care process, and that included, I might say, a whole group of people who were part of the Steering Committee on this process. It included the former Deputy Minister of Health, Frank Maynard; the Executive Director of the Health Action Centre, Jeanette Edwards; the Registrar of the College of Physicians and Surgeons, Dr. Ken Brown; the ADM of the Department of Health at the time, Betty Havens; the interim director, Home Care Branch, Marilyn Robinson; the Winnipeg Home Care supervisor, Cathy Lussier; the department of continuing health at the University of Manitoba, Dr. Evelyn Shapiro; the former Executive Director of Mount Carmel Clinic, Anne Ross; the President of Victoria General Hospital, Marion Suski; the Director of Finance and Administration of Manitoba Health, Tammy Mattern; and the Chairman of Bethel Place, Ray Wahl. So this group was kind of, I think, the guiding group, and then underneath them were the task teams of people from within the Continuing Care, as it was known then, Home Care system as it is being described now. Out of that came a series of recommendations, and that is what has been laid on the table, that is the documentation, because we have not been able to, I have not through my efforts been able to find any formal report, but this was transmitted by the then assistant deputy minister to the deputy minister as the work that came out of that contract and as the assurance and certification that the contract had been fulfilled.

So that is all we have been able, through my efforts, through the efforts of the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae), to find. It is a huge document. I was just handed it at 1:20 this afternoon, so I do not know what is in it, and I am in exactly the same position as the Leader of the Opposition.

I have apparently used my ten minutes. If I can either be given leave or else, I will sit down and—

**The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Radcliffe):** Is there leave for the honourable First Minister? [agreed]

**Mr. Doer:** Just while I am giving leave, can I get a copy of that committee that you just got from your staff?

**Mr. Filmon:** Yes, we will have that copied for you.

The other element to the puzzle is that the apparent recommendations or conclusions were that all the home care not be contracted out—all. But it did as well, as part of that—and it is multi pages, I mean he has it and I have it and I do not know if it is 100 pages or more—part of it also says, though, that some elements of it ought to be looked at for external contracting, external delivery on a contracting-out basis. So there too you have the confusion that you can either take this sentence, which is do not contract all of it out, or this sentence that says, look at the possibility and the opportunities and the advantages of contracting out part of it.

So we can get into this and we can debate whether there are recommendations that lead to this conclusion or not lead to this conclusion and we can both be right, and that is exactly what we are going to see through this, because basically there is a fundamental disagreement with the decision on the part of the Leader of the Opposition and his supporters and the position that our government is taking.

**Mr. Doer:** I thank the Premier for this. We indeed will read all the documents that we were given and these are serious issues because in the material that was handed out, there are some dates we have to check out, we have to read them and I am not here to debate all these groups. I guess this is the problem with having 102 committees that the government set up. It is very hard to know exactly who is making what decision and what advice is being provided to the government. I find it interesting that Dr. Evelyn Shapiro is on this group. I remember the Premier making some comments about her last week. We are going to read the documents. I just say that within five minutes we

realize there is a discrepancy between what the minister tabled as the APM and what Keirstead has in the APM document on Recommendation No. 6 in terms of dates. But we are going to go back and read it. I would say, we did make presentations in 1993 to the Home Care Coalition, which included disabled and senior people, to improve the flexibility of home care because we recognized—in the early 1970s, the service went from just the nonprofit VON to the provincial Home Care program—that we were serving a growing and different population in the 1990s than the 1970s. We in our platform and our alternative speech from the throne—you borrowed our term “Manitoba works” in your campaign from our alternative speech from the throne. I am sure you—

**Mr. Filmon:** . . . good ideas wherever we find them.

**Mr. Doer:** I know. I wish we had more money to have advertised our ideas before you took it out of our speech from the throne. However, I wish you would have taken our ideas on home care because we also talked about what we perceive to be transition in home care. We did not, in our view, introduce the whole notion of profit and private. In fact, we were very worried about the possibility of that initiative because again the people that give us advice, starting with the clients, did not want to proceed that way. I am just going to leave this with one—the Premier talks about the NDP, the Premier talks about the employees, and there are corporate interests in this issue as well, private companies, other companies that want to move into the home care field, companies that want to move into private insurance insuring health care services.

The ministers across the way have been bashing this group and bashing that group. We would like this debate to be on the cost, the quality, and the clients, and you are not going to have your minister stand up and say one thing about employees and unions, and not have us talk about corporations that have a tremendous vested interest in profit and changes and policies too. So I leave that as notice to the Premier, but I would prefer to have this debate. First of all, I would prefer it to end this weekend because I think the recommendation from a number of people, particularly clients, to put this whole thing on hold and have some public hearings, I think, is good advice. I think

listening to the clients that spoke to you in the seniors' document, when we get beyond your disagreement with mine, and the union's disagreement with the Minister of Labour (Mr. Toews), and the employees' disagreement with the government

There is, after all, one group that we are all interested in, and there is no such thing as a totally homogeneous position from any group on this thing. You can find employees that oppose the dispute; you can find the majority of them in favour. You can find clients that are opposed to the dispute and support privatization, but the majority of clients we have listened to and talked to on the phone and listened to continuously—and we get a lot of the same letters the Premier has. If we want to get into a letter-tabling contest, I suggest the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) would be—I do not think that is a wise strategy because I think the Premier knows we have a lot more of them from a lot more people. I would just go back to Dr. Mary Pankiw's letter that I tabled the first day at Question Period in this House; I would go back to David Martin's letter or the document that I tabled for the Premier's attention in the House last week. When I asked the Minister of Health about that document on Monday, he said David Martin does not know the details. If he knew the details, he would agree with our position. Well, he did know the details. He knows them quite well, and I suggest to the Premier that over the weekend, I am going to strongly recommend, he spend time with Dr. Mary Pankiw, he spend time with the Manitoba seniors, he spend time with David Martin or Mr. Rosner on behalf of the disabled organizations. He has his advice from Treasury Board; he has his advice from the Department of Health. He says there are different recommendations, you could go either way, based on all the reports. We will have to see. I would like the government to stop, look and listen to the clients this weekend. I would really recommend you do that.

\* (1510)

Some want an end to privatization, some want an end to the process of privatization immediately, and they all want a long-term halt of this initiative that was announced by the Minister of Health on March 1. They all want this thing to stop, and I am talking about people from all political parties. I presume most of the

people who support the Conservatives would have a philosophy and ideology similar to the Premier on most issues, but on health care, they do not agree with the Premier. We are talking lots of people from all walks of life and from all political parties.

They do not want to see—and the Premier uses VON—a sliver or a whole project of people moving into profit in health care, in home care. They do not want it. They do not mind Ford competing with General Motors. They do not mind McDonald's competing with Burger Factory—a place in my constituency, good food. They do not mind that. They do not mind Pitblado & Hoskin competing with Thompson Dorfman Sweatman. They do not mind these things. They understand that there is a marketplace with competition; I do not have any problem with that. We have a mixed economy here in Manitoba. When people say, why do you not tender out this or why do you not tender out that? Why do we not tender out St. Boniface Hospital? That is ridiculous. We are opposed to that.

When we are talking about the future of home care, there are two distinct directions to go in. All programs need to be improved every year. I have no problem with that position, but we are looking at two paths in the road—you know, the old Frost poem, *The Road Not Taken*. That is why people are so concerned about stopping it now. It is not just this little move, or a little move down here, they do not want to take the wrong path. They want to have the path of nonprofit. They are not upset about VON; it may be a private company, but it is nonprofit. They do not want profit in the changes in home care. Those are the two forks in the road in health care right now, and the fork in the road that is nonprofit, clients, the majority of Manitobans do not agree with, I suggest to the Premier. Sometimes you do things that people agree with and I do not like the fact that they agree with you, but sometimes you do things that you know they do not agree with you on and your own supporters do not agree on.

I am asking the Premier this weekend, I will read the reports, the Premier will read the reports. I am very worried about what is going to happen over the longer term when people dig in, and I was hoping we could

prevent the strike by tabling documents last week and the week before. I was hoping we could stop the strike with legislation we are going to introduce next week on nonprofit versus profit. The best way to stop it is the Premier, taking a deep breath this weekend, listen to Dr. Mary Pankiw, David Martin and others and do not go down the path of profit, because that is not the path people want for their future vision of home care. I will leave that with the Premier.

That is not a question. I will sit down and ask another question. We will move along, if we want.

**The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Radcliffe):** I believe there is a question that has been put to the First Minister (Mr. Filmon), and I would look to the First Minister at this point for a response.

**Mr. Filmon:** Mr. Chairman, I accept what the Leader of the Opposition has said. I disagree, obviously. I do not believe that by introducing a small piece of the services for competition for alternative deliveries that we are, in any way, endangering the program, endangering the services that are very good services but can be improved, we believe. I just tell him that it is a small piece; if the outcomes are not supportable or acceptable, why would we go ahead with more of the system? But what does he have to fear? An opportunity for people to demonstrate whether or not that small piece can indeed produce better results than we currently have. It seems to me that is a position that is not supportable and that is something that I would expect people would look at.

I did not hear all the dates he threw on the table, but if I could clarify, is he suggesting that somewhere in Ms. Keirstead's comments there is a reference to studies that were done in November of '93?

**Mr. Filmon:** No.

**Mr. Doer:** The minister tabled a document for November '93; Keirstead quoted a document in November '94. That contract is dated January '94.

**Mr. Filmon:** Yes.

**Mr. Doer:** Now, I do not know—

**Mr. Filmon:** My understanding—and I know that this went on—from asking people involved in Treasury Board was that it was assumed by virtue of the global contract that had been entered into with APM that they could do a variety of different things. They were already working in the fall of '93 on the home care analysis, so that a date of November of '93 would have been part and parcel of work they were already doing.

It was pointed out by somebody at Treasury Board that they did not have authorization for this and so the contract was not signed until January of '94 for work that had already been underway for several months. I am told that is the case. So if that solves the problem with respect to that November '93 issue, that may be it.

Another bit of information that the member opposite asked for and that was with respect to the regulation that was passed that repealed the multimaterial stewardship program—oh, sorry, it waived the payment of \$862,379.17 in penalties. They were penalties that had not been collected, and, of course, the threat of collection was there so that we could get a multimaterial stewardship program entered into by all of the different companies.

I think it was alleged firstly—and I said straightforwardly that Barb Biggar had absolutely nothing to do and no discussions on this and I have confirmation of that from all the people involved—but it was also alleged that this was somehow a big benefit to one particular bottler or manufacturer of drinks. I am told that 56 different manufacturers or distributors were the beneficiary of that, and these companies range in size and scope from very small groups to ones with more than 500 employees in Manitoba, and that in fact it was the carrot and stick and the minister was wanting the participation and agreement of all the various players in this multimaterial stewardship group to come together and agree to a long-term program, which they did agree, and in response to that agreement, the unpaid penalties were waived.

\* (1520)

**Mr. Doer:** As I say, I hope we are not carrying on the debate on profit and nonprofit and home care next week.

My advice to the Premier was to meet with Dr. Mary Pankiw from the seniors organization who wrote the letter to the Premier that I tabled to meet with David Martin, to meet over the weekend and listen to them. Do not listen to me. Do not listen to some of your ministers who have their heels dug in. Listen to people who are the clients who have expertise. Some of them are volunteers or seniors. Listen to the words of the Premier in his own election campaign. These people in the seniors organization built this province. They built this great province—the spirit they had to build this province, and I would ask the Premier to use that same spirit this weekend.

Maybe you want to even meet with them in the same railway car that you shot the ad in the museum, but just spend some time this weekend. Get out of this building, get out of the fight in this Chamber, get out of the advice you may be getting from your Minister of Labour (Mr. Toews) and Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) who seems—I mean, yesterday his comments in the Chamber in the Estimates, I think the Premier would want to review that at a more sober period in terms of what he is saying. It is not very helpful.

I think we should get away from bashing various institutions. We would rather debate the issue of the cost, the quality and the implications of profit, but we would rather not debate it next week because we would like the Premier to stop his Minister of Labour and Minister of Health and get an agreement. We are not talking about the government changing its—I mean, the proposal, as I understand it and what all the people are asking for, is the government to put these plans on hold. I am not saying, abandon your principles. I would like you to abandon your principles on profit and home care. They are not saying that; they put it on hold.

That is what he is being asked to do, so when he gets out of this building tonight or whenever I would like him to spend a little time this weekend with the seniors and with the disabled community. There is an opening, I think, on the weekend, hopefully. Hopefully there is an opening today. I would like this silly thing to be settled. We wanted to give the Premier the opening prior to the dispute, because I think it is in everybody's best interest to get the thing resolved ahead of time,

obviously for the clients, but I will leave that with him. I am giving you the recommendation to meet with those individuals and I tabled those letters, obviously to pressure the government to change its mind, but obviously I thought there were—we get hundreds of letters and I could table five or six a day. The Premier is getting copies of most of them and I would just ask the Premier to look at that.

I would like to move on to some areas of federal-provincial relations. We talked about the Constitution yesterday. Can the Premier please advise us on the status of the treaty land entitlement with the federal government and the First Nations here in Manitoba?

**Mr. Filmon:** Mr. Chairman, I just want to respond to that last part and say that the member opposite knows full well that this is pure ideology on the part of those who are opposing this, and what we are asking for is an opportunity to demonstrate with a small part of the delivery being opened to competition, the competitive bidding. If we were to delay this for a year it would make absolutely no difference to the Manitoba Government Employees' Union because they have already said that with them this has nothing to do with quantifying any aspects of their collective agreement. We are just discussing a pure philosophical difference, and they would be just as opposed next year as they would this year, and we would not have had the opportunity to evaluate the outcomes of the small portion of the work that is being externalized.

Getting to the treaty land entitlement discussion, my understanding is that an agreement in principle with respect to a basis for settlement has been initialed by the negotiators for the 19 bands that were at the table and has been signed off by our negotiators and the negotiators for the federal government, and it is sitting on the desk of the federal Minister of Indian Affairs, Mr. Irwin.

**Mr. Doer:** I am pleased to hear that we have moved along in the negotiations. As the Premier knows, we had a treaty land entitlement agreement in the mid-'80s, and the federal government and the federal minister, the former federal minister Mr. McKnight, the Honourable Mr. McKnight, was opposed to the population numbers and was concerned about some

negotiations in Saskatchewan, and thought the agreement that we had arrived at in Manitoba would prejudice those discussions.

I know that if we would have accepted the agreement that was negotiated, and I think there was even an Order-in-Council authorizing the government to proceed, and I remember reading back the comments of the Premier where he supported that agreement as well, we in Manitoba would have been a lot further ahead in terms of knowing what the scope would be, and knowing what the land would be and the requirements.

Now, of course, the population growth and the economic implications, et cetera, nothing is static. If you do not get something early on, what may be required later may be quite a bit different. So I would encourage the government—I think every decade we waste definitely works against First Nations people in terms of having an economic opportunity through a land base and resource base, and every decade we waste can potentially slow down a government that must deal with the other side of the negotiations.

I, again, would not want to see what—I really worry about what has happened in British Columbia, because you have political parties taking different positions on something that was negotiated between the B.C. government, the Nisga'a First Nations people, and the federal government. I hope that things are proceeding, and as I say, I was very disappointed in the mid-'80s that the federal government rejected the proposal from here in Manitoba that was agreed to by the chiefs and the provincial government. The Premier's statements were positive about it. He said he would respect that agreement, as I recall in his comments in 1988. I wish the government well, and I hope that they can get a successful conclusion to the terms of reference and terms of principles that they will be utilizing.

I remember his Minister of Finance said that the second Repap agreement, that even the Leader of the Opposition would have trouble with it. I liked the second agreement a lot more than the chlorine-bleached first agreement, as the Premier knows in '89, but I did raise the issue of treaty land entitlement again, which was an issue that was raised by the corporate vice-president of Repap in letters that Clayton Manness tabled in this Chamber a few years ago.



I wish the government well. We want the government to succeed with the TLE committee and the bands in Manitoba, and succeed with the federal government on this next step. I have had the opportunity to meet Chief Dennis Whitebird, and I have been very impressed with his presentation on some of the economic advantages for all Manitoba, notwithstanding the economic advantages for settling treaty land entitlement for the local communities. I wish the government well on that issue.

I heard the Premier's comments on the GST today, and I may concur with his comments about the Deputy Prime Minister. I am sure the member for The Maples (Mr. Kowalski) would agree about her comments about abolishing the GST. The Premier, I notice, was pointing out that discrepancy between her red book commitment and her apparent conversion on the road to Damascus in the wrong direction. I guess it was not on the road to Damascus for the GST; it is on the road to Hades, perhaps.

I have heard the Premier's comments about Atlantic Canada, and the Liberal governments in Atlantic Canada. It is rather interesting, you know, we have had GST harmonization in five provinces, if the three Atlantic provinces agree, or it may be six provinces. I think Canadians are not aware of this. The first province to agree to GST harmonization was the Liberal province of Quebec under Mr. Bourassa; the second province to agree was the Conservative province of Saskatchewan. In fact, when people talk about taxation in Saskatchewan, and I do not want to get into that debate, one of the first things the Romanow government did was to stop the harmonization of the GST that was agreed to by the Devine government, in fact was being collected in the province of Saskatchewan in 1991. And now, of course, we have back to the Liberal compact on the GST which, I think, is wrong. I think we should be phasing it out and phasing it out as promised in the red book, and I remember the Prime Minister promising to phase out the GST at Brandon University. I remember he was challenged by the media, how are you going to do it? Oh, do not worry, everything is fine, we will do it. He could not tell us how.

\* (1530)

I just want to know, is the Premier saying that under the—and now, the other thing, the insidious part of this is the Liberals in opposition were very critical of the first proposal from Michael Wilson that would be 9 percent and would be hidden. Now that it is 7 percent and visible, they are talking about a hidden tax, which again is not only regressive but it is also absolutely dishonest. That is not abolishing the GST; that is abolishing the tax on your bill.

We also know that the Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson) has been meeting with the federal government on this issue. We are also aware that they have said no to this proposal, no to that proposal, no to the other proposal. Is the Premier saying today—and I would like him to say today—I heard him on the radio for a minute there today and I got the flavour of what he said on the GST. I did not listen to your whole interview. I apologize. But is the Premier saying today that it is no truck or trade with any GST proposal from the federal government, or are they saying just no to what they hear is the present proposal from the federal government?

**Mr. Filmon:** For all of the reasons that I have given publicly, including this morning, I do not think it is in Manitoba's interest to consider harmonization of provincial sales tax with the federal GST. Regardless of what it is termed, a new national sales tax buried in the price and all of those things, for all the reasons the member opposite has indicated, I do not think it is in our interest, and so we are saying no. Having said that, we cannot stop the federal government from coming forward with new proposal after new proposal after new proposal. If there were a proposal that did not negatively impact on Manitobans, Manitoba consumers, I would be wrong not to consider it, but I have not seen anything that even comes close to that. Everything that has been put forward so far has massive negative consequences for the consumers of Manitoba, as well as for the Manitoba Treasury, I might say.

I want to just say for the record, and not as a knock against my colleague and good friend Roy Romanow, that since the member opposite has raised that particular transition decision of 1991, that having cancelled the harmonization, he later, of course, had to

raise both income taxes and the sales tax rate in Saskatchewan in order to make up revenues. That was a choice that he made, and as I say, he is a friend and a colleague, and I do not knock it. He made his choice, and we have made our choices along the way as well.

**Mr. Doer:** Perhaps your choice was easier when the—I know he takes credit for the '88-89 surplus of \$55 million. I know we take credit for it, but perhaps the Premier's choices were easier to make when one is faced with being elected in a current year. I remember getting briefed from the Department of Finance, and I know the Premier could tell everybody what he wants, but I remember hearing three things: One, we were at 6 percent in the polls; two, we were not doing that well in our own party finances; and three, we are going to hand the Conservatives a surplus. Other than that, it was a pretty good day, the day after I was elected Lleader.

Ultimately, the documentation—I mean, the bottom line was that every year that Grant Devine was in government and every year in Manitoba the NDP was in government, the debt and deficit, the year-over-year debt was twice as much as Manitoba every year in Saskatchewan.

But I want to move along. The Premier is saying he is not making any deals with the federal government on the GST. Is that correct?

**Mr. Filmon:** Mr. Chairman, I will repeat that we do not believe it would be in the best interests of Manitobans to make that kind of agreement on harmonization with the federal government, and I have no intention to do that. On the other hand, the federal government keeps coming up with new proposals in their attempt to try and find something that is palatable to other provinces in Canada. They are not even close to anything that would interest us, and I do not anticipate that they can do anything that would interest us because certainly the numbers just do not work out for them. They are always looking to find a way in which they can somehow harmonize and vary, but everything I have seen says that the negative consequences to Manitoba would not in any way motivate us to agree to it.

**Mr. Doer:** I want to move on. The Port of Churchill, can the Premier advise us—I noted, first of all, the agricultural policy. There was supposed to be a \$300-million transition fund in western Canada. Have there been any funds allocated to the line, to the port, to the facilities?

There was a Free Press article about a year ago out of Ottawa, and it looked like a strategic leak from the federal minister responsible for Manitoba. You get these stories saying a source says but Lloyd Axworthy confirms, blah, blah, blah. You do not have to be a rocket scientist to figure out who is the source and who is the commentator. Can the Premier indicate has there been any money? That \$20 million, as was announced or leaked to the Free Press, has that ever been confirmed? And what is the strategy to implement the task force report that has been produced.

**Mr. Filmon:** We have no confirmation of any of that money being available. We also suspect that it may be held up by the privatization of CN, because that will be one of the decisions that will have to flow out of the privatization, I would assume, as to what commitment they are prepared to make to that line.

With respect to the report, it seems to me that the provincial report, the provincially driven report, the Arctic Bridge, and the other one which was the Gateway North, which was the federal-provincial one, both identified numerous opportunities that are now being regurgitated by Terry Duguid's committee.

When I saw them talk about taking grain to eastern Europe and bringing concentrate or ore back for smelting here, that was something that was in the Arctic Bridge report, for instance. There are a number of what appear to be very viable alternatives that should be considered for processing and would bring in opportunities to Churchill that I think would enhance its economic future very, very well, but I do not know of any other further progress that has been made.

**Mr. Doer:** We have discussed with CN our concern about the privatization of the line to Churchill. Perhaps we can get some briefing from the federal officials who are working on this at some point.

I would ask the Premier if perhaps it would be possible to have, rather than all of us running off in different directions, perhaps it would be useful to have the lead minister for Churchill, I believe it is the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Downey) brief us with the federal government officials in a similar way to what we did with the Air Command and just sit down and find out what is going on and what is not going on. I remember Lloyd Axworthy's promise of a million tonnes of wheat and all you have to do is have the political will. I thought we were having a rough time with the former Mulroney government, who, of course, is a close personal friend of the Premier and I notice he was at his usual low-key self yesterday in the media. I would ask maybe for a briefing on that topic.

\* (1540)

I want to move on to AECL. Three years ago I proposed that we have an all-party committee on AECL because I heard then that it was in jeopardy of losing jobs to Chalk River and losing jobs with federal government cuts. The government eventually invited us to join in kind of a mission to Ottawa, kind of a one-day wonder with federal officials, et cetera. We appreciate that opportunity, but I would like to know from the Premier, what is the status of jobs at AECL, what is the status of the task force, and is there any truth to the rumour about another potential loss of 200 jobs that is circulating around Pinawa in terms of the scientific jobs and safety jobs in the safety section at the Pinawa AECL site?

**Mr. Filmon:** Mr. Chairman, I will just say that I will make a note and have my staff send a memo to the Minister of Transport, I believe, is the lead minister on the Churchill co-ordination. We have a person who has been appointed on the Duguid committee at our request and that is Mr. Manson Moir, who was formerly president of UMM and is sitting in on meetings beginning today, I understand. So we will attempt to get a briefing, and, certainly, this is an all-party endeavour and we will welcome the opportunity to have the New Democrats and Liberals involved in that process.

The matter of Pinawa, of course, has been of great interest and concern to the Minister of Energy and

Mines (Mr. Praznik), who represents that area and has gone to Ottawa and raised the attention along with colleagues opposite and the member for La Verendrye (Mr. Sveinson), and I believe that kind of high profile action did get the attention of the federal government and probably was instrumental in their decision to appoint the Peter Siemens task force. We attempted to get more representation than we ultimately were given on that task force, but ultimately they accepted the appointment of one of the names that we put forward, and that was the secretary of the Economic Development Board of Cabinet, Mr. Stuart Duncan, who is representing us on that task force.

The matter about nuclear safety and other matters is certainly foremost in our minds as we attempt to identify the areas in which Pinawa has far greater expertise and capability and represents a greater opportunity for justifying the investment there. They have many issues that they are putting on the table in an effort to try and persuade the federal government to work co-operatively to keep Pinawa viable. I think rather than a traumatic cut in their budget, which is being suggested by the Leader of the Opposition, we are just as concerned with the slow attrition that is occurring because of the uncertainty with some very highly skilled scientific people seeking opportunities elsewhere because they fear that the federal government does not have a commitment to Pinawa and therefore their jobs eventually will disappear and so they are taking their own action. I understand that Pinawa's staff complement is slowly eroding but, in particular, some of their best people are perhaps looking elsewhere for opportunities.

In either case, we are concerned about the negative outlook and certainly the massive negative impact that would occur on that part of eastern Manitoba if we were not able to put together a strong, strong case to change the federal government's mind on this.

**Mr. Doer:** I would like to ask a question. I noted the other day that apparently some of the federal members from this community were getting praised in editorials for raising the issue of, quote, the head tax and immigration policy in Manitoba, and I was wondering whether this editorial was leading to a result of whether

the federal government was going to in fact reduce this, what has been called by Mr. Denton a racist tax?

I do not know whether—I guess I cannot use the term “racist” in terms of past history in Manitoba or present history or future history, but I can use it about the federal government, as I understand the ruling. I would not want to trip over that. I will not ask the Premier questions about certain ethnic groups or certain groups in our society—this is B’nai Brith Week—being allowed to join the Manitoba Club or not. Those events did not happen because they are illegal to mention in this Chamber.

But I would like to ask the Premier: Where is this head tax going? Where is this immigration policy going? Should we be cheered by the editorial about how successful we are by raising this issue with the federal Minister of Immigration, or is this going to have a result or is it just politics and public relations?

**Mr. Filmon:** I am informed by the Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship (Mr. Gilleshammer) that to his knowledge there has been no change in the federal policy.

**Mr. Doer:** I am going to make a suggestion to the Premier. Perhaps we should invite all federal members of Parliament to a meeting with the Leaders of the parties here in Manitoba and ask them to take more than just a little notice in raising this as a sort of, well, I have raised this, so I-am-okay-Jack kind of issue. Perhaps we should invite all the members of Parliament in all three political parties to a meeting, and I am suggesting this to my friends in the Liberal Party. I know the member for The Maples (Mr. Kowalski) is concerned about this, along with the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux), because it affects their constituencies. Invite the 12 Liberals, one New Democrat, one member of the Reform Party to a meeting here in the Legislature where we can talk about the impact of this head tax on Manitobans and get some agreement that they will go back to Ottawa with more than just letters and nice editorials but will go back and get results.

I am just giving out an idea, because we have had town hall meetings here as an opposition party; we

have had meetings in communities; we have had members from the Liberal Party speak; we have Mr. Denton speak; we have had Mr. Dalin speak from the settlement centre. All those places seem to be getting cut, and we seem to be getting this head tax, and we seem to be getting nowhere except flowery editorials that do not mean a damn bit of difference to the families that are going to get nailed with this tax and cannot afford to move to our country.

We all have come to this country. We are all, except the First Nations people, immigrants, sons and daughters of immigrants. We are all second- or third-generation immigrants. I find, when you look at the committee room in the Legislature, you look around at all the Premiers there, none of their parents had to pay a head tax. So I am making a suggestion to the Premier, if the quiet diplomacy has not worked, let us have a public meeting. Let us get at it—make a suggestion.

\* (1550)

**Mr. Filmon:** As much as I support fully the position of the Leader of the Opposition with respect to the head tax, I do not think this has been quiet diplomacy. I have read some pretty serious stuff about the meetings that have been held in the Filipino community and the Italian community and the Portuguese community with the federal members of Parliament. I guess the difficulty is that the federal members of Parliament are allowed by the media to get away by saying that we disagree with our government's position on it. I mean, the only test of whether or not they disagree is whether or not they would vote against their government in showing their displeasure with that policy. The fact is that they have not, and I agree with him that they do not deserve any credit for saying that they disagree with the policy if they are not doing their utmost to change the policy.

**Mr. Doer:** I appreciate the Premier's comments. I am just saying let us set a date here in this Legislature in the next couple of months, let us invite all the members of Parliament to that forum, let us have some members of the community that directly work with immigrants and know the impact of this policy, and we could have a few minutes' presentations from all three political

parties here, and we can have some presentations from the people in the community and let us get some backbone with the members of Parliament about what they are going to do back in Ottawa. I think we need results, and I am making that recommendation to the Premier. I will leave it with him.

I will move on to another topic. I finally just want to ask one last question of the Premier. The Manitoba Telephone System. [interjection] I am dialling the Premier here. [interjection] I am on the Internet; so is he.

**An Honourable Member:** He is going to hang up on you.

**Mr. Doer:** There he goes—foghorn. You are going to be in a whole new world now; that kind of Ed McMahon cadence of yours now just will not play on the Internet the same way.

We, of course, raised the question of the Manitoba Telephone sale with the Premier last December. Does the Premier feel he has an adequate mandate from the public, given the fact that before the election, during the election and after the election, he refused to—he did not state that—well, before the election certainly and during the election, he did not present the policy of privatizing MTS as a policy of the government that he was seeking a mandate for?

**Mr. Filmon:** No, Mr. Chairman, I can say unequivocally that we did not have privatization of Manitoba Telephone System under active consideration or under consideration at all at that time. In fact, I recall the irony of it was that I was with quite a few media one day at lunch time at the food court at Portage and Main, the Trizec underground food court, and there were a number of employees from Manitoba Telephone System from, I guess, the Bestlands Building across the street. They would be young professionals, I would gather, by their active discussion that I had with them. They were urging us to consider privatizing the telephone system, giving me reasons why, and I was arguing with them that I did not think it was an appropriate policy. This was during the election campaign.

Subsequent to that, of course, we got an analysis of risk, I think it was termed, from the Crown

Corporations Council that pointed out to us a number of matters that I have stated publicly since we have been engaged in the review that is ongoing. Among other things, they said what had been regarded as a natural monopoly by Sir Rodman Roblin at the time that he made a public ownership of the Manitoba Telephone System was no longer even close to a monopoly, that over 70 percent of their revenues were now derived in a field in which they were in direct competition for those revenues with primarily private sector corporations.

They pointed out that this is the field of most rapidly changing technology in the world today and therefore the kind of decision making that has to prevail in order to keep up with change is a form of decision making that is not available under public ownership. In other words, middle management seeing an opportunity would have to convince upper management, upper management would have to convince the board, the board would have to convince the minister responsible, the minister responsible would have to convince cabinet, and cabinet, ultimately, if it required a change in the act—because getting in to new technology fields and other areas, for instance, such as Saskatchewan Tel is doing—ultimately requires bringing a bill to this Legislature and that could be a process, all told, from beginning of an idea to available policy change, could be a year. Under those circumstances, their market opportunities would disappear before they even got permission to go ahead with it. The bottom line, of course, is that all the while as they are in this more and more competitive environment and less and less able to keep up with new shifts and changes because of their cumbersome decision-making process, we have \$850 million of taxpayers' investment at risk in the corporation.

So that is the whole basis upon which a review is currently ongoing as to the recapitalization of the telephone system and whether that recapitalization continues to be in a form of public ownership or some hybrid of that. Whether it is privatized, that will ultimately be the decision that government will have to take and, clearly, any significant change would require legislation. So I guess the Leader of the Opposition and his colleagues will become aware of it very, very quickly when the decision is made.

**Mr. Doer:** The Premier and I can debate a long time about our different visions of telecommunication.

I just have a couple more points. Can the Premier tell us the timing of the decision and is he saying it will require legislation?

**Mr. Filmon:** I am saying that if a decision were made to privatize, my understanding is it would require legislation, and I would hope that the decision would be made, probably within the next couple of months, certainly the sooner, the better, because I do not want to leave the debate hanging, and I do not want to leave people who are concerned about what way the corporation will go in the future to be left not knowing for much longer.

**Mr. Doer:** Is the Premier then saying—if he says his understanding is that legislation will be required, so we will have, at minimum, public hearings through the legislative process in terms of the decision, because you have already got the Manitoba Association of Urban Municipalities opposed to this decision of the government, as the Premier knows. Many rural communities are quite worried about it.

I do not disagree that times have not changed. I know my own experience in cellular telephones, that we could establish competition at the retail end with the Order-in-Council that we signed, but at least we had the network that was paid for by the telephone company utilized for revenues so that we had the best of both worlds. We had competition at the retail end, and we had revenues flowing to the publicly owned corporation for use of the information highway that they had built at the public level.

So I would like to ensure that—if the Premier is saying that there is going to be legislation prior to the sale, then that will suffice—and I think he said that a minute ago—in terms of our questions on public hearings.

Do the Liberals have any more concerns?

I am willing to pass the lines of the Premier's Estimates.

\* (1600)

**The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Radcliffe):** The item that has been under debate at the present time has been item 2.1(b) of the report of the Manitoba Estimates.

The line in particular is 2.1(b) Management and Administration (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$1,852,900—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$416,300—pass.

The next item for consideration is found in paragraph (c) Intergovernmental Relations Secretariat (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$332,100—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$66,400—pass.

The next item for consideration is (d) Government Hospitality \$10,000—pass.

The next item for consideration is (e) International Development Program \$450,000—pass.

The last item to be considered for the Estimates for the Department of Executive Council is item 1.(a), the minister's salary. At this point, we would request that the minister's staff leave the table for consideration of this item.

The item for consideration has been the minister's salary, (a) Premier and President of the Council's Salary \$40,400.

**Mr. Doer:** The Premier knows my position on treating MLAs, the Leader of the Opposition, cabinet ministers and the Premier in a similar fashion to what we are expecting of the rest of the public service. I have asked him that question before, that the wage be frozen for us in a similar manner. I still maintain that position that we have stated in the House, and we are pursuing that. I want the Premier to know that we will be pursuing that position at the Legislative Assembly Management Committee.

**Mr. Filmon:** At the risk of getting into a dustup at the end of my Estimates, I point out to the Leader of Opposition that he has said to me personally on a variety of occasions that he would not make an issue of MLAs' salaries, that he believed we are all underpaid

in accordance with any comparisons that are made either across Canada or vis-à-vis other people in society. He has indicated that he knows we are all underpaid and that he believes we all deserve to be recognized to a greater extent and that he would never be in a position where he would fight any reasonable presentation or proposal with respect to salaries being set for MLAs.

He and I talked at length about setting up an independent mechanism for setting those salaries, taking into account the fact that cabinet salaries were not adjusted for 15 years, and taking into account the fact that we were giving up the one-third tax free portion, taking into account the fact that there were reductions in expenses, particularly for transportation needs for MLAs and there was a removal, entirely, of an unfunded pension that had been roundly criticized. A number of other downward adjustments—and, you know, he can now change his position and want to make political hay over this and say that it is a matter of principle, but I would just tell him that I remember very well many discussions he and I have had over the last decade or more on this issue.

**Mr. Doer:** I just want to put on the record a couple of major points. One is, I did agree with the Premier that we should establish an independent commission. I did agree with the former Leader of the Liberal Party and the Premier on the participation on that committee. I did think that the public should have a right to decide what would be in that committee's report. I did say, and we all said, that we would agree to what the findings were on pensions, on severance, on minister's salary, Premier's salary and on MLAs' salaries, and we would be bound by that report. That is not in contention.

What is in contention is the automatic increases that came in after that report that were a couple of percent last year and again this year. That is why we thought it was wrong for our secretaries in our offices to be getting a 2.5 percent decrease last year while we were getting an increase. We think it is similarly wrong this year to get a 1.1 percent increase when our own secretaries and staff in this building are getting a decrease.

Now I know the government can still adjust the salaries because they are still in negotiations with their

own employees so, yes, I agree with the Premier on the Fox-Decent process. I thought it was a good one. Yes, I agreed that we should have somebody else decide our salaries and we did, but I do not think that we can take an automatic increase this year and that is our point of departure, and so we just agree to disagree. We will take it to LAMC. The government can do what it wants at LAMC. I am just saying there is a difference between the Fox-Decent report and our commitment to it and subsequent increases that came in.

**Mr. Filmon:** There is also a difference between the comments that he has made to me on numerous occasions on a personal basis that said he did not think, and he used the term, that we ought to put on hair shirts and cut back our salaries when we already are the lowest paid in Canada, and we continue to be very much less remunerated than comparative salaries across the country for legislators or for cabinet ministers and comparative salaries vis-à-vis the rest of society. But he is entitled to change his mind and he can put forward whatever he wants, but I can say that in principle he has very much moved away from where he was in many discussions that we have had in the past.

**Mr. Doer:** In principle, I supported the Fox-Decent committee. [interjection] Well, you know, we moved the motion last year that went through our caucus and that I agree with, and I asked you a question last week about it—

**Mr. Filmon:** Make your politics. Go ahead.

**Mr. Doer:** Well, this is not politics.

**Mr. Filmon:** It is pure politics, and you know it.

**Mr. Doer:** Well, I disagree with the Premier. I think he is requiring—now, we do not know what is going to happen with the rest of the public service. The Premier is in negotiations, I suppose, with them but I stand by the motion that we made last year in LAMC, and I stand by the proposal we made to the Premier last week in Question Period.

I also stood with the Premier in the election campaign on the Fox-Decent report because we had all agreed to it and I was committed to it. We did not say

that we were going to lower the recommendations from the Fox-Decent report before the election or during the election, but subsequent raises have come out since that report and I want to delineate both of these things I believe were different, and I am saying that to the Premier today and I will say it tomorrow.

\* (1610)

**The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Radcliffe):** The item under discussion has been 1.(a) Premier and President of the Council's Salary, \$40,400—pass.

Resolution 2.1: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$3,168,100 for Executive Council, General Administration, for the fiscal year ending the 31st of March, 1997.

This completes the Estimates for the Department of Executive Council. The next set of Estimates that will be considered by this section of the Committee of Supply are the Estimates for the Department of Health. The committee will recess to facilitate the change of committee.

*The committee recessed at 4:11 p.m.*

#### After Recess

*The committee resumed at 4:35 p.m.*

### HEALTH (Continued)

**The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Mike Radcliffe):** This committee shall come to order. This is a continuation of the Committee of Supply for the Department of Health. We are discussing Section 21.1(b). At this point, I believe that the honourable member for Inkster had one minute and ten seconds left when he was interrupted in his speech, and I would invite the honourable colleague to continue.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster):** Mr. Chairperson, I am going to be as precise as possible. The question to the minister is, does the minister believe that there are

other viable options that would see the role of the current community hospitals enhanced? I refer very quickly to The Action Plan where it states: "Although the teaching hospitals are our most expensive, most high-tech institutions, they appear to admit many patients with uncomplicated disease who may well be better served in community hospitals." Another one from the Manitoba centre for policy review states: Less expected, perhaps, was the findings that teaching hospitals also treat a considerable portion of low-acuity, low-resource intensive care suggesting they function not only as tertiary care institutions but also as large community hospitals, particularly for pediatric and obstetrics admissions.

Again, what I am suggesting is there could be other options even if you have to cut back on acute care beds. Is the minister looking at that as a possible option?

**Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health):** Mr. Chairman, how many acute care beds is the honourable member wanting us to cut?

**Mr. Lamoureux:** Mr. Chairperson, there might be a valid argument to be put forward from the minister in terms of the need to reduce the number of acute care beds, given the technology advances and so forth. The actual number of acute care beds is something which the Minister of Health is in a much better position to be able to evaluate. I guess that might be, in essence, one of the starting points for us, is the number of acute care beds that are necessary.

If, for example, we have approximately I believe somewhere in the neighbourhood of 2,500—I do not have the document right of me; I had it in the committee room but I do not have it right in front of me. If the minister is suggesting, given the information that has been provided to him that there is a need to cut back, let us say, a hundred acute care beds—and he would not be the first minister; the New Democratic administration actually cut back on beds—if there is justification for that, then go ahead and say that this is, in fact, what it is that we are going to do. The number of acute care beds and the number you have to cut back on definitely will have an impact ultimately on the decision of the community hospitals. That is the reason



why I suggest to the minister that there are at least three options: the first option that is more of a status quo with marginal cutbacks on acute care beds; another option that could see the recommendations as suggested by his deputy minister implemented, something which the Liberal Party is adamantly opposed to; and the third option which is more of a follow-up with The Action Plan. Depending on the number of beds being suggested to be cut, we could still see both Misericordia and the Seven Oaks Hospital continuing to play a role. It all depends on the number of acute care beds.

\* (1640)

So the question to the minister specifically is, given the comments that I have just put on the record, does he feel comfortable in the sense that there are other options that deserve this same sort of weight that the government might be giving the deputy minister and his committees? Does he feel comfortable with other options that are out there, that are being made available? I understand, for example, the Misericordia and the Seven Oaks, and possibly others—I do not know who is providing the minister the options, and this is the reason why we are asking the question. Does the minister feel comfortable in the options that are being presented to him to be able to make a decision in the not too distant future?

**Mr. McCrae:** Mr. Chairman, the honourable member has seen the budget, which requires that \$53 million be removed from the hospitals. He has mentioned that, I think he said he would support closing 100 acute care beds. Does he think we can save \$53 million by closing 100 acute care beds?

**Mr. Lamoureux:** Yes, it is very important, I would not want to be misquoted. I am not suggesting that the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) close 100 beds. He has the information and the better ability to give an exact evaluation or a better evaluation in terms of the number of acute care beds that are necessary for the province of Manitoba. It is for him ultimately to decide that and, hopefully, when a decision is made he will give us the information that he used in order to justify that particular decision. The question specifically is, does the minister feel comfortable with other options

outside of the one which his deputy minister has brought forward to him?

**Mr. McCrae:** I did not hear the honourable member. He didn't say how many acute care beds he suggests we should close. He says that I am in a position to know more about these things than he is and yet he considers himself well enough informed to know that what the design teams are suggesting is wrong, so he must, therefore, have an option. I don't think you can close 100 beds and save \$53 million, so I will just await his next proposal.

**Mr. Lamoureux:** Yes, I will actually maybe even venture into this, into that area a little bit, but prior to doing that I want to comment about the option that the minister just made reference to. I have had the opportunity to talk to a number of CEOs, and some of the discussion was on the record; other parts of the discussion were off the record, and the stuff that I found most interesting, of course, is the stuff that was off the record as I am sure the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) can appreciate, but suffice to say, we have individuals that sat down in that inner circle that put forward these recommendations that do not believe that the recommendation or the option that is being presented by the deputy minister is in fact in Manitoba's best interest.

That causes me to have great concern in terms of if you have the group of individuals that are recommending to the minister a particular option, and amongst that group there are individuals, because it is not that large of a group, that are really calling into question the validity of the recommendations. It causes me to have great concern in terms of the validity of the recommendations, and that is the reason why I ask the Minister of Health, there are other options that are there.

One should never speculate as a politician because if you speculate you can tend to get yourself into trouble, but wanting to be able to assist the Minister of Health in the best way that I can, if there was a need, if the government was able to demonstrate a need to reduce the number of acute care beds, well, where then should those acute care beds come from then becomes, in part, the argument. What sort of an overall urban strategy,

a hospital strategy should be developed in order to achieve the types of acute care bed cuts or cost savings that the minister is hoping to achieve. I would suggest to you, Mr. Chairperson, that the best way to achieve those cost savings is in the way in which we deliver the services. For example, if you want to cut acute care beds or close acute care beds, well, where are the most expensive acute care beds, and where those most expensive acute care beds are, if you can transfer into less expensive acute care beds, it seems that you would save money.

There were two reports which I quoted and both of these reports are government policy documents. One is from the Manitoba Centre for Health Policy and Evaluation for hospital case mix costing project based in December 1994, on '91-92, and in there it makes reference. In its conclusion, it says: Our case mix adjustments for different types of patients across hospitals work well. Less expected—now I am missing a little bit here—it goes: Less expected perhaps was the finding that the teaching hospitals also treat a considerable portion of low acuity, low resource intensive cases, suggesting they function not only as tertiary care institutions, but also as large community hospitals, particularly for pediatric and obstetric admissions.

The Action Plan report, again, makes reference to the same thing. So, if the ministry says, look, we have to cut back on acute care beds or we want to save additional dollars from within our hospitals, it seems to me that if you look at the services and you have to make these cuts, common sense would more dictate that we take the suggestions that are being brought forward possibly, or at least implied, from the Manitoba Centre for Health Policy and Evaluation. This is a viable option which I believe has not been seriously looked into from the current deputy minister, Mr. Chairperson, and if I am wrong, I would like for that to be communicated to me through the Minister of Health that in fact this committee did look at it.

With the individuals that I talked to that sat on the committee, it was indicated that they did not look into it, they did not have the cost analysis. I do not want to go on to that area because I did say I wanted to keep it

as brief as possible. Hopefully, that was of some help for the minister, and I look for his response.

**Mr. McCrae:** Mr. Chairman, the Liberal scalpel appears to be pointed in the direction of the tertiary hospitals. The budget calls for a reduction in the hospital line of \$53 million. How many acute care beds would the Liberals suggest be taken from the tertiary hospitals?

**Mr. Lamoureux:** Mr. Chairperson, you know, it is an interesting process. We bring forward and articulate some arguments and pose a question to the Minister of Health, and then in return, he poses the question back to me. The Minister of Health is hoping that I, representing the Liberal Party on health care issues, am going to make a statement of, here are the number of acute care beds that have to be cut. The challenge that I have for the Minister of Health is to demonstrate to the public of Manitoba that the health care requirements of Manitobans could be equally or better served if we cut this number of health care beds.

\* (1650)

We often make reference to, or I should not say often, there has been reference made to what has happened in Calgary, in Edmonton, and a number of beds have been implied as high as, or rumoured to be as high as 850 and as low as zero, if you like, but I think that many believe there will be some ultimate cut in acute care beds. We do not know what the numbers are; we can only speculate what the numbers are. It is not my job to say to the Minister of Health, cut 700 acute care beds, or cut 100 acute beds. That is not my responsibility. If the Minister of Health is prepared to equip me with the resources that he has been empowered with, I might be in a better position to be able to make a decision of that nature, or the party might be in a better position to make a decision of that nature.

The question remains, does the Minister of Health believe that there are other options that are just as viable, and, quite frankly, I would suggest more viable and more in the best interests of Manitobans, that should have been presented to him, that were not, from the deputy minister and the deputy minister's

committee? The Minister of Health should take no shame if he has to say yes to that. There were definitely time constraints. There is nothing wrong with asking the deputy minister to look at other options and bring them forward at this point in time. All I am asking the Minister of Health is, does he have those other options in front of him today?

**Mr. McCrae:** I assume it is as a result of very, very significant and tedious analysis that the member for Inkster has come out with the figure of 700 tertiary hospital beds. Just for clarification, is that divided equally between Health Sciences Centre and St. Boniface Hospital, or how does he come up with the number of 700? Is it 400 at Health Sciences Centre and 300 at St. Boniface? The honourable member is the one who used the figure.

The honourable member has commented on the approach that I am using this afternoon. There is a reason that I am doing that, you see, and I will explain that, Mr. Chairman. The honourable member is talking about recommendations that have come forward, and it is quite appropriate that he do so. I have no problem with that. But he has not, as I recall, other than first suggesting 100 beds could be cut and now 700—it is quite a leap from 100 to 700—but he must have some scientific data behind him to suggest that you can save \$53 million by closing 100 beds, or at the same time, that you can save \$53 million by closing 700 beds. I do not know how that works, but I am sure the honourable member can logically figure that out for us and explain it to us.

What I am really trying to do is to get the honourable member to do something besides just be critical. It is important, of course, to be critical when governments make mistakes, and governments do, there is no doubt about that, for oppositions to be there. There has to be more, Mr. Chairman, to constructive debate, and I have already given the honourable member for Inkster some commendation for attempting to be constructive. He is exploring this issue and I respect that. What I am getting at is we are presently working to see if the recommendations already before us are the appropriate things to do or whether some other option might be the right thing to do. That is what we are doing. So now the honourable member wants to debate it while that is

going on, and it is okay. It is his business to do that, but at the same time all I have heard from him so far—[interjection] How many beds, for example—[interjection] Well, he has talked about Seven Oaks Hospital quite a bit, although when there is a crowd, he talks also about Misericordia Hospital.

With respect to Seven Oaks Hospital, he does not want it to look after older folks. He wants it, I guess, to be as it is. However, he knows, because his soulmates in Ottawa have helped us to face the reality that we face, and that is that there are significant cuts coming out of Ottawa this year and next year, so it is not like we can pretend we do not have a problem, because we have an issue to address.

All I am asking from the honourable member is put a proposal down and we will talk about it. I am quite open. The honourable member knows that, that I am open. I have not accepted the design team recommendations because the work associated with them is not done. When a decision comes, no matter what it is, I guarantee you, and mark my word, Hansard might want to bold face this in its report for today, all I know is whenever the decision comes, the honourable member for Inkster will be there to criticize the decision.

So I say, let us avoid that sort of approach to health care reform. Let us have the honourable member's proposals on the table. Maybe he did not mean 700 beds; maybe he did not mean 100, I do not know. I do not think you can save \$53 million by closing 100 beds. So, that being the case, I do not know if you can do it by closing 700 beds. Let the honourable member show us how it is he costs out his proposals. At some point along the way, members in the opposition—we are going to find a way, I am going to find a way if it is one of the last things I do—I will try to find a way to make elected representatives responsible for what they propose and say.

I am saying to the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux), he may think it is good enough just to say, no, you cannot do that and join the crowd of 500,000, 700,000, whatever it is that happens to be saying one thing on one day, and then, you know, join some other group some other day and say, oh, yeah, I

am with you. It reminds me of the Liberal who was asked where he stands, and his response was, well, some of my friends look at it this way and some of my friends look at it that way, and, well, I am with my friends.

That is the kind of thing we are getting in this House, and I do not think it is responsible opposition. Frankly, it is not my job, I suppose, to tell honourable members how they should do their work, but I am not going to accept too much criticism from people who have nothing to offer but criticism. If they want to question me about what studies, what reports—and I am certainly giving them so much information they cannot even read it all, so there is nothing left because there are only so many hours in the day, and they figure, well, we have to do something today to get our name in the newspaper, so we better criticize something.

So that is what we get from— [interjection] No? The honourable member from Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) says, that is not the way he does his work. Well, I am glad to hear that. Maybe he can tell us how he does his work.

When is the last time the member from Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) made a proposal which was not, just don't do anything? Like the proposal that we get from the NDP is, go back to the system we had in the first place. Well, I am saying no to that.

I will challenge the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) to produce the studies, the documents and the reports that say, let us go back to the way we did things in the first place. So far, the one report he has produced, that he and his colleagues commissioned, calls for user fees in home care. I am sorry I cannot accept that either. I do not think that is the way to get at the problems that we have in home care. He, and his report, suggests that there are lots of problems, and yet he stands in the House and says, it is not broke, do not fix it. His report suggests that there is all kinds of abuse and unintentional misuse of the home care systems, and yet he stands in his place and says, let us have it the way it was. Well, that is not very responsible. It is certainly not very constructive.

Why should I take the member for Kildonan seriously? The member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux),

on the other hand, has a more helpful attitude. I just await his proposals, and if they are something that makes sense, I can guarantee the member I will look at it very carefully.

**Mr. Lamoureux:** Mr. Chairperson, I am interested in knowing if the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) is concerned about a fairly serious allegation that I said, and that is that you have a number—not one, in excess of one—of individuals, from what I understand, who sat around the Urban Health system management committee, who really challenged the outcome of the recommendations and have implied to me personally—and I know this is very dangerous territory when you start not being prepared to say names and so forth—but in essence that there are other options that were not considered, and this is not the best option. That is definitely what was implied to me; that is the reason why I am concerned about this. I am wondering if the Minister of Health shares the same concern.

\* (1700)

**Mr. McCrae:** Well, I can tell you the people on the design teams, the people on the part of the urban planning partnership are not, unlike members of the New Democratic Party and their union friends, a bunch of trained seals. These people, unlike the New Democrats, care. Unlike the New Democrats and their union boss buddies, Mr. Chairman, the people who are part of the urban planning partnership are intelligent people. Unlike the New Democrats and their union boss buddies, the people on the urban planning partnership take their responsibilities seriously. Unlike the New Democrats and their union boss buddies, these people do not stand around waiting to see what their masters in the union movement tell them to do and then speak out. They are not like that. These are intelligent people.

Surely, the honourable member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) is not trying to tell me that a totally unanimous view is what is required before change happens? If that is what he is expecting, he simply has not been around very long, and I know that the honourable member for Inkster has been around now for a very significant period of time. He has a nice

for a very significant period of time. He has a nice respectable political portfolio and record behind him, so I am not suggesting that he is like the country song, I was born in the dark but it was not last night. I mean, that is not the honourable member for Inkster. He has been around long enough to know a little bit about what goes on. So, to suggest that we should somehow be shocked and horrified and surprised that somebody amongst a group of extremely professional and intelligent people has an opposing or different view, and that this is somehow shocking, well, frankly, it is not shocking to me.

I told the honourable member earlier today about numerous reports about home care. I am sure the people involved in all of those reports have not all just seen eye to eye on every single thing. The way opposition works is, well, let us find somebody who has a view that is different from the group and we will go with theirs, and that way they will vote for us next time.

I think the people of Manitoba and the people of Canada have become tired of that particular approach to politics, Mr. Chairman. The people of Canada and the people of Manitoba have come down now on the side of a government three times in a row that has tried to look at what the greatest good of the population is, and that is where they have placed their ballots, for the candidate and party that stands for that. I cannot explain what happened in Kildonan. I am not going to try and analyse—

**An Honourable Member:** Maybe it was his position on independent schools in his community . . . their position here in the House.

**Mr. McCrae:** My honourable friend and colleague points out to me that maybe it is because the honourable member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) says one thing outside this place and takes a different position when he gets here. That may account for it. I mean, those are the people over there who talk about fraudulent elections and things like that. They wrote the book on it, Mr. Chairman, and they have been pretty good at it for the most part.

### Point of Order

**Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan):** On a point of order, Mr. Chairperson, I listened quite calmly during most of the minister's insults of almost everyone in his Chamber, but I believe it is unparliamentary of the minister to suggest that members on this side of the House—I personally would say one thing inside this House and another thing outside of this House, and thereby implying that somehow I am not speaking the truth. I would ask the minister, as he has had to do on half a dozen times during the course of these Estimates debates, to withdraw that comment.

**The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Radcliffe):** Is the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) rising to speak on this point of order?

**Mr. McCrae:** Yes, on the same point of order, the honourable member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) seems exceedingly sensitive on this point, Mr. Chairman.

**The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Radcliffe):** I would caution all—oh, I am sorry, the honourable member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) on the same point of order? No.

I would caution all members to maintain the decorum of collegial parliamentary language in this Chamber, and I would ask for everybody's co-operation in picking and choosing their language which would show the innate good respect that each member has for the other, and I would encourage the honourable minister to continue, taking into account those comments, and I would thank the honourable member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) for his concern on this issue. Thank you very much.

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**Mr. McCrae:** Interesting, a little earlier today, Mr. Chairman. For some reason my honourable colleagues got me off the track, and I should not let that happen but being human this sometimes happens to me. I was in the process of reading a letter from a card-carrying, dues-paying MGEU member by the name of Kelli Paige, who wrote a letter which was published in the

Winnipeg Sun, Winnipeg Free Press and also read out on CJOB. I got through a good part of it, but there is a little left here which, out of respect for Kelli Paige, I would like to complete this and I will do so. When I called—

#### Point of Order

**Mr. Chomiak:** A point of order, Mr. Chairperson, I am looking for direction from the Chair. When we were in the previous committee, the chairperson indicated there should be some sense of relevance between the question answered by the minister and that posed.

I believe the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) posed the question specifically relating to hospitals and specifically relating to the care provided of the minister. Now, I understand under Beauchesne's that the minister does not have to answer the question, but the minister is now attempting to answer another question he was unable to answer on a completely unrelated and irrelevant topic of no relevance whatsoever to the question, the very specific question, if you peruse Hansard, that was posed by the member for Inkster. I would ask you to perhaps rule on the issue of relevance when one considers that a question posed in one area and the minister completely going off, there can be no nexus, no connection whatsoever between the minister's reading of a letter on home care from a previous question that he was unable to answer and a specific hospital-related question posed by the member for Inkster.

**Mr. McCrae:** Mr. Chairman, on the same point of order, ordinarily I might be sympathetic to the argument being made by the honourable member for Kildonan on this point of order, but surely the honourable member for Kildonan does not want to stifle a young woman like Kelli Paige who has something to say. They shouted me down earlier today, the New Democrats, when I was attempting to bring forward the points of view of our fellow citizens, and I guess through the mechanism of a point of order the honourable member thinks he can bully people, not unlike the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton), who thinks he can bully people daily in this House by

dictating to them how they are supposed to conduct themselves.

**The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Radcliffe):** I would like to thank honourable members for their presentations at this point in time. I note that we are discussing Section 21.1(b) of the Estimates, which is Salaries and Employee Benefits and Other Expenditures, which is a generic and pretty broad-reaching item of the report, and so therefore I am sure that this gives reasonable ambit for comments and answers of a broad nature. However, I would certainly encourage the honourable Minister of Health to focus his answers as much as possible in a responsive nature to the questions that have been put to him on this case.

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**Mr. McCrae:** Mr. Chairman, I will abide by what you have said. I dare say, however, I could have got through that letter if the member for Kildonan had not raised it because normally Chairs and Speakers are the servants of the House or the committee and generally it is subject to the rules, the will of the members that carries the day. Unfortunately, the member for Kildonan wants to stifle decent, hard-working people who want to provide service to their home care clients, and I accept your ruling.

#### Point of Order

**Mr. Chomiak:** A point of order, Mr. Chairperson. You have just admonished the member to choose his words carefully and to suggest, impute motive that we want to stifle the activities and cares of individuals is, I think, an inappropriate comment, by virtue of raising a point of order.

**The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Radcliffe):** The honourable Minister of Health, do you have any comment on the point of order at this point, or do you wish to reflect upon the words that you had—

\* (1710)

**Mr. McCrae:** Mr. Chairman, on the same point of order, it seems like the honourable member talks about how many times I have had to withdraw my comments.

I wonder if there is a running total on how many times he raises points of order. He is probably ahead of me. I do not mean to say things that I should not say, but how can—this is a point of order, is it not?

**The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Radcliffe):** Yes, it is.

**Mr. McCrae:** I will just say with respect to this point of order that the member for Kildonan is very, very sensitive when suggestions that he and his colleagues stifle decent, hardworking people. He is very sensitive about that.

**The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Radcliffe):** I would advise the members of the committee that I was in conversation with the Clerk at the time that the comment was being made. I will review the records of Hansard, and if there is any further recourse, then I will take it under advisement and comment further on this issue.

I would invite the Minister of Health to continue with his answer, having in mind that the answer should be of as informative a nature and as noncontroversial as possible under the circumstances, and I realize we are in a sensitive area of activity. I would invite the honourable minister to continue.

\* \* \*

**Mr. McCrae:** Yes, Sir, I will take complete responsibility for having brought us back to that sensitive area. It is my fault, and it is simply my wish, perhaps injudiciously arrived at, to try to represent the feelings of decent, hardworking people in our province who are being stifled by the New Democrats and their union-boss friends.

Mr. Chairman, the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) was asking about the hospital situation, the design team, urban planning process, and I have put on the record many, many times how that process works. The honourable member is free, and indeed I invite him to discuss the process, to discuss all issues relating to an integrated hospital system in the city of Winnipeg. All I ask from the honourable member for Inkster is to put his money where his mouth is.

This is a difficult time in Canada. We are trying everywhere to adjust our health system so that we can have one in the future. The New Democrats want to kill the health system. Liberals, I think, want to preserve and have a health system for the future, and so do I. I respect that in his particular area, yes, indeed, one of the community hospitals in our city, in the city of Winnipeg, is being looked at for change. This obviously creates concern in the community. I hope it does not create health care concern, but if it does, then show us, show us what is wrong with the one proposal and make another one that makes better sense and still achieves the objectives, the objectives being: care for people, No. 1; and No.2, taking \$53 million out of the hospital system in Manitoba.

The honourable member for Kildonan, I do not think, is going to get \$53 million out of the hospital system by advocating the closure of a hundred hospital beds. I do not think it is going to happen that way. [interjection] Maybe by closing 700 as he—I do not know if that is a suggestion of his or not.

He does not answer my questions, Mr. Chairman. It is very frustrating. If the member would just answer the question, then we could get on with a reasonable debate, but he refuses to answer my questions.

**Mr. Lamoureux:** Mr. Chairperson, frustration—you know, I say persistence—I will leave that comment to the side.

Let me ask the minister—dealing with process, he had sent me a letter, and in the letter, and this is in response to my request to be able to meet with the deputy minister, along with some other health care professionals, to be able to cross-examine, if you will, the recommendations or suggestions. In that letter he sent to me—and I will quote right from it—he indicates that before government makes any decisions regarding these recommendations, I believe further dialogue with health care providers and the public is necessary.

I am interested in knowing exactly what the minister's intentions are with respect to consulting with the public, and will he give some sort of assurance? He wants us to be able to participate in terms of what are our ideas, and I believe that I have given some thoughts

to the minister. I am interested in knowing, what are the options that the minister is currently looking at?

We know one of the options. That is the option that will see the conversion of the Seven Oaks and the Misericordia, among other things, but those are the two real controversial aspects of the recommendations. We are familiar with that option. What we want to know is what other options is the minister currently looking at? This way, as we have commented on this as not being a viable option for a number of different reasons, and if the minister can quickly answer that question, I will then go into some of the reasons why we do not view this as a viable option. I would ask the minister, in the best way he can, if he can keep it as short as possible, and answer that specific question.

**Mr. McCrae:** Mr. Chairman, the honourable member in one of his earlier questions talked about some off-the-record discussions he has had with participants in the planning partnership. If he has had those off-the-record discussions, he might know what it is those participants are saying and proposing, so that therefore he has access in the same way I do.

This is a very open thing. He has off-the-record discussions; I do not get the liberty of having so many off-the-record discussions. It may be that certain people involved in the process have some views that they would like to share with the honourable member, and if the honourable member has no ideas of his own, he can bring those forward. That is okay with me, because I respect the people—I respect the honourable member, by the way, but I also respect the people who are part of this process.

There is only one problem with that, Mr. Chairman. I respect this person over here and I respect this person over here. Unlike the Liberals, I cannot say, yes, we will have it both ways. I am not in the kind of position that the honourable member for Inkster is, so I am saying make a decision, come up with something. I am not here to batter it around. No health minister in Canada, I suggest, is going to turn away any well thought-out proposal, or even not so well thought-out proposal. I am prepared to listen, which I have been doing.

The honourable member asks about this process for consultation. We are in that right now. As part of this costing process, we are listening to people who have views that do not reflect the same views as the planning partnership. We are listening to people who are saying, you know, there is too much emphasis on the tertiary hospitals in these plans. The member for Inkster says well, you know—I think he said something like this—you know, the cost to convert Seven Oaks Hospital into a geriatric centre would outstrip the benefit that you would get in the short term. I think he said something to that effect. Then I asked him, well, okay, let us talk about the costs that are necessary simply to keep the Misericordia Hospital going the way it is.

So, first of all, I will ask the honourable member, what is the cost at the Misericordia, because he was there the other night at the meeting to preserve the Misericordia Hospital basically as is, I think is what was being said that night. What is the cost of the capital requirements at the Misericordia Hospital to bring about the result that the honourable member is advocating? When we have that number, then maybe he might want to give his comment about that at Misericordia Hospital, too, because we are not just talking about Seven Oaks, important a place as that is, especially to the honourable member. We are talking about an integrated hospital system in Manitoba because, you see, I try to say to honourable members like the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) and those who are critical of the design team process which they say puts too much emphasis on the tertiary centres, that surely recommendations that would put a lot of emphasis on the Health Sciences Centre would have to have some analysis of the capital cost at Health Sciences Centre to make that hospital appropriate to do all the things that the design team seems to be saying it might do in the future.

\* (1720)

We know that the capital budget has been put on hold and the members opposite have been very critical of that, but they are not critical of the people in Ottawa who have made that necessary. You see, sometimes you have to kind of be consistent, Mr. Chairman. Sometimes you have to be logical and sometimes you simply have to be fair, because people are watching.



People are watching the honourable member for Inkster, and they are going to say, well, is he fair, is he logical, do his statements add up? Well, I will leave that judgment for others to make, but what I am saying is, do not assume that nobody is listening to concerns that the Health Sciences Centre is being, in these recommendations, proposed to be overutilized at the expense of the community. Do not assume that.

Do you think that we do not have to look at those questions? We do. You do not think we have to look at the questions raised by medical practitioners and their patients? Where am I going to get my admitting privileges? Seems like a pretty legitimate question if the recommendation is to take acute care out of a hospital and that is where you have your privileges as a physician. Do you think we are going to proceed without answering that question?

Well, let us get real here, with all due respect to the honourable member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux). I hope he gives us enough credit to think that we would actually want to have answers to those questions before we proceed with making decisions about these recommendations, but I put some questions to him and this is the Estimates process. No one is asking me specific Estimates questions, so I can ask questions too, because here we are. We are asking each other questions, which is what debate is about, and I have a question for the honourable member. I want him to answer it, and then maybe I will answer one of his.

My question is, at Misericordia Hospital how much capital improvement is required there in order for him to have his wish come true, that is, to leave everything as it is or, to quote the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak), go back to the system we had in the first place? That is what the New Democrats want and I think maybe the Liberals in a lot of their questions seem to support that point of view and yet they do not know how to make it happen, so I am asking the question: How much has to be spent at Misericordia Hospital to make the dreams of the honourable member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) come true?

Question No. 2, if I have time, Mr. Chairman: Why is it that Liberals want to talk about their support for senior citizens and geriatric issues, but when the word

“geriatric” is used in association with the Seven Oaks Hospital, all of a sudden our elderly people do not matter anymore? I cannot understand that. Or is it that I am wrong and that elderly people do matter to the Liberals, and if they do matter to the Liberals, is the member for Inkster going to substitute his judgment for the people involved, experts and others involved in making decisions, or making recommendations I should say, about geriatric care in Winnipeg? Do not just say, no, you cannot do that, or stop, or as the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) says, go back to the system we had in the first place. It is all well and good. Give us a better option and we will listen, we promise.

**Mr. Lamoureux:** With geriatric care, it is not a bad word. Geriatric care is absolutely essential in today's society. It is a question in terms of the recommendation that is being suggested, that in its whole is in the best interests of the city of Winnipeg or the province of Manitoba, because all of Manitoba uses the urban hospitals. Quite often, when we talk about urban hospitals, we—at least some—might tend to forget about that fact, but all of the urban hospitals are well utilized by all Manitobans.

In essence, I would suggest to the minister, and this is something that is not new, at least in part, I am sure that the minister has heard of this: how do we go about making that decision? Community hospitals and the principle of community hospitals, the benefits of community hospitals should be taken into consideration, the size of medical programs that are being provided, the size of surgical programs, the number of operating rooms, ICU beds, primary clinical space, diagnostic service capabilities, age and quality of the physical plant, day surgery capacity, minimal capital or what are the capital expenditures, the future needs of the city, in fact, the province as a whole. These are the types of things that have to be taken into consideration when you are looking at, hopefully, a number of different options.

This afternoon, my attempt—or the question, in essence, that I have been posing to the minister is a question of, do we have options? Does the minister have options that he is prepared to share not only with me, but others? He makes reference in the letter that he

wants to consult with the public. Well, what is it? Make reference to the fact that I had these off-the-record discussions and which did take place.

Well, I have an idea in terms of what might be being considered. Do I know if the government is actually giving as much weight to those ideas as the recommendations put forward by the deputy minister? We do not know, and we are not being given any indication from the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae). If there are some other options that are out there, ultimately, I would suggest or ask the minister, what does he have to lose by sharing the other options?

Most importantly, and if I could get the one question answered from the minister—he answers this question and I will do my very best at answering the next question that the minister puts to me. If not, I will ensure that I will get an answer at some point in time to the minister. The question that I would like to ask the minister is, the current community hospitals that we have in the city of Winnipeg, does he believe that there is a viable option that would, in fact, allow for emergency services and acute care services in the current community hospitals? Is, in his mind, there an option out there that is worthwhile considering and has the possibility of being adopted?

If the answer to that is yes, I believe that there will be more support towards the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) in better defining that option and ensuring that option in fact will work. Ultimately, I believe that sort of an option will be far more acceptable to the public as a whole in the province of Manitoba and will meet the future needs. Now, that option still can include, if it is deemed necessary, the cutback of acute care beds. All we are looking for right now is that little bit of light that, yes, the government does believe there is the potential to have that option there and we are looking at that sort of an option. That is all we want to know—are you looking at an option that would allow the continuation of services to some degree?

**Mr. McCrae:** I will look at any option that the honourable member wants to put in front of me, and if he has an option like that that can work, that can make patient care the priority and help us with our fiscal issues, I am quite interested in looking at those options.

**The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Radcliffe):** Pursuant to subrule 5.(3) and Rule 72, the hour being 5:30 p.m., this section of the Committee of Supply has recessed until 9 a.m. tomorrow (Friday).

# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, April 18, 1996

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