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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

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Friday, April 19, 1996

The House met at 9 a.m.

ORDERS OF THE DAY
(Continued)

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY
(Concurrent Sections)

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Mr. Deputy Chairperson (Ben Sveinson): Good morning. Will the Committee of Supply please come to order. This morning this section of the Committee of Supply will be resuming consideration of the Estimates of the Department of Education. When the committee recessed yesterday afternoon, the minister was going to introduce the staff in attendance and then the committee was to proceed with consideration of line 1.(b) Executive Support on page 34 of the Main Estimates book.

The honourable minister, to introduce her staff present.

Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to introduce today at the table with me the Deputy Minister of Education Mr. John Carlyle. Along with Mr. John Carlyle, we have Mr. Jim Glen who is one of the assistant deputy ministers with finance and along with those two gentlemen, we have Mr. Tom Thompson. His exact title is director of finance with the Department of Education. Jim Glen's exact title is assistant deputy minister, Administration and Finance. I would like to thank them not just for being here today but for all of the very, very good work they have done in the last year. They are very helpful and very professional people whose quality of work I feel is superb.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Thank you, Madam Minister.

Mr. Gary Kowalski (The Maples): I would ask leave to make a very brief opening remark.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Is there leave of the committee for the member for The Maples to make an opening remark? [agreed]

Mr. Kowalski: I will be very, very brief. First of all, a compliment to the minister about her effort as Minister of Education. Quite often, I do not agree with many of her actions and policies, but I will never discount her effort. I am one to put in long hours here and I continue to see her here working in her office quite late at night and quite early in the morning, and I commend her for the efforts she is making in her department.

Having said that, I am concerned about many of the directions that this government is going in. It bears mentioning just to remind myself, as well as to put it on the record, and I said it in my Budget Debate, that in the role of opposition, quite often we criticize government policies, and in the heat of debate sometimes members take the criticism personally. I want to put on the record that I separate my criticism of the minister's policies from criticism of the minister personally. The role of opposition is very important. A dictatorship is probably a very efficient form of government, probably gets things done very quickly, very efficiently, but it is not the best form of government, and that is why we have opposition to compliment the government when we agree with the policies—and I have—and to criticize the government when we do not agree with their policies. That is our very important role here, and I will continue to do that.

Speaking about education in general, more and more in the past year as the Education critic for the Liberal members in the Manitoba Legislature and formerly as a school trustee and as a parent to a 15-year-old daughter, and now I am a student taking a certificate course at the University of Winnipeg to become a teaching assistant when I grow up—

An Honourable Member: You could do that after the next election.

Mr. Kowalski: The member says I could do it after the next election. Who knows what will happen after the next election. Re-election has never been that important to me. I am here to make changes to my community, to the province of Manitoba. I am not here to be re-elected; I am here to do what is important.

All those experiences more and more re-enforce that the most important element in the education system is not

the minister, is not the curriculum, it is not even the policies, but it is the classroom teacher, the person who has day-to-day contact with the child. I do not think there is any educational system that could ever prevent a good teacher from teaching. I believe in some directions we might be testing the edges of that envelope. Good teachers, no matter what, will succeed, will care about their students, will do a good job, and it is becoming more and more apparent in sometimes difficult situations that teachers are going above and beyond the call of duty constantly.

Yesterday, I attended Forum '96 in the River East School Division, and I think the Minister of Labour (Mr. Toews) was the guest speaker there. A presentation was put on about many of the internship programs, work experience programs, alternative education programs, and, of course, they had the usual—the representative from the school board, the representative of the superintendent team, and then from each high school, Miles Mac, Kildonan East, River East, they had one teacher talk about their program. In the most powerful part of the presentation, a student from that program came forward and talked about their experiences.

There was one young lady, I do not remember her name, from Miles Mac Collegiate who talked about last year. Her average was 41 percent. She had missed 17 days of school during the school year. As a result of this new program they have at Miles Mac Collegiate, my alma mater by the way, she now has an 85 percent average. She has only missed one day of school. This program—where instead of having a number of teachers, she only has two teachers. Last year, she only received four credits; this year, she will be able to get 12 high school credits. Most importantly, even more so than the marks and attendance, was her attitude. She was looking forward, she had a vision of her future, and she attributed it to the support that she received from those two teachers. That was the strongest element of that program, was the connection between the student and the teacher.

I am sure we are going to hear about federal offloading during these Estimates a number of times, and we are going to hear about the \$2 million a day on interest from the deficit. I like what the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Enns) said during his Budget Debate—get over it, get over it. All governments of all different political stripes

in the '80s during a tough recession, whether it was Pierre Elliott Trudeau in the '70s, whether it was Peter Lougheed, no matter who it was, whether it was Conservative, NDP or Liberal governments, that was the economics of the time and deficits were created and, yes, we have to deal with them. So let us get over it. It is a reality; it is there. Just as when I was a school trustee when the provincial government cut our spending, we could have spent hours upon hours complaining about it, but we had to get on with the business, the business of what we were doing in Seven Oaks School Division and we did.

* (0910)

The other part is there is an inconsistency. The criticisms that the provincial government gives about the federal government cutbacks, it is funny how they do not hold true when we talk about the \$120-million surplus and why it is important to not spend that and how the additional lottery revenues, we do not take that into consideration. There are choices there. At a speech I said to the Kelvin High School teachers' public forum last night, I mentioned that Choices, who are not necessarily my best friends, created an alternative budget. There are choices; there are other ways of doing things so we do not have to suffer some of the cutbacks we are seeing in education in Manitoba.

Right now, my family is an analogy, possibly, of what is going on in society in that I am running a large MasterCard balance and I pay interest on that, but does that mean last summer when we were short of money, we were paying interest on a MasterCard balance, that it was not wise for me to spend the money I spent on mini-university for my daughter to send her to mini-university as an investment? Would it have been better to put that money to pay down that MasterCard bill so I would not have had the interest payments this year and would have more money to spend on her education in the future? The world does not stop. The needs, whether it is in health care, education, continue regardless of the interest payments we have to pay on any debt. So there are alternatives.

I will not go into detail repeating what I said in the Budget Debate about the common belief that taxes are bad, government is bad and public service is bad, therefore, if we had no taxes, no government, no public

service, it would be a better world. No, that would be anarchy. That would be survival of the fittest. And yet, that seems to be the direction that we are going in public education in that because taxes are bad, so the less taxes we have, the less public service we have, the less public school system we have, the better off we are. Only the strong, the independently wealthy, the people who could afford it will succeed, will be able to go to university. I am concerned about that direction we are going in.

I said I would be brief, and I have gone a little bit too long. I will just finish by saying, with those criticisms, as is my duty as an opposition member, that I know all members here care about children, care about the province of Manitoba, and I will respect the minister's right to make the final decision, but I hope she will continue to respect our right to oppose her policies.

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): We are on line 16.1(b), I think. We are looking at Executive Support.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: I am sorry. It is 1.(b) Executive Support (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$631,900. Shall the item pass?

Ms. Friesen: This is a line which over the last three or four years has shown considerable increase. I note if we go back to 1993-94 that this line was at \$361,000. We are being asked here to pass a line of \$625,000. Could the minister explain some of these historical changes?

Mrs. McIntosh: The main reason is the creation of the second deputy minister for the post-secondary side.

Ms. Friesen: Could the minister explain the increase this year from \$590,000 to \$625,000 that we are being asked to approve here?

Mrs. McIntosh: At the time the Estimates were being prepared, the department was not at that time able to confirm the classification or salary level for the new deputy minister because it had not yet been decided, but that new deputy minister's salary in fact has not changed from his old salary.

In the meantime, this had to be printed, so to ensure the sum appropriation was sufficiently resourced and to avoid having to have a supplementary funding issue, the budget was based upon a DR3, a Deputy Minister 3, at

the maximum salary and that is not really the case, as it turns out, because the new deputy's salary is actually that of a DR2, the same as he had before. So that money will probably lapse. It was put in there because at the time of printing we were uncertain and we wanted to budget for the highest-case scenario which, in reality, is not the case.

Ms. Friesen: Could the minister tell us what the maximum salary is then that she budgeted for at a Deputy Minister 3?

Mrs. McIntosh: Mr. Chairman, the maximum that had been budgeted for was \$116,000.

Ms. Friesen: And I believe the new deputy minister comes in at a salary of about \$110,000.

Mrs. McIntosh: No, you are wrong. I know that the MGEU printed and distributed widely as fact a salary that in fact they had not researched and did not know, and you may be going with what the union is telling you. However, as those who are actually paying the money, I can indicate that salary is \$99,000, not the figure that the MGEU has published as a fact. They probably should correct that because it is a disservice to the individual involved and a very, very poor reflection on their integrity and credibility.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Chairman, that DR2 salary, \$99,000, is that a maximum?

Mrs. McIntosh: Yes, it is.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Chair, could the minister tell me what changes there have been in her staff this year, and could she give me the salary levels of the people she has in her department in this area?

Mrs. McIntosh: On all the staff? [interjection] Oh, just on this line, okay. The staff is looking to get numbers. I will give you the names of the people in the meantime and their position. We have Pearl Domienik, who is the administrative secretary to the minister. We then have two administrative secretaries in the outer office, Debbie Milani and Sharon Curtis Lesley. The two assistants who are traditionally assigned to ministers, Beverley Hares, executive assistant, Connie Hall, special assistant.

* (0920)

We have, in the deputy minister's office for Kindergarten to Senior 4 John Carlyle as deputy minister, and he has two people working in this office, Nicole La Roche, his executive assistant and Diana McClymont, administrative secretary to the deputy minister.

On the Training and Advanced Education side of the department, we have Tom Carson, the deputy minister and Yolande Choiselat, assistant to the deputy minister and Gail O'Neill, the administrative secretary there, and, if the member will just pause for a moment, I will get the figures.

Mrs. McIntosh: The salaries in the order that I gave the names—for the administrative secretary to the minister, \$37,000. These are gross salaries that do not have anything taken off them. That was Pearl Domienik, \$37,000; Debbie Milani, \$31,000; Beverly Hares, \$48,000; Connie Hall, \$41,000; Sharon Curtis-Leslie, \$31,000. Now into the two deputies' offices—John Carlyle, \$116,000; Nicole LaRoche, \$49,000; Diana McClymont, \$36,000. In the other side of the department—Tom Carson, \$99,000; Yolande Choiselat, \$49,000; Gail O'Neill, \$34,000.

Ms. Friesen: Could the minister tell us what changes in salaries there have been in each of those positions over the past year?

Mrs. McIntosh: The staff will obtain last year's salaries. They indicate to me that there were no adjustments beyond the normal annual increment that civil servants receive. So the annual increment is included in this from last year's base, and what also is not included in this is the four days reduction. The base salaries, we will provide for you and table them as soon as they come—the base salaries from last year.

Ms. Friesen: The minister is asking us to look at an increase here of from \$590,000 to \$625,000 minus, I assume, the \$17,000 difference in the deputy minister's salary. Could she explain what that difference is for?

Mrs. McIntosh: Mr. Chairman, it can be summarized in this way. The adjustments for salaries included money that was identified for the deputy minister of Training

and Advanced Education which will not be applied. The merit increases, in total 13.5, the merit being the annual increment, the accrual—

Ms. Friesen: 13.5 what?

* (0930)

Mrs. McIntosh: Thousand. I am sorry, 13.5 thousand. I appreciate the member's request for clarification there. The department is switching to an accrual method of accounting. The accrual for one day is \$13,200; miscellaneous, \$3,000; and that is a total of \$49,000. Those are the adjustments, those are the rationale for the adjustment for salaries.

Ms. Friesen: Could the minister explain the accrual method for accounting and how that leads to a \$13,200 increase?

Mrs. McIntosh: I appreciate staff giving me the information here because my background is not in accounting, but I could explain it this way—and maybe it is easier for one layperson explaining it to another. To explain it simply: basically we used to pay 26 bi-weekly pay cheques for the year, but some years, of course, have 27, and so the accounting is changing to reflect the actual year, the actual days used in that year. That means that this year will have one extra pay that we distribute because we will have 27 instead of 26, and that accrual that I referred to earlier when I said one day's accrual of \$13,000—\$13.2 it actually is—is that extra period.

Ms. Friesen: Is this then system-wide throughout both the department and the government, and should we anticipate this kind of same percentage increase in every line of salary in this department and in the government?

Mrs. McIntosh: Yes.

Ms. Friesen: Could the minister tell me whether her staff or how her staff dealt with the issue of so-called Filmon Fridays, the work reduction weeks, and how that is accounted for in the Estimates as presented here?

Mrs. McIntosh: Here they are showing the salaries with the workweek reduction removed. That is the net salary that has been identified.

Ms. Friesen: I am sorry, I do not understand that. I thought earlier the minister had been giving me a list of base salaries, and now we are talking net salary. So I probably need some clarification on that.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: The honourable minister, to clarify.

Mrs. McIntosh: The individual salaries that I read out earlier are the base salaries. The summation that the member is looking at shows the summation of those salaries with the workweek reduction and other things removed, so that they are the total net total.

Ms. Friesen: Could the minister tell us a little more about how her department dealt with Filmon Fridays with that workweek reduction? We will stick to this particular line, to the administrative executive support. Did everyone take that workweek reduction? Was there a rotation of staff over certain periods of that time? Did everybody whose name the minister read out to me take that workweek reduction?

Mrs. McIntosh: Yes, everyone took the workweek reduction in terms of salary. The minister and the minister's special assistant did not take the days off, but they did take the reduction. That was applied to everybody. If you are asking, did they take the time off? Most did, some did not, but they all took the workweek reduction in terms of salaries. The minister's office was still open though, with the minister's assistant and the minister.

Ms. Friesen: Could we come back now to the \$13,000 adjustment for salaries that is in here?

Earlier the minister—just for the concern of staff, I see them puzzling over this—had said that what was included here in this increase was \$13,500 for merit increases; \$13,200 for the accrual method of accounting and then \$3,000 for miscellaneous.

So I am going back now to that first item, that \$13,500 adjustment for salaries, including merit increases. I wonder if the minister could give us a breakdown of how that is distributed in this group. Does it apply, for example, to the ministerial assistance? Does it apply to the deputy ministers? Does it apply to everyone whose name was read out?

Mrs. McIntosh: It applies to everybody. That is the figure that I indicated. If you would like the breakdown, staff will provide it. It might be later in the day though because they do not have it here.

Ms. Friesen: The minister mentioned it as merit increases. Could the minister explain to me, for the record, what merit increases are? How they are judged? How they are applied?

Mrs. McIntosh: The way in which that works, Mr. Chairman, is that annually, with each year of experience, the person becomes eligible for a merit increment. The supervisor must do a report on the employee and indicate the reasons why they feel that employee has worked to earn a merit increase. If it is felt that the individual has not performed in a way that merits an increase, then of course they do not get the merit increase. A form comes around to each supervisor asking them to do a report on the employee and indicate whether or not that employee should be granted the merit increase. Then that will continue for a specified number of years until they reach a maximum, and thereafter, there is no more eligibility for increments beyond that point.

Ms. Friesen: How many years does it take to achieve that maximum, or what is the average number?

* (0940)

Mrs. McIntosh: It varies from one area to another, but it is proper to indicate that somewhere between six or seven and 10 years, depending upon the individual's role.

Ms. Friesen: That report on employees, is it done—I know in some companies it is done in conjunction with the employee, that the supervisor will fill out a report on the employee. The employee will sign it, will discuss it with them. Plans are perhaps made for the next year, and then there is a subsequent evaluation. That is the level of discussion I am looking for. Could the minister explain to me what happens within her department?

Mrs. McIntosh: Mr. Chairman, we have two procedures the member is referring to. There are performance appraisals that are done with employees and their supervisors, and if it is a full-fledged performance appraisal, which occurs from time to time but not on a

stipulated time line, then for those the employee would be asked to sign. The merit increments, the employee does not have to sign those. The supervisor does that on an annual basis, and the merit increment is normally granted on that annual basis, the supervisor still has to send in the form and everything, but unless the performance is less than satisfactory it is not normally a case for interaction with the supervisor and the employee. So there are two different things going on here. Of course, there is usually ongoing dialogue between supervisors and employees. Most employees have a pretty good sense on a daily basis as to their performance.

Ms. Friesen: Is there an expectation in merit increases that the employee will have had some guidelines set in the previous year which will have been met? Is there an expectation that employees will have exceeded requirements or exceeded previous years? The minister used the word satisfactory, not quite in this context, but I am trying to get at what the levels of judgement are.

Mrs. McIntosh: Mr. Chair, employees have job descriptions, and the job descriptions will normally indicate fairly concisely what is expected of that employee on a day-by-day basis. The performance review process is ongoing. It occurs daily. It is normal between an employee and that employee's immediate supervisor. But in short, merit reviews are summative that once a year you would pause and say, according to this job description, are the daily tasks being performed? If it is a secretary in the outer office, for example, is the correspondence being filed properly? Those kinds of things.

The performance review process could become a more in-depth thing on perhaps the mutual setting of goals, et cetera, for those whose job does not have routine tasks, but the job description is the ultimate indicator of goals and objectives.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Chair, could the minister explain how deputy ministers are evaluated and how increments are awarded in that case?

Mrs. McIntosh: Deputy ministers are also subject to the merit review. The deputy minister's role is slightly different in that it is defined by The Civil Service Act and the merit increment for them would be governed

according to the same rules as with other employees, that once a year pause when the supervisor—in this case it would be the minister—would look to see if the year's work has been done satisfactorily. If there is no major problem, then the merit increment could be granted, or if there is a problem, discussion could occur to correct that problem.

Ms. Friesen: Is the time frame for merit increments for deputy ministers about the same, the six to seven years?

Mrs. McIntosh: Yes, as long they are not at maximum, it is on an annual basis.

* (0950)

Ms. Friesen: It seems to me that there are strong similarities between what happens in the department and what happens to teachers. I know that the minister's review and the minister's proposals for changes to teacher compensation suggest departures from this, and so I wonder if the minister might want to comment on that, in the comparability between the civil service and the teaching profession on merit increments and evaluations.

Mrs. McIntosh: Oh, would that they were similar, because if they were similar then boards would be forced to sit down every year and evaluate a teacher's performance to see if a merit increment was justified. That is the main point of departure that has been identified in the accountability document, that was identified by trustees; that is the main point of departure from the way the civil service runs.

The way the school divisions run is that here in government merit increments are only granted upon a signed document by the supervisor indicating that performance is satisfactory and that the job description has been well met. If there is any problem, it has to be brought to the employee's attention and the merit increase denied.

I would wager that if the member searched the full breadth and width of this province, the member would have a very, very difficult time finding any teacher whose merit increment has been denied and would find very few instances in which a summative report has been done on that teacher before a merit increment was granted. In

school divisions, the merit increments are more properly called automatic annual increments and, in fact, many boards now do refer to them as automatic annual increments because they occur with no obligation for assessment, with no obligation for a look at the employee's work, with no obligation to inform the employee that anything needs improving. So the member is correct in identifying that those two procedures do need comparing.

I am absolutely delighted that she raised that comparison because that has been the main bone of contention, that in private industry and other levels of government, employees do have to have some sort of evaluation on an annual basis before they are given an automatic annual increment.

Ms. Friesen: So what I understand the minister is looking for then in terms of accountability is an annual signed statement, similar to that used in the civil service, which says that this employee has met the job description, that their job performance is satisfactory. I understand that that is what she said.

Mrs. McIntosh: Mr. Chairman, that must be corrected, the conclusions drawn by the member, and I would ask permission that each time an incorrect conclusion is drawn by the member that I be given the opportunity to correct it for the record.

I am not saying that the school divisions should adopt the government's model. That is an incorrect assumption. I have repeatedly, over and over, indicated to the member and to the opposition that we have no preconceived notions as to what the outcome should be. We do have some defined problems, and the document defines problems and asks the field to suggest ways in which it could be improved.

There are many who would feel that the government model does not do enough in terms of evaluation and merit and would say it does not go far enough and that what teachers require is far more than just the immediate supervisor indicating approval, but that they should include as well other factors for consideration in deciding whether or not a teacher should get an automatic raise.

What we have heard loudly and clearly, and I know the member has heard it loudly and clearly as well, is that an

automatic raise should not be given just because one more year of experience has been put in.

Experience is important and in most cases experience is a growing experience, but in some cases an extra year of experience using bad habits is an extra year to reinforce bad habits that will then be that much harder to undo. So there are many factors.

Because I indicate to the member that the government model of granting annual merit increases, if deserved, is a superior model to the school division, and I say it is a superior model to the school divisions, the member is incorrect to conclude that because this is a superior model in my opinion, it is therefore the model that I wish to impose upon school divisions. I wish to see school divisions, together with their members, come to an understanding that performance evaluations must take place on a more regular basis, with more defined criteria. They must be thorough and regular and more frequent than they currently are, and they should seriously consider tying increased monies received to the indication that the performance, in fact, has been good.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Chair, could the minister tell us when the last time was in this section of her department when someone did not receive their annual merit increment? One of the procedures that the minister established early on was that these could be denied and she would see I think as one way of an effective evaluation system that such increments could be denied. That is what she is proposing for the teaching profession. Could she tell us how frequent an occasion this is likely to be, giving, for example, her own department?

Mrs. McIntosh: Mr. Chairman, in my own branch, to my knowledge, the staff indicates there have not been any in recent years where they have been denied.

The point I am trying to make is that there has been opportunity to deny them, and that is the critical point. We take very careful pains when we are hiring people for minister's offices and for senior levels of government to ensure that we place people properly in the first instance, and that is another issue that we may like to talk about in terms of hiring and firing throughout the part of Education that is not directly accountable to government. Proper hiring in the first place will ensure that you do not have a lot of mistakes. Where you have a lot of mistakes

in terms of hiring, normally what happens is the employee will ultimately not be there anymore and we may have some instances of that having occurred.

But the point that the member overlooks, inherent in her question, is the fact that I have opportunity as a minister and my deputies and the ADMs and the directors have opportunities as supervisors on an annual basis to deny a raise. They have that opportunity. The employees know that. The employees do not wish to see a denial occur on a merit increment form. Everybody is conscious of that time of the year when it comes around. I am not saying that is why performance stays high. I am just saying everybody knows it, and in the school division that does not occur. Hopefully, if everybody is doing their job right, there should not be very many denials.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Chairman, I wonder if the minister would be prepared to bring, perhaps this afternoon or tomorrow, a copy of the employee evaluation forms that are commonly used within the department.

Mrs. McIntosh: Mr. Chairman, we do not have them here, but I will try to bring them in this afternoon. If we do not have them this afternoon, we will have them at the next time that we meet. Apparently, we will have them this afternoon.

* (1000)

I just want to indicate as well that many employees in government are appointed by Order-in-Council and they can be removed without cause. There is no tenure as there is in teaching, for example, where you are given job security in exchange for having been there for a certain period of time. So no tenure for Order-in-Council employees. They can be removed without cause, and normally if their performance is not satisfactory that is what happens. They are just let go and replaced by others. That is another difference, but then those are O/Cs; they are political appointments in that sense.

Ms. Friesen: I thank the minister for bringing in that form, and it is of course a blank form that I am looking for, the evaluation methods and procedures. I wonder if the minister could tell me whether the evaluation forms for deputy ministers are similar? Are they the same, I should say, or are they different forms? If they are

different, may I also see a copy of a blank evaluation form for deputy ministers?

Mrs. McIntosh: The merit form for deputies is worded slightly differently. We will table that for you as well. Deputies, because of their close association with ministers and government hierarchy, are evaluated on a day-to-day basis, and the ultimate supervisor for deputies, of course, is cabinet. Many of the day-to-day interactions are verbal or oral in terms of the constant ongoing assessment, but the annual merit increment is done similarly to the other employees. The form is slightly different, and we will table that for you as well.

Ms. Friesen: The minister has also indicated that there is a ceiling which is reached, eventually, by most staff, I assume. I wonder what the minister's thoughts are on that? Again, I am drawing the comparisons to the criticisms that have been laid about teachers' evaluations and teachers' ceilings and annual increments and those sorts of things. Now, we have that in the civil service. Is the minister arguing that in the civil service this is appropriate but perhaps is not appropriate for teachers, or is the minister, perhaps, not content with that in the civil service and would like to see changes there?

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Order, please.

Hon. Jim Ernst (Government House Leader): The other Committee of Supply has recessed for about 15 or 20 minutes because of the Holocaust reading of listed names in the rotunda. Public Accounts has also recessed. You might want to consider it.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Is it the will of the committee to recess for 15 minutes?

Some Honourable Members: Yes.

The committee recessed at 10:04 a.m.

After Recess

The committee resumed at 10:30 a.m.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Order, please. Now, where were we? 1.(b)(1). The minister was about to answer a question.

Mrs. McIntosh: Mr. Chairman, I think we are all pleased that we were able to take that break and join those who were reciting the names of those who died in the Holocaust, some of those millions of people who died. I think those kinds of remembrances do several things. They do help us focus in again on what is really important in the world, and sometimes some of our games here are not that meaningful in the light of people who have lost their lives under circumstances such as those, so I think the pause was a very important one for us to take.

The member had asked just before we went to the ceremony, or visited the ceremony for a few moments, about classifications and whether, I believe the question was, there is a cap or there is a ceiling on the number of increments in government. Therefore, do I believe there should be a ceiling on the number of increments in school divisions? Is that the question?

Ms. Friesen: No, not exactly. What I am trying to do, obviously, is draw some lines of comparison between the kind of evaluation system which exists in the civil service and the kind of evaluation system that the government is looking for in the teaching profession.

As the minister has outlined it, there are annual evaluations, which are written, which relate very specifically to the job classification. Satisfactory or unsatisfactory is the kind of criteria which are dealt with by the immediate supervisor. I thought that was an interesting form of evaluation. I have asked for the evaluation form and will certainly be looking at that.

The minister clarified beyond that, that was not exactly what she was looking for in the teaching service, that it would have to be more than that, but without any predetermination of what more than that would be.

Then what I asked was about the ceiling issues, because, again, that is something which has been raised in respect to the teaching profession. What happens to evaluation systems? What happens to that kind of accountability once a ceiling has been reached? So it was really that. Accountability beyond the ceiling was the issue I was raising.

Mrs. McIntosh: Mr. Chairman, those are exactly the kinds of questions we are asking school divisions. Of

course, I am accountable for government in these Estimates, so I will say that, in government, once the maximum has been reached is not to imply that performance evaluations or assessment of employees' work does not continue. There are constant daily indications to supervisors as to whether or not an employee is performing the tasks that that employee was hired to perform, and there are procedures for dismissal of employees who are no longer capable of serving the government in the job capacity to which they are assigned. That is at the one end of the spectrum.

But I indicate that in case there is an implication that once you are at the maximum you no longer have a merit increment, it does not mean that your merits are not continually assessed and that measures are taken in place to correct that up to and including dismissal if necessary, and usually those are not the first choice, of course, in terms of doing a performance evaluation.

In the school divisions, we are saying that we do not have any preconceived notions. We have identified problems. There is a big difference in saying there is a problem when an increment is given automatically and the suggestion that the school divisions would then automatically best be served by some other model that exists—say, for example, if the member is making the comparison here in the provincial government. Because you are dealing with differing kinds of situations, you may require differing kinds of solutions. I think in terms of ceilings or caps to the number of increments, obviously, if there is a ceiling then there comes a point beyond which raises just do not continue to escalate ad infinitum in terms of automatic increases because, as the member knows, on top of the automatic increase goes whatever the negotiation for the year provides in terms of settlements.

So you have two things going in terms of money paid to employees here and in the school division. That would be the automatic raise in school divisions and the annual increment in government on top of which is added whatever is settled for that year, and traditionally that has been a raise. In latter years that has been a status quo, or with the workweek reduction it might be possible that some actually saw less pay going home. Although many indicate that they saw no reduction in pay, many that I know personally have showed me their pay stubs and showed no reduction in the actual amount of money

going home, but that is because they got the annual increment and then the four days off and they netted out. So that did not happen in every case. It will vary from employee to employee.

A ceiling then will ensure that at a certain point, once a person has reached what is presumed to be a suitable number of levels of experience and increasingly satisfactory performances, satisfactory over time showing that it is not just a flash-in-the-pan performance but an over time consistent indication of satisfactory performance, that at some point in government it is deemed that you need to have a ceiling so that you do not continue to see raises going up and up and up until you find a secretary ultimately at the end of a 40-year career making \$100,000 which is what could happen if there were no ceiling.

Similarly, it could be said that the same thing could happen in school divisions and that in fact you will often hear teachers say, all I have had for the last 10 years are my raises and I have not had my annual increments, so all I am getting is the 4 percent or 5 percent or whatever it was in those days that was being provided. Or otherwise you will also hear school boards complaining as they do most vociferously and most viciously when the teachers say to boards, you only gave us a 1 percent increase last year, boards will say, yes, but 45 percent of you in our division were also getting annual increments. So while you only got a 1 percent raise, the cost to the school division was more than 1 percent increase on the salary line. So those kinds of things are there to be debated and to be talked about.

I do not have a preconceived notion that the cap or the ceiling on the number of increments or the number of steps in classifications should be left, or removed, from school divisions. We have identified it as one of the chronic complaints that comes forward. The ceiling is not a complaint, but the steps within those levels are the chronic complaint. Trustees have not complained to government about the ceiling. Some teachers have because they want the ceiling removed and the classifications to be longer, but the steps within them and the length of time, would it be six years, 10 years, has been discussed and debated.

What we have said is these are the complaints we have been told, these are the problems that have been

identified, and we would like people to tell us what they think about them, to see if, in fact, there is a better way of recompensing people justly and fairly for their good work in a way that is also designed to meet the employers' needs as well as the employees.

So we can make comparisons, but we must also understand that when we talk about the way in which we recompense people who work for the civil service, we are talking about very different job descriptions than we are about people who are employed in schools. You can make comparisons, and I think you do need to make comparisons, between like professions, and I stress the word "like," similar professions or the same job performed in other jurisdictions, but to compare an administrative assistant in a business office of the government with a person teaching in a classroom, to me, is not quite an accurate comparison in terms of the job descriptions.

Does that mean that the method of evaluation needs to be slightly different as well, is a question that I pose, in turn, to my colleague from the opposition.

* (1040)

Ms. Friesen: The question I was really posing was what are the implications of ceilings for continued evaluations, as that is an issue in school divisions as well. I understand what the minister's response is. That informal evaluation continues after ceilings are reached and that there are no written evaluations after that. Am I understanding that correctly, Mr. Chairman?

Mrs. McIntosh: Mr. Chairman, the evaluations and performance appraisals, whatever terminology people wish to use, but the process of supervisors being aware of their employees' work and working with employees to improve performance which, hopefully, then would occur or to dismiss employees whose performance does not improve, that process is ongoing, as I indicate.

Regardless of whether they have reached the ceiling or not, it should be irrelevant to the ongoing process of evaluation whether they have passed a certain step in the progression of the person's career. So those evaluations that take place after the maximum has been reached could be oral, could be written, could be whatever they choose.

They have continued evaluation and sometimes that is definitely put in writing, particularly if an employee's performance is in jeopardy. Performance appraisals are always designed to be positive in their outlook, to be taking the attitude that they would help to assist employees to improve, to correct problems that might be there, but even with good employees to assist them in improving and enhancing so that they become even better. So they are not designed to be punitive.

They are designed to be supportive. They are designed to work to enhance performance and also to give an indication to the employee where they are performing well so the employee will have confirmed for him or herself that indeed they are on the right track.

I have mentioned that the ultimate conclusion of a severe ongoing problem with performance could be and probably should be dismissal but one does not go into an evaluative process with that in mind. One goes in with the desire to ensure that the team of people working together are functioning at full capacity and that there are adequate supports, both moral and instructive and any other thing that needs to be there, to assist that employee to become better and better and better in their jobs.

Relating that and comparing that to school divisions, that I think is something that should also be there for teachers. I think teachers deserve to know if they are doing well and deserve to know that their performance is pleasing those with whom they interact and that it is deemed to be suiting the needs of the children properly. I think a teacher deserves to know if there is a flaw in the performance what the flaw is and how it can be corrected and that they be given assistance with that.

Regarding the paper that the member has introduced into this part of the Estimates, the Enhancing Accountability document, we are motivated at this point by questions, not answers, and that is maybe the simplest way to put it. We are motivated by the questions that have been put to us over the years and not by answers at this stage, although we are looking for answers.

We have these kinds of questions. Should a teacher be granted an increment if a fair evaluation shows they are not performing satisfactorily? Now, we asked that question in the document, and I realize it has caused an uproar, but I still think it is a legitimate question to ask.

We ask it of our civil servants all the time. Should a teacher be granted an increment if a fair evaluation shows that that teacher is not performing satisfactorily? As I say, I know that question has caused an incredible uproar in the community, but I still think it is a legitimate question to ask, and because it is a question that has been asked of us as government so repeatedly, I think it is a question that, in fairness, we need to examine.

I think not to examine it is to do an injustice to the clients in education, the only people for whom the system was designed, the only reason that all of us are here in this room today, the education of our students. The system was designed for them. The system was not designed for those of us who work in it; not for teachers. The system was not designed to create jobs for teachers, or jobs for ministers of Education, or jobs for critics of education, or anyone in between those two levels.

The system was designed for students. Everything we ask ourselves about how the people in the system are evaluated and paid has to always have those students' needs in mind as No. 1 criteria, No. 1 priority. We have had other questions, such as, what is the relationship, if any, between experience, the number of years of employment, and performance? Do more years on the job make you a better person to do that job?

I would wage that, if asked, the opposition critic would say that the longer I stay on the job as minister, the worse things get. [interjection]

An Honourable Member: Well, there is maybe some truth in that.

Mrs. McIntosh: The member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale) has just made my case because he says there is some truth in that, and I thank him, and that quote will be used quite extensively, I guarantee it, because that is the point we make about the questions being raised by school boards when they say, if we have teachers who year after year simply reinforce bad habits and bad direction, should we have to pay them extra for that?

I thank the member for Burrows on behalf of the official opposition for putting on the record their position on it. If it is not their position, then I expect that the opposition would clarify that that is not their position,

and clarify it probably within the next statement. Otherwise, it will be assumed to be the position of the official opposition, and it will be extensively and widely quoted.

* (1050)

The other question we have is, what constitutes effective performance in education? What is effective performance? There are so many ways that you can answer that. What is quality education? There are so many ways that you can answer that. How do you determine effective performance? We know that one way that you do not determine effective performance is to never observe a class with a teacher in action, never observe the work that is being done in the classroom, never look to see if the children are actually being able to improve their own performance, never listen to complaints or concerns raised by parents about a particular teacher.

Those are some ways that you do not determine performance. What is the converse of those ways of not determining effective performance? That is a question that has been asked of us repeatedly and consistently over enough years for us to know that they must have some basis in reality for legitimate concern.

We are motivated right now, as I indicated, by questions, not answers. So the member will continue, I am sure, as she has in the first few questions, to draw the parallel between the civil service and the teachers, and to indicate that things that are happening in the civil service are things that may be, or may be not, the minister feels should be happening in the public school system.

I say those are good comparisons to make, but one has to consider, when they make those comparisons, the fact that you may not be comparing like occupations. There may be some things in the processes in government that could be well-utilized by divisions, or vice versa, but when you draw comparisons, do try to compare apples to apples and we will have much better comparisons by comparing like professions or the same profession in other jurisdictions than dissimilar professions.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Chairman, so I understand the answer to my question then is that when ceilings are reached,

that evaluation continues on an informal basis and that written reports are made on an as-needed basis.

The minister has suggested that we compare like professions and, of course, that is an important concept. The minister does not apparently believe there are any comparisons that are useful at this point between the civil service and the teaching profession, and she may be right in that. I think it requires probably more than the kind of discussion we are having here.

What I am trying to understand from the minister is what she does value in evaluation, what kind of procedure she thinks could be considered for the teaching profession.

She has, as she said, put out a document which caused considerable concern and has, I think, created a great deal of disunity in the teaching profession. So my concerns here are about evaluation procedures, the ones that are used in the department, the ones that are consistent with a system that has developed over 100 years essentially in civil services around the world.

I think some of the elements that the minister has suggested are different for teachers. She would be looking for observation, I think, she said, that if we are looking perhaps at the converse of what she did say, that we need a system where there are observations of teachers' work, that there are recommendations or an understanding that children will improve, or have improved, and that complaints are taken into account, listened to and dealt with. Those were the three elements I heard her say.

I wonder if the minister might comment perhaps on divisions in Manitoba where she believes that is not occurring.

Mrs. McIntosh: Mr. Chairman, I first want to indicate that we are off line. You know, every other question the member has asked so far has at least made some fleeting reference to the line in the Estimates. This last question does not even bother to make any fleeting reference to the line in the Estimates. So I would suggest that it would be helpful for me if we could stay on the lines because I need to have the appropriate staff here for the line by line.

What happens when the opposition goes off the lines, is that I either have to do what happened a couple of years ago where the minister of the day had to bring all the staff in and sit endlessly for hours because the opposition was jumping all over the place, or I have the wrong staff here and have to go out and get others and bring them in. So it would be appreciated if we could keep to the schedule so that the work of government, and the civil servants who work in it, is not so consistently disrupted by going off line.

While we sit here in Estimates arguing these fine points, civil servants are called away from their desks to be here with us, and there is a lot of work to be done. I do not want to have people sitting endlessly waiting or to have to bring people up in anticipation that we are going to consistently go off line. I do not think that is fair to the government or the people of Manitoba, and I think it would be better if we stayed on line. As long as the point she is raising bears some fleeting connection to the line, I am quite happy to answer it, but this last question did not.

I also need to put on the record, and I am sorry to be taking up time doing this, and yet I do need to correct all of the assumptions the member comes to when she comes to them, because they get on the record and they are assumed to be something that they are not. The member started off her question by doing what she always does, and it is really, perhaps—well, I will not insult.

The member indicated, the minister apparently does not believe that there are like professions in the civil service and in school divisions. Again, she draws an incorrect, erroneous assumption from comments that I have made. She comes to a conclusion and then on the basis of the conclusion to which she comes, formulates statements or questions. When the basic premise or the basic assumption or the erroneous conclusion is wrong, then the questions and the comments that she puts forward are meaningless and have no substance because they are based upon fog.

I did not indicate that I do not believe there are not like professions in the civil service and teachers. What I indicated is that the process laid down for civil servants and government employees is, in the main, a generic form of progression through a career and that it may not have application to school divisions.

The member knows full well that in a body as large as the provincial government, that the majority of people in that body will not be compared accurately or consistently to teachers. There will, however, be some that might be able to be compared. They would be in the minority in terms of numbers, but the system here was designed for a standard for the majority, and the majority is not compared to teachers.

For example, I sit here with my human relations head, a fine man who probably would relate very well to young people in a classroom, but the work that he does in helping decide where people are best placed within government is not like teaching Grade 3 mathematics. The secretary in my outer office, who I believe is superbly skilled as an executive secretary—one of the finest in government, in my opinion—with her knowledge of word processing and all of those things, telephone protocol. All of those things that she does so well may or may not be suited to teach in a classroom, but, certainly, one could never compare her job to that of a kindergarten teacher or a high school physics teacher. The comparisons cannot be made.

The majority of people in government fall into that category. There are some in government—a small number—where there might be some similarity between what they do and what teachers do and when I talk about the process of government being laid down in a generic way to meet the needs of the majority of government members whose jobs in the main are not like those in a classroom, I did not say nor did I imply that there is nobody in government that has a profession that might be similar to a teacher's and for the member to extrapolate from my comments that that is what I meant is to draw, once again, yet another erroneous conclusion.

* (1100)

So I would appreciate it, Mr. Chairman, having indicated that, if we could get back on line and at least have the questions bear some relevance or connection to the line under discussion.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Chair, I appreciate the minister's desire to use her staff efficiently, but I think the fine points that the minister suggested I was raising are indeed the public business. I think the public business, particularly when it relates to the kinds of comparisons

that have been drawn as a result of the public discussion the minister initiated, I think perhaps are worthy of discussion here and we can certainly continue them in other areas.

I would, secondly, point out that the issues I raised of observation, child improvements and listening to and reflecting upon and dealing with complaints were ones which the minister raised in her response to me.

So, Mr. Chairman, perhaps just for your consideration, it seems to me that what the minister is saying is that she is permitted to comment at will on what I say, but when I respond to what she says she can then say that it is not on this line and we are wasting the time of her staff. I do not think that is my intent, but I do believe it is my responsibility—

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Order, please.

Point of Order

Mrs. McIntosh: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman, I am responding to questions and concepts raised by the member. So if the member raises a point, I have an obligation to respond. She is the questioner. I am the one answering the questions. I am asking that the questions be relevant to the line and I will answer the questions and try to address the subtle nuances in the questions, the assumptions, the implications and the innuendos in the questions, and I will do that. But I believe the onus is upon the questioner to keep these questions on line.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: The honourable member for Wolseley, on the same point of order?

Ms. Friesen: Yes, on the same point of order, I think what the minister is saying is that she is requiring you to rule that I may not respond to issues that she raises in her response. It seems to me, you know, it is one hand clapping here. Could the Chairman perhaps rule on this, or would he perhaps like to take this under advisement?

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Order, please. I am ruling that the minister does not have a point of order.

I would say this, and ask all honourable members at the committee table, in the 1.(b) Executive Support (1)

Salaries and Employee Benefits, in the past, they have been allowed to have reasonably widespread questions. I would say to all honourable members at this table, though, that I would ask you not to—[interjection] No—expand that too, too much. Let us spend some time there, but if you could work with me on this thing, perhaps we can get through this line.

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Ms. Friesen: Mr. Chair, could the minister tell us how many of the Order-in-Council appointees are evaluated on an annual basis in this same way?

Mrs. McIntosh: All of them.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Chairman, could the minister tell us which of her staff that she laid out at the beginning are Order-in-Council appointees?

Mrs. McIntosh: The executive assistant and the special assistant—[interjection] Plus the deputies, of course. I just made the assumption that was known. The two deputies and the two assistants.

Ms. Friesen: So that would be Connie Hall and Beverley Hares, is it?

Mrs. McIntosh: Connie Hall, Beverley Hares, John Carlyle and Tom Carson.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Chairman, this is an area which has seen a change in staff this year, with the loss of one deputy minister and replacement by another. Could the minister tell us what the explanation for that is?

Mrs. McIntosh: The deputy minister of Advanced Education and Training was replaced by an Order-in-Council, as all deputy ministers are when deputies rotate, by the Premier (Mr. Filmon) of Manitoba.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Chairman, could the minister tell us why that last deputy minister in post-secondary education was let go by this government?

Mrs. McIntosh: I think some of these personnel matters, Orders-in-Council, of course, are different from the normal process that is undertaken in the civil service. I believe the member knows that, and I think some of

these personnel matters are really quite inappropriate to bring up in this setting.

Ms. Friesen: Well, I appreciate the minister's comments on this, but the removal of a deputy minister is an extraordinary event. This is not something which happens every year. It usually does not happen every 10 years. It is an extraordinary event. It is a deputy minister whom I understand, not just from members of the minister's own department, but from staff with whom he had worked in other areas of government, that this was a person who was very well respected, that he had brought a great deal to this government.

I remember the last Minister of Education, the previous Minister of Education, speaking very highly of this particular new deputy minister. He brought him in to deal with post-secondary education, expected great things, thought this was the right thing for the department to be doing, and the minister, in her comments last year, when I did question the appointment of two deputy ministers in one department, argued that this was what was needed and this was the right way to go. So it is a surprise that within a very short period of time and with a change of minister, this particular deputy minister has not simply been shuffled but that he was, I guess a euphemism that is still used is, let go. So it is an issue of policy in my mind, and I am looking for some explanation from the minister as to why that particular decision was taken.

Mrs. McIntosh: Yes, I am really very puzzled as to why the member implies that we have a change in policy here. I recall very clearly last year saying that what was needed and the right way to go—just quote the member exactly here. She said that last year I said having a deputy minister in post-secondary was what was needed and what was the right way to go, and I still believe that. We still have a deputy there, and it still is the right way to go. There is no change in policy. There is a change in person, but there is no change in policy. We still have a deputy minister in that capacity doing the job description that was indicated last year that I wanted done.

Last year the member said, will this be a permanent position? I said, absolutely. It is a permanent position. It has not been removed from government. The member did not say, will I forever and all time see the same person operating in that position? The member did not

ask that last year, and it was not a concern to her last year. She wanted to make sure there would be a deputy minister position. I assured her there would be. There still is. Never once last year did she ask for assurances that we would forever and all time have the same people in the same roles. She wanted assurance that the role would continue to exist, and it does. So, please, again I ask that the member not put incorrect assumptions on the record with every question. Because the personality of the individual in the position has been changed from one to another does not imply a change in policy, and it is not correct nor is it fair, nor is it completely and totally within the realm of honesty to indicate that I have changed a policy—

* (1110)

Point of Order

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Chairman, I think perhaps the minister did not choose her words perhaps as well as she might on second thought, and I think she was perhaps moving towards language which was unparliamentary and perhaps she might want to consider that.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: The honourable minister, would you like to withdraw part of your statement?

Mrs. McIntosh: Yes, Mr. Chairman, I do apologize most sincerely for having used the words about honesty. I was grasping for a word that would reflect—

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: I would like to thank the honourable minister.

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Mrs. McIntosh: As I said, Mr. Chairman, I do apologize. I am grasping for a word that I believe would accurately reflect what the member does when she draws conclusions that she knows absolutely are wrong conclusions and then puts them on the record implying that they are the truth when they are not. Maybe in her mind she believes them to be the truth—

Point of Order

Ms. Friesen: Yes, I think we need to conduct this discussion in a civil manner. I am doing my best to do that. The minister is suggesting there are a lot of

assumptions being made. I think the assumptions are the minister. I would prefer to keep this in a civil manner, and I think it would be better if the minister stuck to answering the questions.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: The honourable minister, would you like to withdraw a part of your statement?

Mrs. McIntosh: Yes, Mr. Chairman, I would. Once again, I have to apologize. I perhaps should maybe use the words right and wrong, and that does not then impute any motive.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: I would like to thank the honourable minister for withdrawing those words.

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Mrs. McIntosh: I will attempt to rephrase without impugning motives. The implications the member allows to go on the record are wrong. I am compelled—the member says would the minister please answer the question. Well, when wrong implications are put on the record I believe it is part of my duty as a cabinet minister to respond in a way that will correct the wrong information and make it right.

When the member says that because we changed people in the position of deputy minister that we changed policy, then I am compelled to correct that and say no policy has been changed, no need has gone unaddressed, no right way to go has been altered just because a different person is now doing that job.

The member I am sure knows that there was a mutual parting here of the ways. We are going into tremendous changes in post-secondary education. We are looking at establishing a council to oversee a system-wide, post-secondary education. We will be doing things differently than we have in the past. The member is quite right when she indicates that the former deputy had many good friends in the education system who thought most highly of him, and that is not being questioned.

The decision to have a new deputy is a matter that is always taken seriously. Every employee has strengths and weaknesses. We feel we are going into new directions, new changes. There are always skills to be matched and mixed, and the member knows that. We

believe the former deputy minister deserves our support for all the excellent work that he did. He has our respect, and I think he deserves the respect of those for whom he worked so hard during his time in government. Order-in-Council appointments are not subject to the same kind of scrutiny that the member would normally have for employees who are hired and have a degree of job security.

Those who take on Order-in-Council appointments know when they take them that there is no job security. In fact, when the hearings for teacher arbitration were going on, many people said that the Deputy Minister of Education earned too much money. I believe, in one of the debates that occurred there, someone else responded, yes, the Deputy Minister of Education earns more money than a high school principal, but then a high school principal not only has job security but has tenure, and the Deputy Minister of Education could be fired tomorrow because O/C appointments have no job security.

Therefore one of the things that people do when they take an Order-in-Council appointment is to weigh the \$100,000-type salary against the fact that there is absolutely no job security. That is known and understood when the positions are accepted. When the government and the deputy minister decide to come to a parting of the ways and that is their decision, that can be done by simply revoking the Order-in-Council. I think that when a person leaves government to go on and seek future careers, delving into some of these matters in terms of his own personal career and making them public in a matter of record is not really in the best interest of that person's future. I believe, as I indicated when I started, that some personnel matters are inappropriate to discuss publicly, particularly when in this instance if the member's concern is, was process followed?

The member knows absolutely that process in O/C appointments is very different from process in other appointments. Does the member have any concern about the process that was followed in an O/C being revoked or put in place? Because those, I think, are the only legitimate questions she has to ask in this line. Is there a flaw in the process with this O/C appointment of Tom Carson or the O/C revocation of the former deputy?

Ms. Friesen: I notice in her response the minister again raised Enhancing Accountability, but I gather this is

something that the minister does not want me to respond to. So I will not respond at this point—

Point of Order

Mrs. McIntosh: Mr. Chairman, my comment was absolutely relevant, because I was not talking about the Enhancing Accountability document. I was talking about a comment that was made at those hearings referring to the deputy minister's salary and whether or not the deputy minister's salary should be the level that it is. The response that was given was, the deputy minister's salary should be the level it is because the deputy minister has no job security. It was totally and absolutely relevant to the question. It happened to take place at those hearings, and those hearings were only referenced to indicate the setting in which the totally relevant comments were made. The member has no point of order.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: I will determine if there is a point of order. The minister does not have a point of order. The honourable member for Wolseley, for her questions.

Ms. Friesen: No, the same point of order.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: The honourable member for Wolseley on a point of order that I ruled already is not a point of order. The honourable member for Wolseley, to continue her questions.

* * *

* (1120)

Ms. Friesen: My concern is with the loss of a deputy minister who had built up some experience in this area and the consequences for the department of changing deputy ministers at this stage in post-secondary education when there is a transition period that is being made. Of course, my concern again, as I said earlier, is that this is an extraordinary situation. I did not question the procedures or indeed the evaluations, or indeed is this related to any personal issues or personality issues of either of the deputy ministers, the former one or the incoming or present one? It is really a sense of, why did the government do this? Why did it do it at this time? Why did it decide that a deputy minister whose work had

been satisfactory and who was in a department which was in quite considerable transition not just in the post-secondary area but in Workforce 2000 and in apprenticeship, why did that happen now? It is an extraordinary thing, and I think something that perhaps should be drawn to the attention, in a sense, of the public record.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Order, please. In making the ruling just a minute ago, I did not explain that it was simply a dispute over the facts. The honourable minister, to answer the question for the member for Wolseley.

Mrs. McIntosh: I already have answered the question. I have indicated that we are undergoing massive change in the system. We know, the member knows, that there are people who have wonderful talents and abilities for maintaining systems. We have people who have wonderful talents and abilities for changing systems, we have people who have wonderful talents and abilities for making systems smaller or making systems bigger, and the member should know that the person who is skilled and excellent at doing one particular task, that there may be somebody who can do a different sort of a task better.

Is she saying that government should, once a deputy by O/C is in place, that that deputy by O/C should remain in place ad infinitum, you know, because I think that is what she is implying, that unless we can justify to the opposition why a particular deputy is no longer in a position, that we should continue with that deputy ad infinitum. The whole nature of an Order-in-Council removes it from that type of scrutiny. As I say, the risk to the person becoming a deputy is high; there is no job security. That is why, as they say in the vernacular, they get the big bucks. They take tremendous responsibility upon their shoulders with no guarantee of job security; it has always been that way.

I believe the NDP might like to go back and check their records of the days when they were in government. I know the opposition member was not in government, nor was the other opposition member with her today in government at the time that there might have been similar changes made by the NDP governments. I would be very interested in having her examine the Hansard in Estimates to see how the NDP government of the day answered questions about deputies who were suddenly no longer deputies. I think she might find such a

comparison very interesting indeed and very revealing, typical of the kinds of things that happen so often when you are in government and have to be accountable and when you are in opposition and have no need to be accountable.

It is very easy when you are in opposition to sit and point at all the flaws—which is great. We need to have flaws pointed out, we need to have questions pointed out. Unfortunately, we also need to have some solutions suggested. It is just as with the time that the federal government indicated they were going to give \$180 million to Manitoba, and the opposition stood up and said, you are going to have \$180 million coming, we have been told verbally, therefore spend it on this, spend it on that, spend it on the other thing, and they end up spending about \$300 million on—they spent that \$180 million over and over and—

An Honourable Member: Relevance?

Mrs. McIntosh: It is relevant. I will prove the relevancy in a moment. They spent that \$180 million over and over, and we kept saying, wait until you see the colour of their money, boys. Just because they said they are going to give it does not mean we are going to get it. Then of course we did not get the money but had they been in government, they would have spent it all, and if they did not get it they would have added that to the debt that they already left us.

So what I am trying to say is, it is easy to sit there and ask questions, but when you are in government you have responsibilities. I would suggest, for example, that the NDP government might like to go back and tell us the rationale that they presented forward for dismissing Ron MacIntosh as Deputy Minister of Education. Would you please go back and indicate why you did not give any public accounting as to why you dismissed Ron MacIntosh, a fine deputy minister, who had lots of respect in the field, had all kinds of accolades for his abilities. He was dismissed overnight on the revocation of an O/C and no public accounting was given by the NDP as to why they did that. I cannot imagine why they did it, such a fine person with an experienced background, highly thought of in the field.

(Mr. Gerry McAlpine, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair)

I guess what I am just pointing out is that what is good for the goose, in terms of the NDP jargon, is never good for the gander. They can revoke O/Cs and feel that there is no need to give a public explanation and decline to give a public explanation and then they can come in—it was sheer, unmitigated gall—a demand that this government provide for them what they would never provide for the opposition when they were in government, a very, very inconsistent approach. There is an old saying that chutzpah, chutzpa, real true chutzpa is defined and exemplified by the person who having murdered his parents throws himself at the mercy of the court because he is an orphan, and that kind of chutzpa I see sometimes surfacing.

Relevance—very relevant, because what I am indicating is a double standard. You dismiss a deputy on an O/C overnight with no public explanation and yet then come with chutzpa and ask me to do what you declined to do, not you yourself, but the government with which you are aligned, your predecessors in government, your current Leader, who was a member of government at the time.

So I guess maybe what I could say is, I am simply following precedents set by you. Having answered that question, and I believe that that question has now been answered, earlier the member asked about other changes in my office. I will indicate that we had one secretary who wanted to move to a half-time job, and she has done that. So she has been replaced and moved on to that other job, and we have a new secretary there. One secretary had a name change. It is the same person, it is just a different last name, so that information is there.

Ms. Friesen: I think we have a situation here where this deputy minister had served the government for eight years and then there was a very sudden change. I think it seems that the minister is not prepared to answer any further questions on this, but I think, unfortunately, she has left on the record an implication, and she might want to correct that. She has said that there are skills for maintaining skills, for expanding skills, for bringing change to skills or talents, I think was the term she used, for different aspects of government policy for downsizing, et cetera, although she did not use the word “downsizing,” but for reducing.

I assume that the minister is not leaving on the record any sense that it was a particular mismatch of skill

between this deputy minister and the government's requirements that led to the sudden change of personnel.

* (1130)

Mrs. McIntosh: For once and at long last, the member has made a correct assumption. I think we should note it in the history books. I was talking generically in terms of reasons that O/C appointments are changed. That was a generic statement, not referencing any particular individual, and, again, I have to correct—I am sorry I have to keep making these corrections, but I do—when she indicates that Ron MacIntosh was a different situation because the deputy who had been here, the deputy that is no longer deputy, had been a deputy for eight years, and that Ron MacIntosh had not, I submit that Ron MacIntosh had been Deputy Minister of Education for many, many years—many years more than the immediate past deputy had been Deputy Minister of Education. The immediate past deputy had been Deputy Minister of Education for only two years. Ron MacIntosh had been Deputy Minister of Education for much longer than that when the NDP revoked his O/C with no explanation.

The only point I am trying to make is that, when you take a man like Ron MacIntosh, who had all the fine attributes that were attributed to the deputy that has recently parted from government, and the NDP, again with the double standard, and that is part of the problem that we have, the double standard that is constantly presented. You dismiss Ron MacIntosh summarily as a government, revoke the O/C with no explanation after many, many years of fine service, highly respected, highly respected to this day in the field. You do that with no explanation and are not willing to offer an explanation, and yet when an O/C is revoked under this government as O/Cs can be without explanation, you then demand of this government the things that you were not willing to demand of yourselves.

That double standard is seen so often, and if you expect me, via your questions, to conduct a performance appraisal here and now in the middle of Estimates of the person under question, I will not do it, because I think all of us owe that individual more respect than that. I think, as I indicated, it is inappropriate for the Minister of Education to be asked to do a public performance appraisal in Estimates on an individual who is no longer an employee of government, who accepted an Order-In-

Council appointment as all deputies do, with the knowledge and the understanding that Order-In-Council appointments carry with them no job security whatsoever.

I think, Mr. Chairman, I have answered this question. I have pointed out the double standard. I have pointed out the process was absolutely without question and that we wish the former deputy all the very best in his future career, and we do not wish to see this kind of discussion about his capabilities and performance put him in any way in any kind of discomfort. We do not do this with other employees and with O/Cs we do not have any obligation to, and certainly I do not see her asking me about clerical workers or other people who may also not be with the government and I would like to know why she feels they are not as valuable to the system in terms of the work that they do. I just do not think this is the proper place to do performance evaluations. I really do not.

Ms. Friesen: My questions dealt with policy issues. They dealt with the possibility of differences in policies between the minister and her former deputy. The minister has chosen to put a number of things on record which, I think, were quite unnecessary, and again I emphasize that I would like to keep these Estimates at a relatively civil level. I think perhaps if we stick to the questions and the answers, it seems to me that when a deputy in an area of government which has been downsized considerably, the post-secondary education area in terms of the staffing of this department, and when that deputy is let go, I would be remiss in my duty as the Education critic to not ask questions on the public record about the reasons for that. I think the minister should take those questions in that context, and we will simply leave it at that, but I do not think that this process is going to be furthered by the kinds of personal comments and assumptions that the minister rushes to. Again, all I can say is, let us conduct this at a civil level and let us stick to the questions and the answers. Let us remember what the role of a public record is and what the role of Her Majesty's loyal opposition is in this process of government.

Mrs. McIntosh: Mr. Chairperson, I am vastly relieved to hear the member now adopt that attitude because I think it is critically important that we do. I think it is quite important that we be civil, that questions not be

filled with innuendo, assumptions and statements that call into question our mutual desire as government and opposition to do the best for the students of Manitoba. So I am vastly relieved to hear that she will no longer be asking questions that have those innuendoes in them, that they will be straightforward questions that come straight to the point without snide little remarks about, well, you have dismissed a deputy so you have changed your policy, which she knows is not correct. I am glad that she will no longer put those personal comments and those incorrect assumptions into her statement because I agree they do then go on the record.

So I thank her very much for agreeing to bring this to a higher level of straightforward, clean, constructive questions devoid of the innuendo. Once she starts to do that, and I will see her do that in the next question I am sure, then she can be assured that my responses will, again, echo the questions she has put forward. I will respond to her in the same vein with which she asked the questions. The questions start with her, the response ends with me. My response will always reflect the tone, the timbre and the insinuations that are in the question. If they are good, the answers will be good, and, if they are not good, the answers will be the same tone as the question.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Chairman, again, the minister cannot resist a personal attack, and I do not know how many more times I have to say this. It is not personal. May I, Mr. Chairman, ask the minister about another member of her department, somebody whom I speak to fairly frequently on the phone, and that is Mr. Masters. Where is his line in this department?

Mrs. McIntosh: Mr. Chairman, his staff line you will find appearing under the Colleges Secretariat.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Chairman, could the minister explain the job description of Mr. Masters? I do deal with him on a number of issues which seem to range mostly over the K-12 area rather than post-secondary. So I am surprised to find that it is elsewhere. Could the minister explain the job description?

(Mr. Deputy Chairperson in the Chair)

Mrs. McIntosh: We are off line, but I do not mind deviating from that line in this instance. I know the

member had indicated she would stay on line, but I do not mind.

Mr. Masters is doing the majority of his work with the post-secondary side of the branch. As you know, he is the immediate past chairman of the Universities Grants Commission. He is a former member of the Board of Governors of the University of Manitoba and has credentials in that vein on the post-secondary side. However, because we have the bulk of work that we have in K to 12, all staff have been pitching in and assisting. Mr. Masters also has considerable experience in K to 12, having been past president of the Manitoba Teachers' Society, a school principal, former executive assistant to the Minister of Education and a wide variety of background experiences such as that.

* (1140)

So Mr. Masters has on his form: And other duties as assigned. He frequently will assist with phone calls from members of the opposition or members of the public that are in areas where he would have some knowledge and expertise such as school management, those kinds of issues, but his main duties are with the post-secondary side of the department, and we do appreciate his wide-ranging expertise and his willingness to take on all those other duties as assigned. I should indicate that I find him a most valued member of my staff, frequently working till 11, 12 o'clock at night, frequently in to spend his whole day Saturday working on issues in the department, a very valued person.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Masters then is an Order-in-Council appointee on the minister's staff but primarily for post-secondary education.

Mrs. McIntosh: Mr. Masters is an O/C appointment. He is a term employee, pardon me. He is not an O/C appointment. He is a term employee with the government of Manitoba, and he has been with the department since last summer, June or July of '95. I do not remember the exact date.

His primary responsibilities or the place where he does most of his work is in the post-secondary side of the department. As you know, we will be soon announcing the establishment of the council on post-secondary education in Manitoba. That will see the Universities

Grants Commission and the Colleges Secretariat rolled under the council. We have an interim transition committee working in the meantime. We have a lot of work to be done in preparation for that.

As well, we have many linkages now being formed in terms of articulation between colleges and universities and between colleges and high schools. That linkage is important as well. What was the other part of your question? Was he an O/C appointment? No, he is a term employee, and his duties are primarily post-secondary, although other duties as assigned see him frequently doing work in the K to Senior 4 area as well.

Ms. Friesen: Just a final question on that is, which line do I find his salary under?

Mrs. McIntosh: I am informed it will be 16.6.

Ms. Friesen: Thank you. I think 16.6 has a couple of sections. Could the minister ask her staff for which section that is?

Mrs. McIntosh: 16.6(b)(1).

Ms. Friesen: I want to pass the mike to the member for the **Maples**, but I have some other questions on this line as well.

Mr. Kowalski: I think there will be a line further in the **Estimates**, but when you were talking about assessments earlier, of staff, I just wanted to put some comments on the record. For the time that I was on the police force, we went through a number of assessment processes, and one thing, as a supervisor, as a sergeant who did assessments on people, it was always frustrating, the amount of time and energy that had to go into it, that it took away from other duties that I was also doing. So I had a choice of whether to do a poor assessment, because if you are going to do assessment properly you have to keep records throughout the year. You have to bring up the good points and bad points when they occur. You have to document them. You have to formulate them into a reporting structure, and then you have to follow up any recommendation and plans.

Because the discussion varied a little bit, I am going to take a little bit of leeway because other members did. When you go into the assessment of teachers, one thing

I hope the minister and her staff are considering any plans for any mandatory assessment structure, to consider the amount of resources and time that it will take. Whether it be administrators, teacher team leaders, whoever does that assessment, that is going to take a lot of time. In the past year, with the standardized testing, we have taken educators away from a teaching function, a student contact function, to an administrative function, a testing function, which, you know, you could make an argument that testing is related to teaching. Now here another one that we might possibly be adding is this assessment function and, again, one more bureaucratic function that takes educators away from their primary purpose, and that is education.

My question simply put is, have the minister and her staff, in their discussions and considerations, taken this into consideration?

Mrs. McIntosh: I indicate yes, because of all the questions that get asked in terms of, what do you need to do out there in the system, you weigh the pros and cons. We start with a principle in making any decisions. Let us say for the sake of discussion on the point that you have raised, that we say there is a principle that teachers should be given the privilege of a regular performance evaluation and pick a time like once a year or once every two years or whatever the appropriate time is determined to be. Once you have decided on the principle, then you go from that and you say, how can we do this without wasting time, how can we do this without disrupting classroom time, how can we do this without getting so heavy into the administrative bureaucracy type thing that we are getting away from teaching? What are the pros and cons of doing it this way or that way? How, in essence, then can we achieve this principle in such a way that the students in the system ultimately benefit?

Always that last question has to be the question, how will the students ultimately benefit from this thing that we feel we need to do in the system? So that question is sort of a guiding criterion that has been behind all decisions we have been making. It is always tested against, how will the students ultimately benefit?

We know that sometimes we make decisions on our way to the ultimate benefit of students, that we may upset certain interest groups along the way, and we want to minimize that. We want to make sure that all of those

who are in the system ultimately feel that the system is enriching their lives as well, but we must never forget who the system was created for.

* (1150)

If I may, Mr. Chairman, make a quick response to the member for The Maples' (Mr. Kowalski) opening comments, I wanted to say two things. One, I very much appreciate, and I want it to go on the record, the member for The Maples' style. He and I, as I say, do not always agree on the issues, although we do agree on some, but those areas with which we do have disagreement, I have found that the member for The Maples has been very constructive in his comments.

He mentioned that we often bump into each other late at night in the hallways, and when he said that he indicated that—I will clarify that—when he is working hard in his office and I in mine, but he paid me a compliment which I wish to return, in that he said I work late, but the only reason he only knows that is because he too works late. The reason he sees me coming out of my office at midnight is because he is coming out of his at midnight, so I know he puts in long hours, but it is more than that.

I know that there have been issues come up in education where the member has had a concern and he has come to me and asked for assistance and I, without condemnation, without imputing motives, without sly innuendoes or any of those things that we sometimes see in this adversarial setup that government has, the member from The Maples (Mr. Kowalski), while he presents criticism and raises difficult questions, always does so, in my opinion, as a way of trying to get to an improved solution, not to try to score political points or to try to demean the government that I am sure he would like to have control of someday. I mean, I know that his party would like someday to be government.

I am pleased to see that on your way to following that quest, you do not at the same time demean and impugn motives to those who currently govern. I think a lot of critics could take your example as the best way to be a critic—constructive, positive, firm, and not necessarily making my job any easier by some of the questions you ask, but I thank you for the dignity and the obvious concern with which they are put.

You had indicated in your opening remarks, to one of the points of criticism that you made, that in terms of cuts, federal cuts, that we need to get over it and start making the adjustments, and I understand that and I agree. You used the example about, you know, it is not always wrong to have a MasterCard or to have a mortgage, et cetera, and again I agree. The only thing I would indicate that where we do, as we often do, say, when members of the opposition will say, you are cruel and unkind because you cut funding to education by 2 percent and you do not care about students, you only care about your big wealthy corporate friends, then by way of explanation we indicate we are faced with fiscal realities.

We have, I believe, been fairly consistent in indicating that we do not disagree with the premise the federal government has to get their financial house in order. We know that the federal government has a huge financial problem and that they must get it under control if the rest of us are to survive. We do not quarrel with their premise; we do quarrel with their priorities. When we are asked why we have been so unkind and cruel as to be not spending the same amount of money as we used to spend on certain areas, we explain this because we have far less revenue than we used to have. We will from time to time question the priorities of the federal government but never their basic premise of having to get their financial house in order. If people, in raising criticisms to us about funding cuts, would cease blaming us for not having any money, we would not even have to make the explanation.

So I just wanted to clarify that and indicate that, yes, a MasterCard and a mortgage are not bad things in and of themselves. They become bad when the MasterCard begins to be used in unwise ways and when you get MasterCard, Visa, American Express, and Enroute, and all of them to the limit all at the same time when your income does not allow you to be able to make all the payments. I am not saying that about the member's personal finances because I know and I believe that everybody in this room would have a credit card of some part that is used wisely in order to make purchases that are felt to be wise purchases, sort of the buy-now, pay-later plan, which is part of a mortgage, a household mortgage.

The difference between us and the previous government here in Manitoba, the NDP

government—because I have heard the Leader of the official opposition (Mr. Doer) make the same point, well, you have a mortgage on your house, what is the difference?—the difference is that most everybody who has a mortgage on their house works to pay it down.

I would hazard a guess that if there is any person in this room that has a mortgage on their house that what they are working to do is to pay the mortgage off. They always have that end viewpoint that eventually they will pay the mortgage off. The previous government just kept taking out a second mortgage. They get the mortgage down to a certain point and then they just borrow some more, take out a second mortgage, and we think that has to stop. Anyhow, I will leave it at that. That is in response to the member's opening remarks.

Mr. Kowalski: Thank you for the positive comments. I will try and get back on line, but I know the minister meant those positive comments with the best intentions but probably they are the kiss of death with the media, who like people who criticize the government and bring up the, you know, the dirt. It does not help me probably due to my inexperience as a politician to cause that. Maybe I will learn to be very confrontational and that in the future, and maybe that is what you have to do as a good opposition politician. Also, having been a police officer, I know the tactic of good cop, bad cop, and the minister has played both roles here today.

Going back to assessment and related to the minister's staff, I am going to get the advantage of their expertise and knowledge here. My fundamental knowledge of management techniques was in motivation that pay, increases in pay, annual increases were found not to be a very good motivator of people. They are very short term.

The impact they have on that person is just very temporary. Only if they do not get it, it is a negative, it is not a motivator. It is a deinceptive if people do not get that. Is that still in the latest studies and the latest academic studies? Is that still true as a management technique, that increases in pay is not a good motivator of people?

Mrs. McIntosh: Just for clarification. You are talking now about in the civil service or in the school?

Mr. Kowalski: Well, anywhere.

Mrs. McIntosh: Anywhere. Mr. Chairman, I should indicate that first of all an employee needs to feel that they have been adequately compensated for their work. One of the things, I think, in the engineering ceremony when they are given their ring amongst all the ethical things to which they commit is, they commit themselves to accept without—I am not sure of the wording—but just compensation for their honourable work or words to that effect. I cannot recall it exactly. So certainly people need to feel that they are adequately compensated for the work that they do.

Adequate will mean something different to people, but there will be a range, I think, that could be identified for most people in terms of the work that they do. Doctors would see a range, for example, that would be a higher range than a school teacher just because of the fact that they literally take life in their hands when they are doing surgery if they are surgeons.

But having said that, money, I agree with you, is not the main motivator, and it is one of the questions we have been asking in the public school system: Are there other reward structures in schooling versus other performances? For example, extracurricular activities, time during the workday to do work that other people might take home in a briefcase at night, those kinds of things. What are rewards that you can build in? If, say, a social worker has to take a briefcase home at night to do work at night and the teachers do not, is that a reward that they have been given, or is it just part of the working conditions? We do not know.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Order, please. I will give the minister time to finish her response after we go for dinner. The hour being twelve noon, the committee will recess until 1 p.m.

The committee recessed at 12 noon.

After Recess

The committee resumed at 1 p.m.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: 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 Education and Training.

When the committee last sat, it had been considering item 1.(b)(1) on page 34 of the Estimates book. The honourable minister to complete her response—how about if we just continue on. I believe the honourable member for Wolseley was going to have some questions on this line until the honourable member for The Maples (Mr. Kowalski) comes back.

Ms. Friesen: I want to try some questions under the auspices of this section of the department providing policy and implementation advice to the minister. The minister is probably aware that I asked to look at the submissions, the written submissions, to the Norrie commission, those that were made to the second Norrie commission over the summer. Our staff was told on two different occasions, and I was indirectly told by a member of the Archives staff on a third occasion, that these reports, these written submissions, were confidential. When I spoke to Mr. Masters later on, I was finally, I think, told that they were not confidential, except for one or two items, and I am not sure in fact that those were actually removed from the set of documents.

I wondered what was behind that because it seemed to me that there was a policy issue here that the minister then continued in the issue of the Enhancing Accountability, that the written submissions to Enhancing Accountability were not to be available to the public except under Freedom of Information. If the minister may remember, I asked her this question in the House and in the House she said that, of course, they were available, and it was not a question of Freedom of Information, that is, the Enhancing Accountability written submissions. But, in fact, the minister had written to me with a letter that seemed to say the exact opposite, that written submissions would only be viewed under Freedom of Information, and I believe that letter has been published, I think, in one of the northern newspapers, perhaps in The Pas.

I remain puzzled, and I am looking for two things. One is the whole issue of the confidentiality of the Boundaries Commission. Are they open generally to

members of the public? Secondly, what is the minister's policy on the written submissions to Enhancing Accountability.

Mrs. McIntosh: Mr. Chairman, I do not recall having written to a northern paper and if the member would be good enough to provide me with a copy of that letter I will recall what she said, but I do not recall writing to a paper on this issue of reports or letters or whatever being public or confidential. So if you could provide me with that letter I am positive I did not write—the only letter that I have written to the editor as minister was one letter correcting some misinformation that was given out about the arbitration paper indicating that we had no place in the paper nor did we intend to effect rollbacks to current collective agreements of 10 percent. That letter was sent out in March to newspapers, but it was not on this topic. So if you could provide me with that, I will have a better sense of what you are talking about.

In the meantime, I should indicate that there are two kinds of submissions or two kinds of correspondence that will come to the minister on the topic that she is referring to, the Norrie commission and the arbitration paper. There are those written submissions that were intended to be presented publicly, so it might be someone who put a submission in because they could not appear in person or whatever, but they intended it to be a public presentation. Those there should be no trouble whatsoever in obtaining without having to go to Freedom of Information.

Then there are letters that come to the minister that are written to the minister by individuals who might say something in terms of an opinion on these topics but that were clearly written in such a way that I am convinced that those individuals would be extremely upset if they thought I then turned around and kind of gave them to someone who could then turn around and give them to the Winnipeg Sun or put them on the record at Hansard or something. So there are two categories in writings, and then there will be ones that are in between that you are not quite sure about when you read them if they were intended to be personal letters that the writer expected to have in confidence or written documents that they expected to be released and made public.

So I think in the beginning with a venture of this sort, the department took the side of caution rather than

inadvertently release something that was written confidentially. They considered as personal correspondence those things addressed to me and sent to my office and, clearly, those that were sent to the Boundaries Commission or sent as official responses to Norrie or to the arbitration panel would be in a far different category from those. So I do not know if that indicates in terms of intent—if there is some confusion, I am quite happy to have that confusion clarified in some way, because we do not want people who had submissions that they are quite happy to be public to have their submissions withheld from the public if they have no objection to them going out.

On the other hand, when people write a confidential letter based on their own experience, drawing conclusions about either the arbitration paper or the Boundaries Review, and it is clear from the nature of the letter that they are sharing a personal experience that they really would not want public, and they have given no permission to make it public, all of those are considered third-party correspondence. The Freedom of Information Act, which the member I believe would be familiar with because it was drafted by her party, indicates some very clear comments about third-party correspondence or third-party writings, that they can only be released with the permission or at the request of the third party itself.

So we are simply applying The Freedom of Information Act exactly the way the NDP drafted it, applying it according to the way in which the NDP drafted it, and I think the NDP drafted that legislation consciously the way they did to make sure that no Manitoba citizen inadvertently had his or her privacy subject to any risk. Now, if it has happened that in trying to abide by the intent of the legislation which was to allow private citizens to gain access to information that might be on record about themselves or to allow people access to government documents that they think might be in the best interests of the public to know, if that intent is to be followed, then it is prudent of us to make sure we do not inadvertently—we would rather err on the side of caution and not release people's writings than inadvertently release it, but that is not to say we are not willing to make public things that are written that we think were intended to be public or that the writers maybe do not mind having go public. There might be someone who wrote to me privately who would have no objection to it being made public.

* (1310)

There is also the issue of cost, as the member knows, and that is why Freedom of Information Act legislation which her party drafted makes statements about paying for things, because there is the issue of cost. It is no problem, we can always add to the cost of government to photocopy reams of paper for the public if it is something that Freedom of Information allows us to do.

So there is no desire to withhold information that people wanted to go out, and if there is some confusion in messages going out, and if there is any way we can clarify it, we would be pleased to do that. If you have any suggestions in that regard, I would be most pleased to consider them because it is not our intent to keep people in the dark at all.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Chairman, I think there are two different issues here. One is correspondence to the minister which is dealt with in a particular way, and the minister has outlined the principles that she follows under that.

But I think there is a second issue here, and that is submissions to a public commission of inquiry. That is really my concern with both the Enhancing Accountability and the Norrie commission. Both of those commissions held hearings over a relatively short period of time and encouraged written submissions in order to compensate for that, and I am speaking specifically of the second Norrie commission and the recent Enhancing Accountability.

It seems to me that when submissions are submitted to a public commission of inquiry or a consultation, is there not, and I am looking for some guidance from the minister and her staff on this, an assumption that those are public documents?

Mrs. McIntosh: Mr. Chairman, I think the member raises a very good point in her comments, and it might be of assistance if we indicated that the approach that we are currently taking with the accountability paper we feel is the approach that will address the balance that she is seeking. With the Norrie report, as the member may recall, while the department took the side of caution initially, the department did eventually come to the conclusion that anything that was addressed, that had on

the front, you know, to the Norrie commission—even if it was sent to me as a letter, we did forward them on to Norrie—should be available for public perusal.

With the accountability paper we were taking the approach that anything submitted in writing that said, this is a submission to the hearings, anything that was addressed to them would be considered to be deemed that the writer intended to have it be public. More than that, if letters were sent to me that appear to be in that category where they would write, you know, Dear Mrs. McIntosh, I have these views on what should be done in terms of the questions raised in the paper, and they do not cite any personal involvement with a student or a child or anything like that, that they were simply sort of factual, objective things sent to address the panel's concerns, that those types of items could also be made public and that we would only retain as confidential those very clearly personal letters where they cite problems they have had with an existing process that affects them as individuals. Those we will still consider private. But I think that approach will address what the member is seeking to have addressed. She raises a good point. It is a legitimate concern, and hopefully if we take the approach that anything written that either says it is to be considered a submission or appears to be written in such a way that one could logically draw that conclusion would be seen then as, in fact, official response to the hearings and therefore available for public perusal.

There is one other category and that is if someone sends in something, no matter what its content, if it is stamped personal and confidential, even if it appears to be a written submission, if it has got personal and confidential, for your eyes only, then I would consider it to be that out of respect for the writer.

Ms. Friesen: My concern is that there be a public discussion in Manitoba and that people in Flin Flon, for example, know what is being said about the same issue in southern Manitoba or in western Manitoba. I think, perhaps, one way to address this in the future is to ensure that public discussions of this kind have an introduction at the beginning that says, written submissions are accepted, always. Written submissions are part of the public record. I think that would be helpful.

I think the second thing that is important is that that discussion be reflected back to the people. When we did

the constitutional committee, and admittedly that was much longer, and it was certainly a great deal more expensive, we prepared summaries of the discussions that could be distributed to public libraries, and they were, and they were read.

Has the minister prepared summaries of the Boundaries Commission, first of all? Then, we will look at accountability.

Mrs. McIntosh: Mr. Norrie did a summation in his report, and I believe that he made every effort to sum up the contents of the submission as accurately as he could. I understand what the member is saying, and I think it is important that as much information as possible go out, but there are some problems, and I will maybe just indicate what a few of them are so that it might help in understanding.

For example, if we take the fact that the Manitoba Teachers' Society had an official position on the arbitration paper, and most of the submissions to the panel, of course, would constitute a reflection of that position. It would be the rare teacher who felt differently, who would have enough courage to come forward and take a public position indicating a difference, although some did.

It is entirely possible, and I am not indicating any break in confidentiality here, that there may well be many educators who disagree fairly strongly with their union, who would choose to write a learned dissertation of some sort to the minister that, when read, would appear to be a straightforward learned dissertation on the issue, who most often in their correspondence would indicate that they would like it to be kept confidential, but, who, for the sake of the fact that they all have to belong to the same association and work together, would prefer that their comments that may take a different position from their unions and offer advice in contravention to the union position, that they would prefer that that not then be released and be made available to the Manitoba Teachers' Society; or, conversely there may be trustees—although maybe there are not as many trustees as there are teachers so the imbalance might be for that reason.

Let us say there was a trustee who disagreed with the trustees association position and would prefer not to have to go to the next meeting of trustees and have to

work with peers when that person came out in opposition to their board's corporate position.

So there are those kinds of reasons that people who would prefer that they want to get the information to the minister and yet they desire confidentiality. I am reluctant to reach that expectation of confidentiality for two reasons.

One, I think it will stop the people from writing to me with what they really think. If people think that everything they write to the minister is going to be immediately turned over to the public so that (a) it can appear in the pages of the newspaper or (b) more meaningful to some of them, that it be sent back to the particular organizations of which they are members to cause them tension maybe with those with whom they interact on a regular basis might prevent me from hearing some personal opinions and private thoughts of people.

Secondly, I guess just on principle, for all my life, I have always taken the attitude that unless someone gives me permission, I do not take letters that have been sent to me from anybody and give them to anybody else unless I know that they are comfortable with me doing it.

* (1320)

So I think the approach we are taking now which will make assumptions that if there is no confidentiality requested and it appears to be a straightforward offering of opinion on a subject and we are confident that the release of this will not get the individual into trouble with any particular organization—or not into trouble, that is not the right phraseology—but maybe create tensions in the workplace for them, then that information would be made available. I think the member understands what I am trying to say in a diplomatic way about that very difficult balance between the desire to be as public and open as you can, which we will make every effort to do and at the same time the respecting of people's privacy. It is a fine line and we will try to do our best, because we do appreciate the point she is making.

Ms. Friesen: But, again, we are looking at two different issues here. The minister has spoken of submissions to the minister and those are dealt with in a very different way and can be held confidentially, can be dealt with under a whole series of Freedom of Information rules that

are the same for everyone. My point really is public commissions, submissions to public commissions. I think what is being confused is the difference between a letter to a minister and a letter to a public commission. What I am trying to do is to ensure that in the future there be no confusion of those crossings of lines and that public commissions, in fact, have a rider in them that says public submissions are welcomed, public submissions are part of a public record and that if people want to write confidential letters, they do not write them to the commission, they write them to the minister. In that way, they can be treated in a very different way.

Mrs. McIntosh: I think it is a good question and an important point. I believe I did indicate and I agree with the member that public submissions to hearings should be made public either in summative form or in their entirety depending upon the length.

The one point that does happen sometimes, however, and somehow I think this has to be taken into account as well, is that there will from time to time be private letters written to commissions—

Ms. Friesen: That is my question. Should there be?

Mrs. McIntosh: Well, it is hard to control. We could say, everything that is presented to the commission will be made public, and I think, by and large, that would hold with no problem. I would say in 95 percent of the cases that would be no problem, but then there will always be people who will send in a confidential letter. I believe it happens on a fairly regular basis. They will say: I am writing to the commission in confidence without prejudice just to say, because I was listening to the hearings, and I heard this and this and this; I have to tell you my point of view, but I do not want to appear in public, and I would appreciate my submission being held in confidence.

If that happens and it is spelled out specifically that they want it to be held in confidence then I think it should be, because you do want to get back all the feedback you can. Maybe there is a way of doing this in that you could say, unless submissions are specifically identified as being confidential, those submitting should assume their documents will become public and that way then people know that if they write they can expect it to be public. If they do not expect it to be public they are

going to have to indicate an expressed request for confidentiality and that might get around it.

Most people who make a submission to a panel want their position to become public. The vast majority will make a presentation at the hearing in order for their comments to be part of the public record. We found that with the public hearings on the accountability document that teachers in great abundance wanted to have their opinions on the record even though they knew the point they were making had already been made sometimes word for word the same as an earlier presenter. They still wanted to have it put on the record to show that they too agreed with that perspective. It was very important to them that their words be heard publicly, and I think that would hold true for most cases.

Ms. Friesen: I think we probably have a difference of opinion on this and it is probably something that certainly in my case I would want to talk to Archives and Freedom of Information people about, because it seems to me that if you had put something like that in each of these papers, that is, in advance, that public submissions were publicly available, confidential letters go to the minister, that you might in fact have a different kind of setup. I think what I need to know is or what Manitobans need to know is that when they see the public record of a public commission, they have got the whole thing. The minister may say that 5 percent is confidential. That is probably a high estimate for the kinds of ones that we are talking about, but unless we lay that out in advance and unless we are clear about it we will never know.

There may be one commission where that then becomes 30 percent, and maybe the commissioners make their judgment upon that 30 percent rather than the other 70 percent. Now, the kind of commissioners we appoint, of course, we do not expect them to do that, but the public record is the public record. There is a level of accountability in the public record that I think Manitobans want to maintain, so I am really just flagging it for the minister.

I think the problems I ran into were not insurmountable. I think the department made the right decision, and I certainly had the opportunity to read those documents and found them very interesting. So I would just move on slightly, unless the minister wanted to respond.

Mrs. McIntosh: Just a very quick response. Depending on the kind of hearing—and the member made reference just now to other commissions and hearings—we do have other ones where it is more clearly obvious that people might want to make private submissions, and indeed arrangements have been made for private verbal submissions, on drugs, for example, is one. In any of the things that we do, we cannot override the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act. We cannot, because the other side of the Freedom of Information Act is the right to privacy. Because Freedom of Information tells how other people can freely access information, it also has to indicate how those who desire privacy can retain that right to privacy. What the member is suggesting would, in some cases, lead people to believe that they would lose their right to privacy. I know that is not your intent, but I think it could be the ultimate conclusion.

* (1330)

If you said that in public hearings all submissions would become public, you would then, I believe, not have some submissions come. Particularly in the accountability document, the member may not realize how very many educators do support some of the suggestions made by trustees, and certainly those people, I think, some of them never did even write a letter just for the very worry the member had.

Some of them resorted to the telephone, gave their names and addresses and everything—of course, because I do not take information without a name or an address attached. Many of those people would come to, I am giving you a phone call, because I hesitate to put what I want to say in writing because it is not that I do not trust your department minister, but I do not want this getting back to the people I work with, but I want you to know that I think—and then they would give an opinion.

I think the member might be surprised if she knew how many people felt that was the only way they could safely get information to me. But I think if there was a provision that said you will not be able to make submissions privately or have them considered held in confidence, then a lot of opinion might not get presented.

The member and I are used to a public forum, we are used to the give and take and the heated debate that goes back and forth, and we are both used to being sort of

yelled at and chastised, and we are used to working in an adversarial situation, but most people are not. They worry that if they take a position opposite to what they feel is the official position of their group or one that group has decided to take, that they will then have to operate on a daily basis in an atmosphere of disharmony and tension, and that is very intimidating. To say that you will not be able to have anything you submit to this commission kept in confidence, I think, would be very intimidating for that minority who would otherwise then be afraid to speak up and share their views.

While I understand her point and I am extremely sympathetic to it, I assure her that we will do all in our power to make available all information we feel is truly meant for the public eye. I do say that we cannot override the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act which, along with guaranteeing the public access to information, also guarantees citizens the right to privacy in certain areas.

Ms. Friesen: What might be possible as a way out of this dilemma is that in its conclusions, if a commission, not these commissions in particular, but if a commission were to say X number of private or confidential memos were heard or so many round table discussions were held or so many written submissions were held which we kept in confidence, fifty years down the road they will be available through Freedom of Information.

Mrs. McIntosh: Mr. Chairman, that might be a very good suggestion actually because it would do two things. It would indicate that the material being made available was the full extent of the material, which is a useful thing to know if it is the full extent of the material, and it would also indicate the degree to which privacy was requested, which would also be useful. That is a suggestion we will take under consideration. I think it may be a good one.

Ms. Friesen: To return to the Norrie commission—and, again, it is the record of the Norrie commission that I am talking about at the moment—the minister said that Mr. Norrie in his report made summations of opinions presented, and, yes, that is true, he did in his first report.

His second report, however, was much briefer. He was in a much tighter time frame, and the summations were certainly not full. In many cases, there were no

summations at all, and this really was as crucial as the first Norrie commission, because these were people's reflections on actual proposals, actual boundaries.

Has the minister prepared any summaries of the Norrie commission's second version?

Mrs. McIntosh: Mr. Chairman, I should indicate that I agree, the second report was much briefer in its conclusions in that the Norrie commission basically indicated that with the exception of a few minor variations he really was not changing his recommendations to government.

In answer to the second part of the member's question, we have not prepared summations of the pieces of correspondence we have received for a couple of reasons. One, the volume of correspondence is pretty extensive. We received hundreds and hundreds of letters from a wide variety of people, and the opinions offered pertaining to each division are very localized. They are basically talking about local circumstances as opposed to the overall picture.

We are, however, taking into consideration all of those pieces of correspondence and the cumulative effect of those pieces of correspondence. While we do not have anything at this present time, I think that when we are finally able to indicate the direction government feels it needs to go, I do not anticipate an extensive summation, but you will in all likelihood see something like, in analyzing the material put before us, we noted that the majority of people indicated a preference for whatever, a smaller group indicated this, and only a handful indicated that. So you might see those kinds of indications just to give people a sense of the flavour of the feedback that we have received from Manitobans on the issue.

I do not think at this point that you will see a detailed summation just simply because there is so much that would have to be gone through to do it, but we could give that smaller summary that I have just indicated that I think would give people a sense and a feel for the types of things we were hearing.

The submissions, I believe, for Norrie are available to the public. If they wanted to go through them page by page, that would involve some initiative on their part, but it would be a very big time saver and cost saver for

the government to have them take the initiative to peruse the documents rather than our just publish them widely not sure if they would be picked up and utilized by members of the public.

Ms. Friesen: Just to clarify something, the minister said there have been hundreds of pieces of correspondence. Was the minister referring specifically to the submissions to the second Norrie commission or the overall body of correspondence that the government must have received on this?

Mrs. McIntosh: In that instance I was talking about the correspondence coming to the minister. Norrie, I believe, received a tremendous volume of mail and feedback on his second round, but the reference I was making there was to the mail that has come to the Premier's Office or to other MLAs who forwarded me the correspondence that they have received.

* (1340)

Ms. Friesen: So neither the Norrie commission nor the government has prepared summaries of the formal responses that were made to that second round, but you intend to provide some kind of overall analysis in the sense that the minister has suggested at some point.

Mrs. McIntosh: The ultimate report will be the decision made by government. When that decision is finally made in presenting rationale for that decision, whatever it is going to be, we do not know at this point, it will in all likelihood make reference to the feedback we have received from Manitobans as an influencing factor to whatever degree it was. I think it would be at that time that that kind of summation would be made available, but I am not wanting to lead to an expectation that it will be a highly detailed analysis.

In my opinion, it will be more of a generic indication of trends and feelings and opinion as opposed to X number of letters with this point and 12 with this, because that is a tremendous amount of work, and I think would take staff away from more important tasks to provide details that in my opinion the general public in most instances would not be that interested in.

They would want to know what is the basic message you heard, approximate numbers, and that type of thing.

So we try to provide what we think the public would like to know in the most timely and cost-effective fashion.

Ms. Friesen: I would like to pursue some other questions on the Boundaries Commission. Is this the line to do it on?

Mrs. McIntosh: It is Policy and Planning technically which is not on this line. Yet we do happen to have the Policy and Planning person here right now, so in terms of my desire to keep staff available, it might be an appropriate time to do it with this particular staffperson here right now, if you wish.

Ms. Friesen: That was for clarification. I want to continue with some other things on this line that are specifically on this. Well, I think they are specifically on this line—but to see where that went. Again I am still on the area of documentation and public discussion of issues that the minister has raised in the public forum. Obviously the one that is currently underway is the Enhancing Accountability. So again I want to pursue the issue of the record of Enhancing Accountability. What kind of summaries will be prepared, if any, and when will they be distributed? How does the minister intend to handle that stage of the report?

Mrs. McIntosh: I do not want to pre-empt the panel in any way, but it is at this stage what I am expecting to receive would be more along the lines of what-you-told-us kind of report. I am sure you have seen those before, where I would receive in summary form, hopefully not an overly lengthy report nor one that does too much predicting but rather: Madam Minister, here is what people told us—because that was an information gathering panel, and it was sent out to try to assist in the process of information coming back to the minister. While I have received many pieces of correspondence, phone calls, et cetera, on the document, at the same time, we wanted to provide a vehicle whereby people could make the information they wanted to get us public, make it in a formal sense, and make it part of a process of information gathering.

So I am expecting a report that will say something like this. Here is what they told us when we went out to listen. People were concerned about this, this, and this—whatever it is that was heard, put in a generalised way, rather than saying Mary Jones from this place said that,

because I, too, have access to Mary Jones' comments, but rather an indication that we heard from so many teachers, so many trustees, so many private citizens, so many students, so many whatever, and generally they felt this, that, or the other thing, so that I can then analyze all that information and put it together with the other information that has come in, in forms of resolutions, et cetera, and use that to help formulate any decisions that might need to be made.

Inherent in all of this, of course, will be discussions with teachers and trustees as to their views on some of the things that I might surmise out of the information I have gathered.

Ms. Friesen: Is the minister expecting some recommendations from this panel, or is it simply, as she has just said, a reflection of what is said, essentially a summary of proceedings?

Mrs. McIntosh: The panel, if they feel that they have heard enough of a common thread running through the presentations that would warrant saying something along the line of, most people seem to have agreement on whatever and therefore you might wish to consider doing such and such since it picks up the common thread, there is nothing to preclude them from making recommendations to me if they feel, based on what they have heard, that there are some conclusions that can be drawn, and that would be most welcome, and they may wish to do that.

I am looking, basically, for the information that was gathered, and hopefully we will be hearing back from them very soon.

Ms. Friesen: The minister said she would be considering this along with resolutions that she has received from elsewhere. These, I assume, are the trustee resolutions and, I assume, if there are any MTS resolutions, Manitoba Association of Municipalities, any of the sort of provincial organizations, Council of Women, those kinds of level of resolutions. Is that what was meant?

Mrs. McIntosh: Mr. Chairman, yes, those are the kinds of resolutions to which we are referring, resolutions from trustees. The teachers may have some resolutions they wish to bring to us, as well. We have resolutions from

superintendents and from municipalities and the Union of Manitoba Municipalities and such like. Those we consider part of the public offering of information and opinion on this issue.

I continue to receive material from people expressing various views and opinions as to what they would like to see happen, and I think that as well as those formal resolutions, a more informal line of communication with teachers and trustees will be extremely useful in developing any ultimate conclusions as a result of what we have learned from feedback from the accountability document.

* (1350)

Ms. Friesen: Is the minister pursuing informal avenues at the moment with any of these groups? Is this sort of part of the process of developing a policy?

Mrs. McIntosh: Absolutely. We have ongoing dialogue on a constant and regular basis with teachers and trustees, and this is certainly one topic that is of high interest to both of those groups at this time, so, yes, indeed.

Ms. Friesen: The schedule, I understand, is still for presentation of new legislation in this session; that is, before the beginning of June, I guess.

Mrs. McIntosh: Mr. Chairman, as we have indicated initially, and we continue to indicate at this point, if we have a feel for what will help the situation out there, then we would be bringing legislation in this spring.

We have always said we never believe in change for the sake of change, but with this particular problem, the problem has in the last couple of years reached desperate proportions with trustees, so if there is a solution that can be obtained, it would be our desire to introduce it earlier rather than later, and with that in mind, we have indicated our intention, if we have something ready, to introduce it this spring. Of course, the key words are there, if we have something ready, but it is our intention to not have to wait forever to solve this problem.

Ms. Friesen: The initial document that was released, Enhancing Accountability: Ensuring Quality, could the minister tell me something about the origin of that

document? Was it written in this section of the department, for example? Was it written in the department? There are certain elements of it, as I am sure the minister is aware, that have caused great concern and much questioning, and I think certainly what I heard at the hearings was that many people were very concerned that such a document could have come from the Department of Education.

There was much searching around for an author, some sense that the author was not within the department, so I am looking for the genesis of that document. Was it worked upon by a variety of departments? Does the minister see that the questions that were asked might be responded to in some way?

Mrs. McIntosh: Mr. Chairman, I guess, ultimately, as with anything that is put out by government, it becomes a government document and, with anything that has this degree of complexity, there is always a crossover of abilities and jurisdictions. There are many aspects of the paper that have sources of information that emanate from other places and yet, ultimately, a document put out by government becomes a government document regardless of how many different sources were required to provide the information contained within that document.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: I would like to ask at this time and hope that it is the will of the committee to take a five-minute recess. Thank you. A five-minute recess.

The committee recessed at 1:56 p.m.

After Recess

The committee resumed at 2:04 p.m.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Chairperson, I wanted just to ask a question as a follow-up from Question Period, primarily because our research person attempted to get a response through the Ministry of Education. The question I had asked the other day in Question Period was with respect to We Care and how much money they would have been given. Our research person tried to get that information and the most recent conversation was that the minister will be provided that information and she could do what she likes with it. I would ask if the minister could possibly give an answer

so I do not have to take the mike again. If she is unable to give an answer maybe she can request that her staff person share with us that information.

Mrs. McIntosh: Mr. Chairman, we are just having the appropriate staff person to come up to see if we can determine an answer. I know after the question you asked the other day in Question Period I thought maybe it might have been a Workforce 2000 training and checked that route but apparently there was nothing in Workforce 2000. So I understand they are looking to see where else, and I will get you the information. I may have it here in just a few moments. If I do not have it here in a few moments, as soon as I get it I will provide it for the record. In answer to your question, if you give us just a moment, we will see if we can find out here.

We have someone from our finance branch who will go now and seek to try to find that source for you, and bring it back hopefully this afternoon for your information. The indication I received yesterday from the staff who did the first initial inquiries, they could not see anything under Workforce 2000, but the financial person who is with us this afternoon will go back through once again. I understand that you were quoting from last year's Estimates in the House, and so we will go back and search that information, and, as I say, we will try to have that for you this afternoon. I do not have it off the top of my head, and the staff that is with me do not recall We Care as a specific group, but then there are so many organizations that have done training, particularly in the health care aides and that type of venture.

The only thing I will say in advance of knowing the specific detail is that our programs that offer workforce training or skills upgrading are generically designed programs designed to be available to any particular group that fits certain criteria. So it is not likely that there would be any sort of operational grant, but funds that are made available for training are not generally made available for just one group. Most of our initiatives in Workforce 2000, in fact all of them right now are for industry-wide or sector training where you will have a person learning transferable skills that are applicable to an area of work.

As I say, I will bring back the details because I do not have it right now. Now, do you want to be present when that is provided? I know you are trying to go back and

forth between two sets of Estimates here, or do you want it just put into the record when it arrives?

Mr. Lamoureux: Yes, if you do get it this afternoon—because I am in the Health committee—I would appreciate just being notified, but it is more important just to get it on the record, obviously. But as a courtesy I would appreciate being here, at least told, the page or whatever. Again I am just recollecting by memory, page 105 of the Supplementary Estimates from last year is what comes to mind, but again I am not a hundred percent sure. Thank you.

* (1410)

Mrs. McIntosh: Mr. Chairman, what we will do then is, if you happen to be in the Health Estimates when the information arrives, we will table it here and send a copy down to you so that you know it has been tabled and you know what it says. Okay? Thanks.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Chairman, I want to continue with again some issues of process and the proposals in Enhancing Accountability.

One of the things that concerned me was the selection of the deputy minister in this case to sit on that committee. Now I have conveyed my concerns to the deputy minister personally, and I do want to put them on the record. It seems to me that deputy ministers, assistant deputy ministers are responsible for providing a minister with advice upon the consequences, the pros and cons, the strengths and weaknesses of policy choices that the minister is making. The deputy minister is a staff position. It is somebody who ought to be able to serve under a variety of governments. I think we all subscribe ideally to that kind of civil servant, and the deputy minister in that sense epitomizes what we require in civil servants.

My broadest concern is the politicization of the civil service in Manitoba. It seems to me to have gone further in Manitoba than in many other provinces and certainly than in the federal government. I have worked in the federal government, and even though that was a number of years ago, there is a very different ethos, I think, there in these matters. That may be the scale of the issues and the closeness of provincial governments, and there are strengths again and weaknesses to that, but the idea and

the ideal of a nonpolitical, nonpartisan civil service, professional and professionalized, which can offer to the minister advice, the best advice, on a variety of issues, I think, is very important.

My concern is that the requiring of the Deputy Minister of Education to sit on a commission which I think would have been known to be very controversial—I could put it into more strong language than that, but I think the minister recognized that what she was doing was very controversial. It seems to me that the deputy minister has to maintain professional relationships with all parts of the education community, and my concern is that by having the deputy minister serve on that particular commission, which was gathering information and might be expected to make recommendations, that position was being jeopardized, and so it is the long term issue of the civil service, the long term issue in particular of this deputy minister.

There were many angry expressions at those hearings. The minister has probably heard of that. I think it was an extremely difficult position to put a deputy minister in, and I expect that the minister has some strong reasons for that. She may not have anticipated how that commission would develop, but I am drawing that point, as an abstract point in a sense, to her attention. I can understand the desire to have expertise. I think most commissions do desire that, and that is exactly the role that deputy ministers and assistant deputy ministers do play, but not as part of the commission. They are there as staff; they are there to make recommendations on the advisability of certain directions that a minister may or may not want to take. So I am looking for some reflections from the minister on this, if there was a particularly strong reason that she saw that her deputy minister should be placed in this particular position.

Mrs. McIntosh: Mr. Chairman, I believe inherent in the member's question is the response. I heard in the question that deputies are responsible for providing advice to ministers, providing information to ministers for doing all those very important jobs.

One of the things the deputies have done throughout time is to collate information and provide summaries of information to ministers in a situation like this, where information is being gathered and feedback is being gathered from the public. Much of that information,

having in the very nature of the information educational components, it, in my opinion, was felt that someone who knew the department, knew school divisions, knew how the funding formulas worked through personal experience in dealing with the funding formulas, knew firsthand through having worked on a regular basis, as the member indicated in her question, with the various groups involved, and who had also participated in attempting to bring the two groups together under other circumstances to see if there was any sense there—it could be voluntary movement towards a consensus—that person it seems had the ability, the expertise and the knowledge to be part of an information-gathering body which may end up presenting conclusions and recommendations to the minister.

I know that we will frequently have deputies in government, many of whom, by the way, do exactly as the member has indicated. We have many deputies in government who have been with government for many, many years, who have been through administrations of differing political stripes, who have served with diligence and professionalism the government of the day with great care and concern for some of the generic things that happen in government. We say that government is political, and in some sense it is, but most of the time in reality, government does what government has to do, and it generally does not really have a wide variation in the needs that it tries to address.

I am thinking of my previous deputy, for example, in Consumer and Corporate Affairs, who is now Deputy Minister of Agriculture, who had been with the department for so many years, but the knowledge he had of the securities commission and all of those things that were pertinent to that department was knowledge and information that he would provide that would be based upon what was happening in the field.

There is no control over how the people in the field view their role in society. They will view their role as they view their role. We cannot tell them how to view their role. You respond to the needs they bring forward, and you take the needs that have been identified to you as deputy and you identify them to the minister. I mean, that is all part of the role. So I do not see that we have a predisposition to be making deputies political, as is implied, and I just state my other department by way of an example that we do not, for example, dismiss a deputy

immediately upon assuming office, as other governments have been wont to do.

I harken back to my earlier comments about Ron MacIntosh, who was deemed to be an outstanding deputy minister who for some reason had his O/C revoked very shortly after the New Democrats assumed power. The conclusion drawn by the whole education community at that time was simply one conclusion, and that was that the New Democrat government was politicizing the deputy ministerships, and so I state that with all due respect as an indication that we did not do that in coming to power. We have not attempted to politicize our deputies. We do feel that some issues of controversy are issues of controversy because there is dissension within groups within the community. It does not have anything to do with politics. It has everything to do with reality.

So when you have two groups governed by the government, teachers and trustees, who have a dispute that has become irreconcilable, and they turn to government and seek government's assistance—at least one of the groups finally in desperation comes to government and says, we have now passed resolutions that reflect our desperation about the untenable position that you, the government, have placed us in; you have set legislation that binds us that we can no longer live with, and we are now telling you that we are ready to resort to strike as a solution which is not our first preference, but we are that desperate; we are ready to do that, and the consequence to us not getting that right or some other corrective action to this untenable situation in which you, the government, have placed us will be to start laying off hundreds of teachers—then I think the issue needs to be dealt with by government and by those senior in government who by the nature of their job want to see situations corrected such that both parties living under laws set by government are able to function in an atmosphere that they feel does protect their interests, as well as the other party's.

* (1420)

So in that sense I do not see this as a political issue. I see this as an issue where you have two bodies in the field unable to continue a working relationship together, that working relationship having been established by government, the rules of the game laid down by government. If there is no role for the deputy minister to

try to delve into the rationale and thinking behind why those two key stakeholders in government are at odds with each other and to provide that feedback and perhaps some recommendations as to how it might best be resolved for the sake of the students in the classroom who are the main priority, the stakeholders for the government of Manitoba, then what role does the member see for deputies, that they sit in their offices and only follow instructions, that they give advice to the minister without having been subject to being able to be party to gathering information that will lead to that advice, that we isolate them from the problems in the field and—I mean, we need their expertise.

I hope that people do not see this whole issue in the accountability document as a political issue. I think inherent in the member's question is that point also having been made, and that is the implication that by virtue of having a deputy minister sitting on a panel, we see the hearings on a controversial issue—that somehow the issue is not based upon a genuine dispute in the field but rather is somehow a political issue; so just those two points.

Ms. Friesen: I think I suggested fairly clearly what I did see the deputy minister's role as, and I want to reiterate that. I think that the minister has suggested that she needs the deputy minister's input from the field. Exactly, she does. She needs a deputy minister who will have the easy professional relationships with all those in the field, whether they are superintendents or trustees or teachers, the groups who the minister sees at the moment in a controversial position.

I do think that is important to maintain, and I am concerned that those easy professional relationships have been made much more difficult by the role that the deputy minister was required to play in this.

It is exactly the expertise and those professional relationships across a broad field in education which I think are important and which any Minister of Education would need. That was why I would have suggested that that expertise and those relationships be available in a staff position, rather than in a public position associated with a document which the minister may believe is not political, but obviously—we will come to that later—but certainly was controversial, and the minister knew it to be controversial and in a very public position.

I think I have probably made the point I want to make and will probably have to agree to disagree on that. I do think it has put the deputy minister in a long-term, difficult position, and I am sure it is something that he will, in the end, be able to overcome. The same expertise could have been there in a staff position. The same information, the same exposure to the issues that the minister will require, could have been there in a staff position.

I am curious. There are a number of other Conservative MLAs that the government might have put on that. The deputy could have been there in a staff position, as, for example, in the constitutional committee. The present Minister of Labour was there in a staff position, came to all the hearings, was there for discussion, had input into questions that obviously come up in those kinds of areas, a very important role to play.

It struck me, just from my experience there, that this was a different kind of approach that this minister had taken. I wonder if there is some particular defence of it in this issue. The minister made reference, for example, to what is called out there as the Carlyle committee, the bringing together of the trustees and the teachers, over I think it was about a 12-month period, to try and see if there could be some resolution in an informal way.

Does the minister think that that alone, that that role that the deputy minister had played, required him to sit on that next stage? Is there something there that I am not seeing, that was not there in the constitutional committee, for example?

Mrs. McIntosh: The constitutional committee, of course, was very definitely a political committee. All three parties sitting on it definitely determined at the beginning of the outset that they would come up with a political conclusion and course of action at the end of it, a very different issue than this.

The flip side of the coin to the member's argument, of course, is that by virtue of having a deputy on a three-member panel, which was essentially an information gathering panel, there are many who would argue that having the presence of the deputy minister there kept that panel from being political. Having a nonpolitical person on it signalled or should have signalled in the minds of some very clearly that this was not political. That is the

other side of the coin that could be argued if this issue were being debated.

We know that there are many instances when deputies communicate with the public and chair committees and chair things of that nature in order to compile data or do a number of other tasks.

The member indicated that it was important for the deputies in government to have easy relationships with the stakeholder groups inside their portfolios. Yes, it would be very nice if all relationships with all groups could be easy. But the member knows, I believe, that in every portfolio where you have groups that by the nature of their mission are adversaries of each other, that it is rare that all deputies can have consistently easy relationships with the stakeholder groups. I can cite a number of examples just from my own portfolios that I have had.

Take a look at landlords and tenants. We did a new revision to The Landlord and Tenant Act. It is now called The Residential Tenancies Act. During the course of doing that, it was necessary to communicate both with landlords and with tenants, and landlords and tenants did not always agree with each other. In fact, in many instances, they did not agree with each other.

The deputy or the senior government official—it did not necessarily always have to be the deputy—working and trying to find the common thread that would produce legislation that would be fair and balanced and seen to be correct for both, at one time or another will run into conflicting points of view with various stakeholder groups. That is impossible to avoid.

So while I would hope and wish that all deputies could have friendly and easy relationships with all stakeholder groups in their portfolios, I would even more wish that the deputy could have productive relationships with those groups, and productive and easy are not always equal. They do not always equate.

* (1430)

For my part, in watching this particular deputy, Mr. Carlyle, I have seen him work on a wide variety of issues with teachers and with trustees, but mostly with teachers because we tend to interact with them more because of

the wide variety of things we are doing with curriculum and all of those things that involve teachers, and we second some 80 teachers a year into the department to assist with a wide variety of educational tasks. I have seen that he is conciliatory and he listens and he provides honest and courteous feedback to the stakeholder groups, and they are able to converse well with each other on items that are highly sensitive—on items of teacher discipline, on the issues of suspension of certificates, on issues of curricula, on issues of all manner of things that The Public Schools Act dictates that this department must do to provide leadership to the field.

In my opinion, a deputy minister is not just there to follow blindly orders from the government. The deputy minister, of course, must administer those decisions made by government, regardless of how the deputy feels about them, but I see the deputy's role as much more than that. I see that the deputy also provides leadership, and I have seen that over and over, the leadership that deputies provide.

I also have become increasingly concerned about the degree to which decisions made by government are being called political decisions as if they are not being made with the motivation being the best interests of the students. Education is not a partisan issue. Children learn in a certain way. Society evolves in a certain way, and it is important that education keep pace with society and provide students with education that is relevant to the world in which they are going to live. That means that there does need to be adjustments from time to time and changes in the way in which education is delivered in order to make certain that the expectations of the world in which these children live are being met for them. I am increasingly concerned that every time we make a decision that involves change, the official opposition says that it is "political," and I put political in quotes.

Any decision made by government ultimately is political because we are a political process. Decisions made by the official opposition to fight every piece of change as being political is in fact a political position taken by the official opposition.

When the official opposition stands up and says, we do not want to see standards exams, we do not want to see teachers marking standards exams in a centralized

location, they are taking a political position according to the way in which decisions are categorized by them. I would submit that what we are taking is contradictory views on educational philosophy, and each of us can go back and quote learned experts to justify the positions we take, for example, on examinations or assessments, and I could come back and list all of the excellent rationale for assessing and for marking and for centralized marking and the member could probably come back and find reams of writing on why it is best not to test students at all and, certainly, if you do test them, it should be individualized marking that is based upon the individual teacher's assessment and not against any outside criteria or any wider outcome than just what the teacher has for that child, no comparisons for example.

I do not think those are political decisions, but I would hold to the view that if the member feels that decisions as to how to resolve the current problem over the mechanism used to resolve disputes between teachers and trustees, if the member chooses to call that political, then I would have to submit the corollary is that her criticism of it is also political because one cannot be and the other not. Similarly, since I do not believe these are political decisions but, rather, decisions being made about education and the system of education, then it holds that I do not see having a deputy minister being part of the information gathering team would be performing a political action but rather an action for the education system.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Chairman, that was a very interesting discussion and interesting I think general assumptions that the minister makes. I think it enables me to see some of the things more clearly that I had not seen in the minister before. I will be coming back to some of those things earlier.

I think the minister's view that decisions are not political except when they are opposition ones, I think that is quite—

Point of Order

Mrs. McIntosh: A point of order, Mr. Chairman, you may feel this is a dispute over the facts, but what I am saying is that incorrect information has just been put on the record and I would encourage all who read what the member just said, go back and read what I said before it.

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

* * *

Ms. Friesen: I expect one day we will have an instant screen in front of us in which these things will flash up and we will all be able to verify things right away, maybe sort of an instant replay. It would be good.

But the minister's view that education is a nonpartisan issue and that it is really a debate over philosophy, I know that is a view shared by many people. And, of course, there are differences in philosophical approaches to education, and the minister and I clearly would disagree over many of them, though perhaps not as many as she thinks.

I think, however, the position of a minister is to distribute resources. It is to distribute the wealth of this province that is accorded to education and it is to distribute those resources between departments and between areas of government, and those are political decisions.

So, the distribution of resources and its effect upon different parts of our community are political decisions. The nature of examinations, for example, and the way in which this will affect different parts of the community are decisions which are made based upon, I think, to some extent, political decisions. Certainly there are philosophical decisions as well involved in that.

* (1440)

But I do believe the minister's job is to distribute the resources and I believe that those are being done as every minister does, in a political way, in accordance with the underlying philosophical approach to society that each government and each minister would have.

In this particular area, though, what we are looking at is whether or not this particular commission was conceived as a nonpartisan commission. The minister said that the presence of the deputy minister would signal to people that this was not a political decision, but if that was the intent of the government, why were there not three civil servants? That would have been a

nonpolitical commission. If it were to be nonpartisan, why were there not members from different parties? If it were not a political document, why were there five elements, proposals that the government was putting forth?

If it were to have been an information-gathering approach which said, here we have a deadlock, here we have a dispute between two partners in government, we are looking for solutions, we want to examine some solutions, which I believe was the general intent of the MAST resolution which the minister referred to, help us find some other solutions, perhaps there could have been open commissions on that, an open commission that said, what other solutions can we look at?

A written document from the government which looked at collective bargaining across the country or looked at collective bargaining in education in other parts of the world might I think have given people the sense that the government was in fact looking at this in a nonpartisan and a nonpolitical manner.

But that did not happen. That paper does not discuss the context of collective bargaining, for example, in British Columbia or Ontario where there are very particular and quite different systems of collective bargaining in education. It does not look at what happens in our larger provinces like Quebec and Ontario.

It does not have that context that says, here is how these relationships are looked at around the rest of the world. It took a very limited, and I think most people who have responded to that committee have said, a very political view and suggested five options. So that sense of information gathering, that sense that this was a nonpartisan approach which was interested in a broad range of solutions from which the government might then pick out one or two and then discuss those with the partners involved, I think that opportunity was lost. I think the selection of a committee which was two Conservative members of the Legislature, plus a deputy minister was the wrong direction to go on this.

Mrs. McIntosh: I think for indication, based on what the member is saying is that if she had been minister she would have done it differently, and I can see that she probably would have, but again I just want to correct something.

I said, and I believe if you check Hansard you will see that I said that the presence of the deputy minister on the panel could signal that the panel was nonpolitical if the subject were to be debated. I believe the record will also show that I indicated that I put forward that observation as a counterpoint to the member's statement that we should not have had the deputy minister on a political panel, that his presence there forced him to become political. I indicated in return that other people might argue that the presence of the deputy kept the panel from being seen as a political panel.

I did not say what the member indicated I said, so I just encourage you to go back and check and recheck what the assumption was that I said versus what I actually said. To address the point that she just made, that we presented five options, and I would indicate that what she did not say about what we said was this: We said, here are five possible alternatives. If you have any other suggestions or other ideas to alternatives that might be better than these, we would invite you to bring them forward. So we made it very clear in writing in the document that we presented five alternatives, and we are looking for more and would welcome having other models be put forward.

There again, the presence of the deputy on the panel with his knowledge of how the system worked was in a position then to be able to ask questions because he was not just a staffperson, he was not just an observer, he was a member of the panel, and therefore in a position to say, well, you have presented an alternate model that says we should do this, how would that interact with that. He was in a position then to ask questions, to solicit detail on the finer points because he had the experience of knowing how the system works and that is why we had him there.

It was not to fulfill a political role on a panel that we did not feel was a political panel, but rather an information gathering panel, and he was there because of his knowledge of insensitivities to the field. He had come from the field, had knowledge of the field, that he could speak to and ask questions about the things that were going on. He could also bring to the table the things that a staffperson would do in assisting the other two panellists on a wide range of issues. But in the end, and I stress this because I think it is important, it is not the deputy who is going to make the decision. The

minister and the government and the cabinet and the caucus and all of those people who govern Manitoba will make the decision. So in that sense and in that sense only, this is a political decision because it was made by people who by definition are politicians, just as the member, in bringing forth the opposite point of view and promoting her point of view, by virtue of her being by definition a politician, puts forward political positions to the public on this issue.

In terms of the make-up of the rest of the panel, the member asked, why was it not an all-party panel? It is not an all-party panel because it was not an all-party initiative. The constitutional panel that went around was the result of an all-party decision. All parties together decided that they were going to do that, so all parties together did it. In this instance, only one party, the governing party, felt that it would be good to go out to the field and have people come to them with views on this issue and, therefore, it was governing people who went out.

The only reason two MLAs from my governing party went out instead of me was simply because of time. If I could have done this the way I really wanted to have done this, I would have gone out myself with my deputy and any other senior staff person that I thought might be knowledgeable of the issues and met with all these people myself and heard from them myself. But my schedule did not permit me to do that. So I asked two of my colleagues if they would go with my deputy and hear what people had to say and if they would come back and tell me what the people said, while I continued to gather information via letter, phone and so on in my office and am able then to carry on with my other duties which prohibit me in many instances from having the flexibility to do the kinds of very valuable jobs that our upper benchers do. Our upper benchers, as you know, chair committees, do a wide variety of things that their scheduling permits them to do because they do not have to run a large and complicated government department.

I would venture to say that my regular visits to schools, which I book regularly and force into the schedule, have given me incredibly good feedback on this issue in a very meaningful way, a way that I would not have been able to achieve by sitting through formal presentations which the others could do for me, thereby allowing me to keep my own schedule and permitting me

to go into schools, see children, watch the curricula in action, watch the teachers in action and talk to the teachers, talk to the principals, talk to the custodians, talk to the school secretaries, talk to the clinicians, talk to the parents, talk to those people who are in the schools. Within the confines of my time, I think I learned as much doing that informally were people saying, by the way, while you are here, may I tell you what I think of this, or me saying, by the way, while I am here, what do you think of this?

* (1450)

So I suppose, if we have government initiatives and the member feels that they should become all-party initiatives, it would be very egalitarian, but I suspect that not much would get done because by the very nature of the political adversarial situation in which we find ourselves, my certified, honest opinion is that after five years in this building I have come to the conclusion that no matter what initiative government puts forward, with very, very rare exceptions, the official opposition will always oppose. [interjection]

The member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway) said that is not true. I would challenge the member for Elmwood to tell me, when he was critic of Consumer and Corporate Affairs when he ever once took a position in support of anything that I was doing as minister in that department, yet many of the things that we do in government are exactly the kinds of things—for example, I will give you a really good example, one from earlier today when the member was criticizing us for following The Freedom of Information Act. We were getting criticized for following The Freedom of Information Act. Who wrote it? I ask you, who wrote it? Their government.

Point of Order

Ms. Friesen: The minister is again putting words into other people's mouths. My criticism was not of The Freedom of Information Act. My criticism was of the decisions that the minister had made, and they were put in the form of questions.

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

* * *

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: The honourable minister, to finish her remarks.

Mrs. McIntosh: Mr. Chairman, I submit that, yes, the minister did not say, I criticize you for following The Information Act. She criticized us for taking actions that reflected our following The Information Act, a fine difference but a difference.

Ms. Friesen: The minister suggests that this was not a political panel. Presumably, I think she would also say it did not have a political intent, yet the minister herself says it was deputizing for the minister.

Does the minister intend to say that if she had gone out to hear these opinions, that this would not have been a political act? When a minister acts in that way, that is not a political act?

Mrs. McIntosh: Excuse me, Mr. Chairman, I think we are getting into a realm of semantics that is really not doing us any good or anything productive in terms of the Estimates, but if we wish to take up our time in Estimates philosophizing on the definition of political and avoiding going through the numbers, I have no objection to doing that.

I would indicate, as I did indicate earlier, that by virtue of definition, any decision made by her or made by me could be called political because we are by definition politicians, therefore the decisions we make are political. Perhaps the word the member wants to use instead would be the word "partisan" or "ideology" or some other word that would more accurately reflect what she really means.

When I was a little girl, "politics" was not a dirty word. "Politics" has become a dirty word. People who become politicians become instantly villainous. People who—[interjection] Pardon me.

An Honourable Member: You are reflecting on the Chair.

Mrs. McIntosh: I take that as a humorous comment intended as wit.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: I did not hear that remark.

Mrs. McIntosh: We will hope the Chairman did not hear it because I think—actually, that was a good one-liner, Jim. It is not bad, but we will not read it into the record and spare the Chairman the agony of a decision here.

Over time politicians, who used to be seen as serving the people and giving of themselves for their friends and neighbours—I do not mean giving like literally giving them something as a reward, but giving in terms of service to their friends and neighbours—seemed to be a very high calling and the individuals elected therein treated with respect, it has come to be a derogatory thing. We foster it here in this Chamber to our everlasting sorrow and to the sorrow of democracy. We foster the image that those who govern are evil. We foster that image by virtue of playing to the cameras in the Chamber, by virtue of framing questions in such a way as to reveal the evil, ugly intentions of those who govern, and those who govern respond in a very defensive fashion to show that if the opposition were to govern they would be just as evil and ugly as the opposition implies the government is. Where we can we will point out the awful, ugly, evil things the opposition did during the days that they governed. It is easier for us than them—a little aside. A joke, a joke. It is meant to be a joke.

When we do that and we have children in the gallery, as we do quite frequently, they look down and they say, and they will say it to me as Minister of Education, why do all those ladies and men scream and yell at each other in the Chamber? We are not allowed to do that. What is the answer? Well, it is because they are politicians. They are scum of the earth. They are evil, ugly people. They do not know any better. They do not care about you. They ran for office because they hate people, and they hope they can govern so that they could hurt them.

That is the image that we have been perpetuating in our communities for many, many years, and we do tremendous disservice to the system. We do tremendous disservice to democracy, all of us together, when we allow that to happen. We discourage good people from running. I have known good people that I have said to, you are so gifted and you care so deeply, why do you not run for elected office? The answer that I am more often given than not these days is, why would I ever subject myself and my family to the kind of abuse that politicians

have to take? Why would I ever do it? Why would I give up a good, decent job, maybe take a cut in salary, to become elected and have abuse hurled at me, if I govern, by the opposition, have my family members hurt, have my integrity called into question at every second of every day? Why would I do it? I am not going to and they do not. That is what we do with our silly game playing. We are like unicorns out in the rain, playing silly games, and we are all going to drown in the end and destroy democracy in the process, unless we start being more positive and constructive in our dealings with each other.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Order, please.

Ms. Friesen: Thanks, Mr. Chair. The hour is closing; I can see that. I wanted to ask some questions about where the minister wants to see certain topics discussed. So can we just run through a couple of things?

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: If you would do it quite quickly.

Ms. Friesen: Yes. I mentioned that I wanted to discuss some more material on boundaries and on Enhancing Accountability, so which line would the Minister like to see those under?

Mrs. McIntosh: Mr. Chairman, if I am reading my staff correctly, and I will seek to maintain eye contact with him when I relay this message so I do not inadvertently screw up their daily schedules here, I believe we can handle those under this area, unless we get into some very fine, detailed questions that would mean your funding formula information and so on in which case we would need to get some of our financial experts back. And staff seems to be indicating that that is all right with them.

Ms. Friesen: And another area would be private schools. There is not a specific line for that. Where would the minister like to see it discussed?

Mrs. McIntosh: That would come under Support to Schools 16.5 is the reference there.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Okay. I would just like to thank everybody for their cordial way of putting questions and answers. I wish you all a very nice weekend.

The hour being 3 p.m., committee rise.

HEALTH

Mr. Chairperson (Marcel Laurendeau): Order, please. This committee will come to order. If there are any staff in the outer area, they can come in at this time.

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Mr. Chairperson, yesterday we had some informal discussions with the former chair and the member for the Liberal Party. I did not have an opportunity to mention it to the minister, but I am just wondering if the committee would be amenable, at ten o'clock there is a ceremony taking place in the Rotunda of the Legislature sponsored by B'Nai Brith of Canada to deal with Holocaust Awareness Week. It is a unique ceremony. It is being held in the rotunda, and I think it would be appropriate, perhaps, if we were to adjourn for 15 or 20 minutes at ten o'clock or just before ten o'clock to allow members of the Chamber to take part in the ceremony.

I know there are all kinds of committees and meetings going on, and we do have to go about our legislative business, but this particular meeting in the Rotunda, I think, would be helpful, and I think it would be appreciated by members if we have an opportunity to participate for 15 or 20 minutes. So possibly if all parties will agree, perhaps we could adjourn at say five to 10 for 15 or 20 minutes to allow members who wish to take part to at least take part in the ceremony. I am looking to see if the—I know the member for the Liberal Party—and I did not have an opportunity to mention it to the minister yesterday.

Mr. Chairperson: Is it the will of the committee to recess at ten o'clock for 20 minutes?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Mr. Chairperson: Agreed. Make that five to 10.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, there are a whole series of matters that I wish to put on the record dealing with some of the minister's comments for the past several days, but in the interest of expediting the work of this committee and dealing with some of the very significant issues that have arisen in the last few days, I want to direct some specific questions at the minister

relating to some of the documentation that has been released in the last several days.

The first question I would like to ask the minister is: Is the document tabled yesterday entitled Home Care Reform: Challenge and Opportunity Advisory Committee to the Continuing Care Program, Response to Strategic Redirection of Home Care, dated March 1996, makes numerous references to the 1994 home care work restructuring report, and I wonder if the minister would be prepared to table that report?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): Mr. Chairman, yesterday in the House I was not given the opportunity to read into the record the letter written by Myrna Fritchett and Joyce Rose. I was shouted down by members opposite. Yesterday I tabled in the House the report of the Advisory Committee to the Continuing Care Program, and the date on that is March of 1996. The reason that previously I had not tabled that report was because there were indications that there may have been a lack of consensus on the part of the advisory committee respecting the contents of the report.

After some discussion, the chair of the committee had made it clear that she had no objection to the report being made public. So I made it public yesterday, but I felt that it was appropriate at the same time to advise honourable members that there were some concerns surrounding that report.

I received yesterday a letter from Myrna Fritchett and Joyce Rose. Myrna Fritchett is a registered nurse with a certificate in gerontology. She is the Director of Care at the Red River Valley Lodge in Morris, Manitoba. Joyce Rose is a former member of the Manitoba Council on Aging. She is the first seniors co-ordinator for Support Services to Seniors for that program in Stonewall, and she is a resident of Stonewall. They wrote to me as follows: Dear Mr. McCrae—

* (0910)

Point of Order

Mr. Chomiak: On a point of order, Mr. Chairperson. I am looking for your direction insofar as the minister has tabled this letter to all members and whether it is appropriate that, having tabled this letter to all members,

the minister would be again reading the record about the letter into the file. Perhaps we could expedite matters insofar as the minister has tabled. We certainly have had opportunity to read it. There is no need for the minister to repeatedly reread the letter.

I am looking for direction insofar as it was tabled. Yesterday during Question Period the minister was called to order in fact. After he had tabled the letter, the Speaker indicated there was no need for him to read the letter into the record insofar as he had already tabled it. So I am looking for direction from you, Mr. Chairperson.

Mr. McCrae: On the same point of order, I would remind the honourable member that this is not Question Period, this is the review of the Estimates of the Department of Health.

As I understand the rules, there is a relatively fair amount of latitude allowed in the asking and in the answering of questions. There should be nothing that might prevent an honourable member in this House or in this committee from reading into the record something that was so appropriate and relevant to the question that was asked in the first place.

Mr. Chairperson: I thank the member for that advice.

Order, please. The honourable member for Kildonan does not have a point of order, but I would like to remind the committee of a couple of areas that we are dealing with here. Under the rules of the committee, speeches in the Committee of the Whole must be strictly relevant to the item or clause under discussion. On this line the minister has almost got open-ended because of the administration portion of this line to go anywhere within his department.

Also, under Quotations in Beauchesne's 496: A member may read extracts from a document, book or other printed publications as part of a speech provided that in doing so no other rule is infringed upon, and his speech should not however, consist only of a single long quotation, or a series of quotations joined together with a few original sentences.

And to remind the committee, there is no longer 30 minutes for responses. You now have only 10 minutes. So the honourable minister, to conclude his answer.

Mr. McCrae: Mr. Chairman, I will take that direction. Even though it is very hard for some of us to be original, I will just try really hard to be original as much as I can.

* * *

Mr. McCrae: As I was saying yesterday in Question Period, I tabled in the House the report of the Advisory Committee to the Continuing Care Program. As I also set out, there were some concerns on the part of some of the members of the advisory committee about certain public statements that had been made and about the report itself. I received a letter yesterday from Myrna Fritchett and Joyce Rose, members of the Advisory Committee on Continuing Care.

They wrote to me yesterday as follows: Dear Mr. McCrae: 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.

I will read that again, Mr. Chairperson, in case the honourable member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) missed that. 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. That new system is under development and is sometime off in the future.

The letter goes on, Mr. Chairman. 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.

I will read that one again, Mr. Chairman, for emphasis. 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 Fritchett and Joyce Rose.

* (0920)

The reason I bring some emphasis to that, Mr. Chairman, is it seems that the only way New Democrats can get the attention of the public is to mislead and to leave impressions that are totally opposite to what the facts would substantiate. They have their problems. They are quite desperate as demonstrated yesterday, for example, by the question put by the honourable member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett) to the honourable Minister of Labour (Mr. Toews). They are quite desperate, indeed, in trying to get their message across.

The honourable member for Kildonan from his seat asks if I read Frances Russell this morning. I rarely read Frances Russell and most Manitobans rarely read Frances Russell, but to make the honourable member happy I have a copy of the clippings from the newspaper today, and to make the honourable member happy, perhaps we could adjourn the Legislature long enough for me to read Frances Russell, or maybe I could find some time to squeeze it in today when I am not picking the hair out of my comb or doing something else more important, to read Frances Russell.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, as is the norm in this committee, the minister refused to answer the question as posed, a very specific question concerning his report and his document that he tabled yesterday. I asked him very clearly to table the 1994 home care restructuring report that is mentioned in the document he tabled yesterday, and the minister either—well, let the record show what the minister's comments were in this regard.

Mr. Chairperson, the minister is attempting to somehow leave the impression that, in fact, this committee did represent the viewpoints of Manitobans. I want to read something from this committee report that the minister tabled yesterday, and this is also from the 1994 restructuring report that the minister has refused to table. I want to read something into the record from the document the minister tabled yesterday, and I am quoting from page 25: Contracting out service delivery among multiple providers is not advisable due to difficulty ensuring quality of service and difficulty co-ordinating across multiple services. Contracting out service delivery requires clear program standards and a system capable of monitoring. Neither of these conditions exist at this time.

What is the significance of that statement, Mr. Chairperson? That statement is from the Connie Curran restructuring project that advises against contracting out of home care services.

This is very, very interesting. Not only did the minister's favourite consultant, Connie Curran, from this report advise against contracting out, but what did the minister do when we did the public service of releasing the Treasury Board document to the public? The minister finally got around to giving this Treasury Board proposal, the one under the minister's signature, Jim McCrae, we are going to contract out all of home care, under the minister's signature.

The minister gave that report finally, after having an advisory committee for almost two years. He gave the advisory committee the report and said, whoops, would you please review the contracting out or privatization proposal and give us recommendations? So this committee, the minister's advisory committee was given several weeks to try to respond to the already decided, fait accompli government decision, Treasury Board decision, cabinet decision, Minister of Health's decision to privatize home care.

So when the minister says that he consulted prior to the privatization of home care, he is so wrong, Mr. Chairperson. He cannot table one document, he cannot table one organization, he cannot table one group that is in favour of privatization in this Chamber. Now, I ask him to table the 1994 report that is included in his own document that he tabled yesterday from his advisory committee, and he is unable to do so. Why is he unable to do so? Because the report recommended against privatization. So what do we have? We have a complete lack of justification, a complete lack of information from the minister justifying the decision to privatize.

So, Mr. Chairperson, forgive us for being somewhat skeptical of the minister's plan to privatize. Forgive us for being suspicious about the proposal to privatize and the genesis of that particular proposal and the genesis of that particular decision. In a vacuum one can only conclude from the evidence and the information that is provided. It is fairly clear from the record that the only people favouring privatization, aside from the minister and the government, were private sector companies who lobbied long and hard for the minister and the

government to have contracting out, to privatize home care.

Mr. Chairperson, do not take my word for it. Look in the 1993 document, the presentation by We Care, the president of We Care, Ron Hoppe, to the task force on home care, and in that presentation what did Mr. Hoppe recommend? What did We Care recommend? Privatize home care delivery. Set up a central monitoring agency. What did the government do? The government decided to privatize home care and to set up a central agency and, in fact, the central agency is mentioned in the advisory committee report with the telemarketing capacity, et cetera.

My question again to the minister is, why is the minister refusing to table the 1994 restructuring report that is quoted on several occasions in the document that the minister tabled yesterday? Why is the minister refusing to table that document since it was paid for by the public of Manitoba? Manitobans have a right to know what was in that document.

Mr. McCrae: Mr. Chairman, the honourable member has not given me time to read what Frances Russell has had to say. I have a bit of a problem, but I do, just picking one paragraph out here, it says, it is wrongheaded because, as Ms. Curran apparently said, there is no accountability to the client or to the government.

So here we have Frances Russell and the honourable member for Kildonan nose to nose, head to head, belly to belly with Connie Curran. Interesting that the NDP should be so supportive of Connie Curran. They do not sound supportive of Connie Curran most of the time, but they certainly do today as put forward by Frances Russell on their behalf. It is interesting that the NDP have now made that immaculate sort of conversion on the road to Damascus. Now all of a sudden they—

An Honourable Member: You are mixing your metaphors.

Mr. McCrae: Yes, I think so. It was not immaculate, was it? It was just a plain conversion, yes. But then we have the honourable member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett) here to correct us when we make grammatical errors so we are in good hands.

Mr. Chairman, I think it is very interesting that the NDP, having campaigned against Connie Curran for two or three, four years, lost an election over it, and they are still campaigning against her, and yet today now they have made that, what do you call it, not immaculate but that conversion over to Connie Curran's way of seeing things. So it is kind of interesting that members opposite are all so interested in Connie Curran's reports because it appears that some of her opinions agree with those of the New Democrats. Kind of interesting that they today should be singing the praises of Connie Curran. They have really changed their tune, have they not?

I just point out again, Mr. Chairman, the honourable member referred to the report of the Advisory Committee to the Continuing Care Program and made a reference to it. I would like to read into the record again a letter written to me yesterday by two members of the Advisory Committee to Continuing Care, Myrna Fritchett and Joyce Rose, as follows:

Dear Mr. McCrae, 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 the 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.

* (0930)

So I guess I should be careful about Frances Russell, too, because media personnel can sometimes get things wrong. Nobody is infallible, unless it is the member for Wellington, but I do not think she is either. I suppose even Frances Russell might get things wrong from time to time as unthinkable as that may be to members in the

New Democratic Party. Frances Russell might be mistaken from time to time like the rest of us.

Since we are talking about media coverage, I would like to read something that I came across yesterday, Mr. Chairman. This is printed in the Brandon Sun: Private home care fills void, it says. As home care attendants marched on the picket line Wednesday, home care workers employed by private companies were busy filling in for their striking civil service counterparts.

Interesting that the union wants to do this work and yet they turn it over to the private companies quite willingly. It is interesting how principles can be sort of so elastic amongst members of the union leadership in this province. First they are against the private people, but then they turn the work over to them with the total support of the NDP. Yet the NDP stands in this House and says, well, no, we do not support that. It is totally confusing.

The article goes on, and I quote, George McMaster, Chairman of We Care Health Services said his company has had a fairly substantial increase in clients due to the strike. Well, I have been hearing all about George McMaster, Mr. Chairman. Nobody in the union movement wants to have anything to do with George McMaster, and yet they say, here, George, you take all this business because we do not want to do it. We want to abandon our clients. We will just let you do it. So you cannot have it both ways. You cannot be upset about George McMaster and then turn over all the work to him. The article continues—

Mr. Chomiak: I do not see the logic in that, Jim.

Mr. McCrae: Well, the honourable member for Kildonan says he does not see the logic. This is what is wrong with the honourable member for Kildonan. He never sees any logic. If it does not fit with his ideas or those of his union boss buddies, then there is no logic. So, you know, it is pretty narrow, and certainly out of sync and out of step with the people of Manitoba.

I continue. George McMaster, Chairman of We Care Health Services said his company has had a fairly substantial increase in clients due to the strike. About 120 home care recipients in Winnipeg have been added to the We Care roster, as have 35 in Neepawa and nine

in Brandon. Quote: Most of our staff are part time and have been picking up more hours, McMaster said during a telephone interview Wednesday. It has been hinted that the Brandon-based company, which has franchises across Canada, was part of Health Minister Jim McCrae's strike-provoking decision to privatize home care.

This is something, Mr. Chairman, that the member for Kildonan has tried to put across, complete with personal innuendo and all that sort of thing that kind of steps across the line and is unkind, to say the least. Now the honourable member for Kildonan wants to tell me what I can say and what I cannot say. This is not unlike the approach of the NDP and their union boss buddies.

It has been hinted that the Brandon-based company, which has franchises across Canada, was part of Health Minister Jim McCrae's strike-provoking decision to privatize home care. McCrae and the McMasters-We Care was founded by George's wife, Bev—were neighbours in Brandon, and speculation had it that the move to contract out home care services was based more on that friendship than on any potential benefit to the system.

Now this is the kind of innuendo I am talking about, Mr. Chairman. The honourable member likes to play with innuendo, because when the facts are not there, make something up, you know. We get that all the time with the New Democrats and certainly with their union boss buddies. Now the honourable member has got me—he interrupted me.

So I will have to go back a little bit: It has been hinted that the Brandon-based company, which has franchises across Canada, was part of Health Minister Jim McCrae's strike-provoking decision to privatize home care. McCrae and the McMasters-We Care was founded by George's wife, Bev—were neighbours in Brandon, and speculation had it that the move to contract out home care services was based more on that friendship than on any potential benefit to the system, but McMaster scoffed at that notion. There are probably five companies that are of our size in the province and there might be another 20 located in Winnipeg, McMaster said. We are just one of many that might benefit. McMaster also took issue with the wage statistics released by the Manitoba Government Employees' Union, which represents the

home care workers. While the MGEU's table showed a considerable disparity between the wages paid by government and private companies. We Care franchise owner Ron Hoppe likened the comparison to that of apples and oranges. It is not an honest or forthright comparison, Hoppe said from his Winnipeg office, explaining that the starting rates of private company employees were being compared to the top-of-scale wages for government employees.

Well, that is a nice honest comparison, is it not, Mr. Chairman? That is typical.

In fact, Hoppe said, the differences on a pay cheque amounted to around 10 percent. While home care attendants contend clients will suffer under a privatized system, Diana Ross of Brandon said she and her husband, Andy, have had home care from We Care and from the government and would not be able to choose between the two services.

Let us go over that again. While home care attendants contend clients will suffer under a privatized system, Diana Ross of Brandon said she and her husband, Andy, had had home care from We Care and from the government and would not be able to choose between the two services.

That is these clients' point of view, and honourable members opposite seem to have substituted their judgment for everybody else's.

The article continues: We have both of them and I am satisfied with both of them, Ross said in a telephone interview Wednesday.

You know, Mr. Chairman, I am, too. I think the people who work in the Home Care program provide valuable service and do good work.

Mr. Chairperson: Order, please. The minister's time has expired.

Before we continue on this morning, I see we are doing just fine, but I would just like to advise honourable members that during our committee I think it is appropriate if we do stay away from personal attacks on members. Not only is it unparliamentary, but it does not add to the decorum, and I do not appreciate it if we start

impugning motives. That is definitely out of line, and I will be calling to order if that does happen during the proceedings.

Mr. Chomiak: I appreciate your comments and I think they are quite appropriate.

Mr. Chairperson, the minister again refused to answer the question dealing with the 1994 restructuring report that the government has that made a number of very wide-ranging recommendations and which the minister is refusing to release. Now, it is not my tendency to respond to the minister's, shall we say, comments, but for the purpose of the record I think I should respond to a couple. Firstly, I guess what the problem is in this debate is that while we are trying to focus on the issue of privatization and while we are trying to focus on the issues concerning the privatization motive which the government is refusing to answer, the minister seems to be trying to move the agenda toward questioning the credibility and the sincerity of members or anyone who opposes the move.

I would challenge the minister to do as I have done and meet with workers and clients on a regular basis, as I have been doing for several years, to get their viewpoints as to the privatization plan. I have been meeting with home care clients and home care workers ever since I became the Health critic, and we began hearing rumours of privatization, and people came to me and were asking for information. Until we got the actual Treasury Board document signed by the minister for privatization, we only had to deal with rumours and discussion, but once the document came out and verified everything that we had heard, then what we are going through now commenced.

But, Mr. Chairperson, the discussion is not furthered by twisting facts and by allegations of a personal nature going back and forth. I think it would behoove us to try to stick to the issues and try to stick to a discussion of the issues. Let us deal with one of those right off the top, the question of the involvement of We Care, one of the private companies.

* (0940)

The fact is, in 1993, We Care made a proposal that mirrors the government's decision to privatize. I asked

the Premier and I asked the minister to respond. Both have refused to respond to that issue, yet the other side indicates, oh, we are dealing with innuendo and baseless fact. The fact is the company that stands to gain most from privatization happens to be We Care. We Care happens to be the company that made the proposal that mirrors the government proposal to privatize. In the absence of any documentation or any evidence supporting the government position to privatize, is it not a legitimate question to ask, and I will ask for it again. I have asked for a public review of the relationship, the corporate relationship, between We Care and the government and their involvement in the decision, to clear the air, so we will know whether or not the We Care proposal that mirrored the government proposal made in 1993 was the reason the government decided to privatize.

Somehow by asking for that, we get dismissed as attacking personally. That is a very legitimate question and a very legitimate question for the public of Manitoba to have knowledge of. The number of individuals that have spoken to me personally about that issue amount to the hundreds, not the tens, but to the hundreds. So, Mr. Chairperson, it is a legitimate question, and the fact that it has not been answered causes us a good deal of concern. If the government could come up and say, look, here is the study, here is the proposal that we have from the Department of Health in favour of privatization, and they were to table it, then you would have something to discuss. In the absence of that, it makes it very, very difficult.

There was a 1994 home care work restructuring report that was extensive in its recommendations. It apparently recommended against privatization. It was initially begun under the auspices of Connie Curran. Somehow the minister tries to make a connection that, because one of Ms. Curran's recommendations is in agreement with ours, that we are in agreement with Connie Curran. I think that is stretching the argument a little far. The minister is the one who has to account for \$3.8 million expenditure, plus \$800,000 in expenses, tax-free U.S., and he signed the cheque. He has to account for it, not us, Mr. Chairperson. After we had warned him and after the utter and abject failure of that exercise was demonstrated.

The 1994 report on work restructuring is significant and figures several times in the document forwarded to

the advisory committee and is mentioned several times. It just does not deal with privatization. It deals with some extensive changes to the home care plan. I think it is incumbent and necessary for the government to table this document because, Mr. Chairperson, if the government refuses or fails to table this document, what conclusions can be drawn? The minister is so concerned about innuendo and accusations floating out there. How does he further his cause by failing to reveal a document that is mentioned on several occasions, that talks about massive changes to the home care system? His failure to provide that document only adds fuel to the fire. It does not help the situation, it does not help the situation one iota.

I am giving the minister an opportunity to clear the air, to forward the document, to allow the public of Manitoba to know what the 1994 home care work restructuring report, the report that is referred to in the home care Strategic Redirection of Home Care response, that is the response of the minister's advisory committee. The minister has an opportunity to clear the air, to further public debate by tabling this document. I urge him to do so and I am asking the minister today, table the document. Let us have a look at it. It is referred to by the advisory committee. It was paid for by the public of Manitoba. It does not help the debate or the discussion any further by the minister's failure to reveal this document.

I note I have a little bit of time, and just for clarification, I again would like to advise the minister, on page 8 of his advisory committee report and again on page 25 of his advisory committee report, the advisory committee relies on the 1994 Home Care Work Restructuring report. We have not received a copy of this report. It is obviously of a significant nature as it relates to the privatization plan. I urge the minister to table the document, clear the air, allow the public of Manitoba to know what Ms. Curran's and what the department's plans were that were forwarded to his advisory committee that was revealed to us yesterday. Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

Mr. McCrae: Mr. Chairman, the honourable member referred to the report of the Advisory Committee for the Continuing Care Program, and I will read the letter that was written to me yesterday by two members of that advisory committee. In fact, I do not think I will read the whole letter. I will just read this part of it, and I quote:

it is our understanding that this committee did not advise against contracting out a portion of the present services.

So, Mr. Chairman, was there something you wanted to say?

Mr. Chairperson: No.

Mr. McCrae: The report of the Advisory Committee to the Continuing Care Program is of course part of the documentation advice that the government has received, but that report has to be tempered by the following written to me in a letter yesterday by Myrna Fritchett and Joyce Rose are members of the advisory committee. That being—

Point of Order

Mr. Chomiak: On a point of order. This is the third time in a space of half an hour the minister is reading the same letter into the record. I just wonder what purpose is gained by a verbatim reading into the record of a letter that has been verbatim read into the record on two previous occasions within the last 30 minutes.

Mr. Chairperson: On the honourable member's point of order, I do not believe he has a point of order. I have been listening very closely to the minister, and he has been directing certain quotations from that letter specifically towards certain areas of the question that the member had asked. So as long as he is within those guidelines, I am afraid we will have to rule him in order.

* * *

Mr. Chairperson: The honourable minister to continue.

Mr. McCrae: Mr. Chairman, I am afraid I am in order, too. I do not know, the honourable member, he seems to want to take his time in this committee and ask the questions, but then it is almost like he wants me to be the kind of puppet that he is to the union bosses, and I will not be—

Mr. Chairperson: Order, please. I have asked the honourable members if they could refrain from the personal attacks on individual members, and I am afraid we are getting pretty close to the line when we start bringing forward those types of situations.

The honourable minister to continue.

Mr. McCrae: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will continue reading the report. I was interrupted earlier because my time ran out, and so I will finish doing that. I will go back a little bit so we get this in proper context. It is not an honest or forthright comparison, Hoppe said from his Winnipeg office, complaining that the starting rates of private company employees were being compared to the top of scale wages for government employees. In fact, Hoppe said the differences on a pay cheque amounted to around 10 percent.

While home care attendants contend clients will suffer under a privatized system, Diana Ross of Brandon said she and her husband, Andy, have had home care from We Care and from the government and would not be able to choose between the two services. We have both of them, and I am satisfied with both of them, Ross said in a telephone interview Wednesday.

* (0950)

Neepawa's Noreen Sage, who oversees the care of a female relative of her husband's, said We Care has filled in for the government attendants in the past. When home care could not get there because of bad weather and so on, they were the back-up people that went in and did her work for her, Sage said. They also do her foot care. The main reason we have home care is to look after mealtimes and medication. Since the strike began Tuesday morning, We Care has taken over the care of Sage's relative, and the changeover took place without a hitch, Sage said. They have only been there yesterday and today, and things went very smoothly. Everything seemed to be just great, Sage said.

Now, Mr. Chairman, the honourable member for Transcona (Mr. Reid) wants to get into the act. You call us to order from time to time for our misdeeds in this House, but the honourable member for Transcona is now joining the pack, as it were. He may just on his own settle down a little bit, but he might have to be reminded to do that.

Mr. Chairperson: Order, please. I think that I will remind the members of the committee that the Chairperson will be responsible for the decorum. If I need any advice on the decorum of the House I would ask the honourable members to do it in a point of order form, and I will rule with that point of order at that time.

But I would also advise the honourable members who are within the Chamber at this time, if they want to enter into the debate I am sure they can ask their questions at that time. We are attempting to keep the decorum at a very level playing field here, and we have succeeded so far this morning. I appreciate the assistance of all members. If any members do not want to enter into this debate, we would appreciate it if they leave the Chamber. The honourable minister to continue.

Mr. McCrae: Since the strike began Tuesday morning, We Care has taken over the care of Sage's relative. The changeover took place without a hitch, Sage said. They have only been there yesterday and today, and things went very smoothly, and everything seems to be just great, Sage said.

Should the privatization plans become reality, Sage said she would not be concerned about the change. But she said the scenario might be different for someone who was completely alone. It is a small town, and they know that I might pop in at any time and ask embarrassing questions, Sage said with a laugh. But we are quite pleased with what has been going on, and I have no complaints at all. I think it is quite a good thing that they were in town and were able to take over like this. End of quote.

I have not finished reading Frances Russell yet but I have not been surprised by anything I have read in there yet. There is one thing about Frances Russell, consistency runs through all of her editorials, all of her work. There is an uncommon consistency there. Of course I do not agree with a lot of the things she says, so one could say a foolish consistency. I think it was Ralph Waldo Emerson who said that a foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds. I believe that was Emerson. Sometimes I get these things just slightly wrong, so maybe the member for Transcona (Mr. Reid) should run on over to the library and check out and see if I got that right. But I think that is what Emerson said.

By the way, the demonstration project that I tabled yesterday, report of the demonstration project which flowed from the APM contract of 1993, the membership of the steering committee there, I should just put that on the record for honourable members, the chair was Frank Maynard, Deputy Minister of Health. Jeanette Edwards, executive director of the Health Action Centre was on

there, Dr. Ken Brown, Registrar of the College of Physicians & Surgeons of Manitoba was on there. Betty Havens, at that time the assistant deputy minister in the Department of Health was on that steering committee. Marilyn Robinson, at that time interim director of the home care branch, was on it. Marilyn Robinson is now the president of the Manitoba Association of Registered Nurses. Cathy Lussier, Winnipeg home care supervisor. Dr. Evelyn Shapiro, department of community health, University of Manitoba. We have recently heard from Dr. Shapiro.

Mr. Chairperson: Order, please. As previously agreed, the time being 9:55, this committee will recess until 10:15. Agreed? The committee is recessed.

The committee recessed at 9:55 a.m.

After Recess

The committee resumed at 10:43 a.m.

Mr. Chairperson: The meeting will come to order.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, I just want to indicate that I appreciate that we had an opportunity to attend the ceremony occurring in the Rotunda to name the names of all of the victims of the Holocaust, and I want to indicate that it was acknowledged by the organizers of the event publicly that we in the Chamber had adjourned. I think it was appreciated by all in attendance that we had recognized the importance of the ceremony and took some time and acknowledged the ceremony per se.

To return to my line of questioning, the advisory committee report that was tabled yesterday was prepared by the committee. After having been for the first time apprised of the government's goal and intention to privatize home care services, and having been in operation for almost two years and having worked and tried to be participant in the process, the committee was simply told that the government was going to privatize and they were given documents and told to comment on that. Notwithstanding that, the committee did refer to the 1994 report and indicated that, as a result of a report provided to them by the 1994 work restructuring report, the '94 report had advised against privatization, so we have added to the list another report, government-

commissioned, government-sanctioned, government-paid for saying again, do not privatize. Again, the case builds against the government argument for privatization.

My question to the minister is, an the minister please indicate—the Premier has indicated that the initiative to privatize is going to save \$10 million over three years. The minister in previous statements indicated that there would be no savings and the associate deputy minister said that there might be \$10 million, but they were not sure. The advisory committee in its report indicated that there was no cost data provided to them, and I wonder if the minister might table the cost analysis today and the cost data on the government's plans to privatize home care.

Mr. McCrae: I see a box on page A5 of today's Winnipeg Free Press, an edition I will refer to in a moment after I have referred to the Price Waterhouse report. The Price Waterhouse report, I am reading, I am looking at the executive summary of that. The Price Waterhouse project or contract, I do not know—does the honourable member recall what the Price Waterhouse report cost? Maybe he could tell us that.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, I take it from the minister's response that he is not intending or unable to answer my question about providing the committee with details of the cost analysis and the cost breakdown about the government plans to privatize because the Premier has said that it will save \$10 million over three years. The minister has said publicly that there is no cost savings, and the associate Deputy Minister of Health has said, well it might be \$10 million but we are not sure; and the advisory committee report that the minister tabled yesterday made reference to a lack of cost analysis and lack of data for them to make their decisions about the whole issue of privatization and whether or not the government would privatize.

I want to use the opportunity, Mr. Chairperson, to perhaps deal with some of the minister's previous statements in the committee concerning several matters. I normally do not, but I think it is important that some of these items be cleared up. I am sure the minister is just as anxious as I am to clear up some of these items.

The minister has made constant reference to comments about the VON. It is ironic that we have been fighting

to maintain the VON, and the government has been doing everything it can to destroy the VON and the contract. So the minister's statements again are wrong.

With respect to self-managed care, the minister has said that we were opposed to self-managed care. I only remind the minister that the whole process started when we were the previous administration, and it was concluded under this administration that we have always supported the concept of self-managed care.

* (1050)

The minister failed to acknowledge, in his constant reading of the Kelli Paige letter, that in fact in the article in yesterday's Sun she indicated that she was not in favour necessarily of privatization. I think that is noteworthy.

The minister also had significant comments about tactics and things like that, and I think that there is no need for honourable members to even respond to comments of those kind by the minister.

Just returning to the line of questioning, the minister seemed unable or unwilling to answer the question about the costing analysis and the costing figures as contained and as referenced in his own committee's report on his own advisory committee. I guess this speaks volumes about the continuing closed nature of the decision-making process by the government. The decision to privatize was kept to a very small, narrow circle of individuals and would have been kept like that had we not fortuitously had a copy of the Treasury Board's submission and were able to make it public and thereby generate discussion.

Finally, after we made the document public, the minister decided he could have his advisory committee that he put in place two years ago to advise him on changes to home care, actually take a look at the privatization plan. Again, it speaks volumes about the practices of the government in terms of information management, cloistered at best, and it also speaks volumes about how important it is for the public to have an understanding of the issues involved and have an opportunity to debate, which is why we repeatedly ask in this Chamber for the minister to provide us with information and to provide us with details about what the government plans are with respect to the privatization.

Mr. Chairperson, in the advisory committee report it is fairly clear that the government is going to set up a home care agency, a Crown corporation or some other corporate entity to handle the privatization, the contracting out. Indeed, in the cabinet Treasury Board submission, under the signature of the minister, in the minister's plan there is actually identified a line item in this year's Estimates that will be expended in this year for the establishment of the Crown corporation.

Finally, on the day after we revealed to the public the government's plans, the minister's plans to privatize home care, the minister said that he saw no difficulty or no problem in setting up this Crown corporation and moving on it immediately. I would like the minister to advise the House today, given these factors, given that the advisory committee received a copy of the plan, and that the minister advise this House today as to what the plans are for the Crown corporation.

Mr. McCrae: I asked the honourable member if he can tell us what the Price Waterhouse report cost.

Mr. Chairperson: Order, please. At this time, I would like to remind the minister that we are dealing with the section of the Committee of Supply under item 1.(b)1. If the minister is asking for clarification of the question of the honourable member, that would be appropriate at this time, but if you can explain to me where the report of Price Waterhouse is reflected within his question then that would be fine, but I am having trouble relating the two at this time.

Mr. McCrae: Yes, Mr. Chairman. The honourable member has been asking questions about home care. We are on that line respecting administration in the department, and we have been told by the Chair that the discussion can be quite wide ranging, and in the spirit of that wide-ranging nature of the debate, that is the spirit within which I am working. The honourable member can pass this line and get on to something else if he wants, but I can only go by the direction we got from the Chair, which is that this is wide-ranging. What the honourable member wants to do, I am sure, is flesh out as much as he can with respect to home care, and that would be a useful thing to do. It is in that regard that he wants to know about cost. We have talked about cost publicly and in this House, and we will continue to do so, no doubt.

The reason that I ask this is that the Price Waterhouse report told the NDP that they should bring in user fees, that they should cut services, and that is all part of the background to everything that is going on here. I think there is probably a clear intention, as evidenced in the Price Waterhouse report when the New Democrats were in office, to bring in user fees and to cut services, but I would like to get at that so we can have these proposals on the table for discussion. We do not believe in cutting services and bringing in user fees. The NDP does. I just want to know how much they paid for that advice.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, just for clarification, I do not know if the minister is aware of this, and perhaps this would help solve the difficulty. There was a report that was created in 1986 called the Price Waterhouse report. The minister may not be aware that he has a committee in his department that are looking after the implementation of the Price Waterhouse report.

Perhaps we can resolve these issues if the minister is prepared to bring to this Chamber his officials who are administering and dealing with the very Price Waterhouse report the minister is talking about. Not only will we have information about it, the minister could ask people on that committee, his own committee that know about the report, perhaps they could answer questions, not just for members on this side of the House, but perhaps they could answer questions that the minister seems unaware of with regard to that particular report. Maybe matters can be expedited if the minister were to bring his own committee who were on the Price Waterhouse report to this Chamber to answer questions. I think that would be a very useful exercise.

Mr. McCrae: Mr. Chairman, let me be very clear. There is a strike on. The NDP wants this strike. The NDP wants to abandon the clients of home care, but when the NDP abandons the clients of home care—

Point of Order

Mr. Chomiak: On a point of order, I believe the minister in saying that the NDP wants to abandon the people of home care is imputing motive, and I think it is a very inappropriate statement, particularly in a strike situation, for a minister of the Crown to make about any honourable member in this Chamber, Mr. Chairperson.

Mr. McCrae: On this point, I would invite you, Mr. Chairman, to read Hansard. In Question Period a couple of days ago, the honourable member for Transcona (Mr. Reid) was complaining about people having service being provided to them. Read that and perhaps—what do you call it—~~reserve~~ on this point until you have read what the member for Transcona says. It is very clear that the NDP wants to deny service to clients.

Mr. Chairperson: I will take this under advisement and bring it back to the committee, but I do ask the committee's indulgence. If we do want to accomplish things here, we have to work together as a committee. If we can stay away from the personal attacks and imputing motives, I think it does start adding to a little bit of the decorum problems that we run into from time to time and, yes, we are under a lot of pressure the way things are today, so I ask for your indulgence. I will bring back the advice on the honourable member's point of order.

*(1100)

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Mr. McCrae: Mr. Chairman, I do not think I engaged in a personal attack; I engaged in a general attack on the NDP. The NDP wants to abandon the clients of home care. The public needs to know that. It is very relevant to this debate, and while the NDP wants to abandon the clients of home care, those clients need service. My department is busy. They do not have time to come in here and answer the honourable member's questions. We are busy trying to provide service to the clients of the home care system. [interjection]

It would be relevant for us to know and maybe our implementation team will provide me with this information, but surely the honourable member is so close to this. He knows so much about home care. He knows so much about every aspect of the home care system; he must know how much the NDP paid Price Waterhouse for their advice to bring in user fees and to cut services. I mean the honourable member cannot have it all ways. He wants to but he cannot. I will not let him. See, he cannot come in here as the self-proclaimed expert on home care without that key piece of information, how much did the NDP pay for the recommendation to cut home care and to bring in user fees? It is a very relevant question. The members

opposite, I do not mean this personally, I just make a general condemnation of the NDP, and I will not be specific and single out the member for Kildonan or the member for Transcona, Mr. Chairman, but they are part of the NDP, and they will have to judge for themselves whether they should be included in that condemnation.

The fact is they want to remove services from senior citizens in this province. They will not discuss an essential services agreement. If they insist that there be a strike, so be it, but why do they not care about people who require services, people who need to be turned in their beds, people who need to have their oxygen turned off or on, people who need help with their bowel movement routine each day? Why will they not help out? Why will they not stand up? They are always talking about standing up for people. Why do they not stand up for people who have Alzheimer's disease? Do honourable members realize what it is like to live with Alzheimer's disease? Do they realize what it is like to live with multiple sclerosis? [interjection] Well, then why, if they do—the member for Transcona says he does—then why does he insist that those people not get any service? Why, Mr. Chairman?. Why do those New Democrats not care about people who have Parkinson's disease? Do they know what it is to live with Parkinson's disease?

Point of Order

Mr. Chomiak: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman, the minister is again going right off the track in saying that we are insisting that home care clients not get service, I think is inappropriate—[interjection]

Mr. Chairperson: Order, please. The honourable member for Kildonan at this time is putting forward his point of order. I would like to hear what the honourable member has to say.

Mr. Chomiak: It is totally inappropriate in a strike situation or any situation indeed to suggest that honourable members are insisting that home care recipients, many in life and death or life threatening situations, do not get access to home care. I take personal exception, I take exception as a member of the Legislature, I take exception as a member of a constituency who spoke yesterday with a gentleman who had multiple sclerosis who had to be moved to a hospital

who is going through a great deal of difficulty and who had asked for my help and I had phoned. I take great exception to the minister saying that not only do we not care, but in saying that we insist that these people not get care. I think that is completely inappropriate for a member of the Crown, the Minister of Health, to suggest, Mr. Chairperson.

Mr. McCrae: On the same point of order, Mr. Chairman, the honourable member for Kildonan is indeed sensitive on this point. This is the very, very touchiest point in this whole issue. It is bad enough that he supports a strike that removes services from people, but he supports removing services from multiple sclerosis patients living happily in their homes and being shipped off to hospitals. This is what they want. They have made it very clear, and if you need evidence for that, in your review of this particular point of order in a long string of points of order, read what the member for Transcona had to say in Question Period a couple of days ago. Have a look at that. He objects to people—I think his question had to do with calling in staff of the Department of Health to assist with assisting clients of the Home Care program. He objects to that. He stood in his place and said so. I invite you to read that, and the honourable member for Kildonan simply does not know what he is talking about or he is carrying on with this sort of attack on the clients of our home care system.

Mr. Chairperson: I would like to thank the members for their input—if you will just give me one minute. Order please. I would like to advise the honourable members that they did not have a point of order, it was a dispute over the facts. I would advise all honourable members to choose their words carefully or we will be ending up on points of order for the rest of the morning and we will not accomplish much.

* * *

Mr. McCrae: Mr. Chairman, the New Democrats support cuts in service and user fees. Will they tell us how much they paid for the advice that gives them the right to support those things?

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, I thought that I had been of some assistance to the committee by recommending to the minister, advising the minister firstly that if he did not know, that he has an

implementation committee on the Price Waterhouse report, and that he could bring these officials in from this committee and they could answer. Not only could they answer the questions for us, but they could probably help us by answering other questions with regard to home care. But the minister seems unwilling or unable to take us up on that particular point.

I am very, very tempted to respond to some of the comments of the minister, but I will let the record show that perhaps in the heat of the situation that is going on some members have a tendency to say things that are inappropriate and inaccurate, and I would hope as we move along in this committee that we will be able to deal not with personalities but with issues and facts.

If the minister does not want to answer my question, the minister can simply state he does not want to answer my question, but to counter with attacks, I think, is counterproductive. I return again to the Advisory Committee to the Continuing Care Program, and I return to the question that I posed to the minister initially, and the minister—

An Honourable Member: . . . rumoured to be a \$5-million contract—Price Waterhouse, \$5 million. Is that true?

Mr. Chomiak: The minister keeps throwing figures out about contracts, and I just want to remind the minister that the largest consulting contract in provincial history may soon be about to be ~~outdone~~ by KPMG. The largest consulting contract in provincial history was signed by this minister to one Connie Curran in APM management, and I believe that contract was \$3.8 million plus \$800,000 in expenses tax-free U.S. And the minister signed that, and I dare say—in fact, Mr. Chairperson, it is significant that Connie Curran should come up, and I am glad that the minister mentioned it. I am glad it has come up because, as a result of the Connie Curran contract, she was engaged to do a home care study. The home care study is referred to in the advisory committee report that the minister tabled yesterday, but the one piece of information the minister did not table yesterday was the 1994 Connie Curran study that we paid up to \$3.8 million plus \$800,000 in expenses tax-free U.S. We paid that. The Minister of Finance signed the cheques, but the Minister of Health signed the contracts and doled over the money.

* (1110)

But we do not have a copy of that report, and I repeatedly have asked the minister during the course of these Estimates to provide us with a copy of the '94 report. He is either unable or unwilling to provide us with a copy of that report, and I have asked that question on numerous occasions and I am not going to pursue that. I again just reiterate to the minister I would appreciate if he would table it and allow Manitobans to decide upon themselves as to why you decided to privatize, because I again reiterate to the minister that that report apparently suggested, not apparently, it is quoted, that report is quoted in the advisory committee report: Contracting out service delivery among multiple providers is not advisable due to difficulty ensuring quality of service and difficulty co-ordinating across multiple services. Contracting out service delivery requires clear program standards and a system capable of monitoring. Neither of these conditions exist at this time.

So, Mr. Chairperson, it is very relevant, and it is very significant, and we are not getting it. But to return to my question that I asked initially, the minister indicated that the Crown corporation would be set up this year to privatize home care. The advisory committee's documents indicate that the Crown corporation—I have got the document in front of me—it suggests a Crown corporation is going to be set up almost immediately. There is an item in the Treasury Board paper signed by the minister on the privatization plan, the minister's privatization plan, and in the minister's privatization plan there is an indication, not an indication, there is a direction that money will be expended out of this year's Estimates for the establishment of this Crown corporation.

I would like to ask the minister what the status is of his privatization Crown corporation that he referred to on February 28 that would be set up this year that is referred to in the advisory committee documents, and in the minister's privatization Treasury Board submission signed by the minister, there is reference to an expenditure of I believe \$150,000 for the establishment of the Crown corporation.

I am not sure, because the minister is so excited and so excited, if he heard the question, so I will repeat it again.

Can the minister outline for us today what the status is of the Crown corporation to monitor or control the privatization of home care as directed by the minister in his Treasury Board submission of December 16, 1995, and referred to by the minister on February 28 in the Free Press as going ahead and as referred to in the advisory committee document that was tabled yesterday? What is the status of that Crown corporation? Is it going to be up and running this year?

Mr. McCrae: I cannot confirm or deny this, but it has been suggested that the NDP paid \$5 million U.S. for the Price Waterhouse report. There is also a suggestion that a number of key people in Price Waterhouse are from Dallas and New York. I wonder if the honourable member can straighten that out for me, please.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, I think the minister is confusing things here. I just want to correct the minister. The minister is probably confusing the Connie Curran report, the APM report that the minister commissioned and signed and paid \$3.8 million plus \$800,000 in expenses tax-free U.S. for Connie Curran APM associates headquartered in Chicago and New York and the five principles who flew down here regularly and initially stayed at the Westin Hotel and then occupied extra suites at St. Boniface Hospital and Health Sciences Centre. I think the minister is confusing the Price Waterhouse report of which the minister has an implementation committee and officials who are working on it. The minister perhaps should ask those officials. I know they are busy. All officials of the Department of Health are very occupied and preoccupied on the strike as is necessary, but he might want to put a call into some of those officials who could clarify for him.

I am not sure if he knows he has an implementation committee, but I am advising him he does. He has an implementation committee in his own department. He could ask these individuals perhaps, and they would clarify the confusion the minister seems to have between the APM Connie Curran report that the minister signed the cheques for, or the Minister of Finance signed the cheques for, and the Price Waterhouse report that was commissioned over 10 years ago. Perhaps if the confusion could be clarified in the minister's mind, he would understand.

I go back to my question to the minister. When you signed the Treasury Board document in December 1995

to privatize home care, there is a chart on there for the establishment of a Crown corporation. It is called Home Care Agency. The Home Care Agency, according to the minister's signed document, is: They will carry out research; telemarketing—telemarketing for a home care agency? I hope the minister gets that one—technology; evaluation; assessment; care planning; quality assurance; contract service delivery. That Home Care Agency, that document I am showing to the minister, it is in the advisory committee report. They were asked to advise on it. The minister, when we released the Treasury Board document, the minister's privatization plan, when we released it to the public for the first time, when we released it the minister that day, stated in the Winnipeg Free Press that this agency would be set up—and I am paraphrasing so I hope it is accurate—within the year. I am quite sure that that is what the minister said because it is quoted.

The Treasury Board document that the minister signed on privatization said that, I believe it is \$150,000 would be expended this budgetary year on the establishment of this home care agency to carry out assessment, evaluation, technology, telemarketing, research, quality and care planning. I am asking the minister today, given that he signed the document, given that he said publicly the agency would be set up, given that the advisory committee on home care was told to comment on the establishment of this agency, I wonder if the minister can advise us and will be prepared to tell us what the status is of this agency.

For reference purposes, on page 28 of the minister's document that he tabled yesterday is a copy of the mandate of this committee. It is on page 28. It has been reproduced from the Treasury Board document, dated December 16, 1995, signed by the minister on the privatization of home care. It is reproduced from that document. That same Treasury Board document in December also indicated \$150,000 would be expended this year on the establishment of this Crown corporation, so I am wondering if the minister could outline for us—and it is very significant, because the story has changed quite dramatically from the minister, in terms of what is happening on the home care privatization, from the initial days when we leaked the document signed off by the minister with respect to privatization of home care, the minister's plan to privatize home care.

When we initially provided that document to the public the minister said they were going ahead full steam. He seems to have backed off. He is nodding though he has not backed off. I do not think he has. I think they are going ahead full steam, as was in the Treasury Board document for the full-scale privatization, which leads to a very interesting series of questions with respect to the negotiations going on now, but I will leave that.

My question to the minister is on this Crown corporation that the minister asked his advisory committee to comment on, which the minister commented on and said was going to be going ahead this year, which the minister signed off when he provided the Treasury Board submission and which is included in this document, what is the status of that Crown corporation? I hope that is specific enough.

* (1120)

Mr. McCrae: It may be true that representatives of Price Waterhouse hail from places like Dallas and New York. I do not know, the honourable member might be able to shed some light on that. But that is the group that the NDP consulted, and they came out with the policy that the NDP would bring in user fees and cut services, make people wait longer for their services. Dilute services is the language used by their supposedly American friends from Price Waterhouse. So the honourable member maybe can tell me whether their friends from Price Waterhouse, the principles of Price Waterhouse, whether there is anybody remotely associated with Price Waterhouse from either Dallas, New York or any other American city, and he might also tell me if it is true that the contract was \$5 million U.S. If that is all not true, then let him tell us. If it is true, let him tell us.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, I again have another, hopefully, a means by which the minister can avail himself of that information that I think will be helpful to the committee, and I am certain it will be helpful to the minister, and that is the former Minister of Health Don Orchard, who knew all of these things, who had these committees set up and established, actually made constant reference during the course of Estimates debates, about three Estimates ago, to the Price Waterhouse report, the former Minister of Health Mr.

Orchard who I believe set up the committees to administer the Price Waterhouse report and who—the minister, I think, was unaware that these committees were in place, but he is now aware that he has implementation committees in his department who were doing this. He might want to check with the former Minister of Health, and he might want to check the Hansard proceedings of this committee in fact where discussions took place by the former Minister of Health Don Orchard who was fully aware of this process and structure and made constant reference to it.

In fact, I do recall, though I do not recall specific figures, the former Minister of Health Don Orchard actually knew not only the figure and cost, but he knew that he had a committee of implementation. I think he had set it up, and he knew the figures of the Price Waterhouse report. So if the minister cannot avail himself and if his officials are too busy on his own implementation committee team, now that he knows he has one with Price Waterhouse, the minister can either phone the members of his own committee to avail himself of that information or perhaps he could check with the former Minister of Health who had a tremendous knowledge of this area. Or finally, to assist the minister, I suggest—you know, our staff are fairly occupied and I would even do it myself; I would check the old Hansard minutes from about three Estimates ago.

With the former Minister of Health, the Honourable Don Orchard, a discussion took place and the former Minister of Health knew those figures, and I think it is referenced in Hansard.

So I think we could save ourselves a lot of time if the minister—he has got a much larger staff than we do—and I know, and the minister has indicated that they are very, very busy, but the minister is spending a lot of time on this issue. I think if he is as concerned about Price Waterhouse as he indicates, and I have no doubt that he is very concerned, he can follow one of these routes, that is, to check with his own implementation team on Price Waterhouse who are fully aware of the Price Waterhouse report, and who are involved in implementation. Secondly, he could check with the former Minister of Health who had a working knowledge, who understood this, or thirdly, he could check Hansard debates, and I have knowledge of the fact that it was referred to by the former Minister of Health who actually had the figure and who knew what that actual figure was.

If he could perhaps check those sources, we could move on in terms of this committee and the minister could then—so I am suggesting three routes and three courses of action to the minister that will assist him in finding out this particular information.

If the minister wants information with respect to the Connie Curran contracts, I have a full file. Probably the biggest file in my office is devoted to the contracts and a lot of the paper from that, and I could refer to that in terms if the minister wants clarification of what that contract was, and I stand to be corrected, but I believe it was the largest consulting contract ever entered into in this regard, I suppose with the exception of Hydro contracts. But, certainly by the Department of Health it was the largest and most expensive contract ever entered into, and that is not even in computing U.S. exchange rates. So I have an extensive file on that, and I could provide that information to the minister.

But I suggest that he check those three sources of information concerning the Price Waterhouse report that he has an implementation committee on, that he could refer to the former minister, or he could refer to Hansard debates in this committee of Estimates that took place, I believe it was three years ago, and I do recall a number being suggested or being offered by the then-Minister of Health Don Orchard.

I find it perplexing that the minister is unwilling or unable to answer the question about the Home Care Agency, because it is so integral to the establishment of this privatization scheme. I think the public of Manitoba deserves to know what the government's plans are with respect to privatization.

Let us consider why this agency was set up. When the minister signed off the Treasury Board document in December, it called for the establishment of a home care agency—one would presume a non-government, or NGO—but the direction seemed to be that it would be a Crown corporation. Contained in the Treasury Board document was a chart and a diagram outlining the duties of this Crown corporation. The minister made reference to it on February 28 when he said that it would be going full steam ahead this year, and in addition, there is an expenditure item of about \$150,000 in regard to this Crown corporation that was in the minister's Treasury Board document on privatization that he signed off.

Finally, and I think most significantly, when the advisory committee on home care was told to examine the whole process of the minister's plans to privatize home care, they were given working documents in this regard and have reproduced, in their report that was tabled yesterday in this House by the minister, a chart that outlines the home care agency. I can only conclude from these actions, Mr. Chairperson, that the plans to proceed with this Crown corporation home care agency are proceeding full steam ahead. The minister has given me no reason to think otherwise, and I can only presume that if the minister is unwilling or unable to answer this question, then we will be proceeding full steam ahead for the establishment of this Crown corporation this year, as was suggested by the minister on February 28, I believe, and as was reproduced from this document.

So my question again is not complex; my question is fairly straightforward: Can the minister give us any indication about the status of the Crown corporation or the home care agency that was to be set up to oversee the privatization of home care, that is, the minister's plan to privatize home care, as outlined in December 1995? Can he outline for us what the plans are for this Crown corporation? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. McCrae: This page xix, Mr. Chairman, Price Waterhouse report, NDP policy, number—the first one—and I quote: The program should require regional program managers to manage their budgets more actively and to stay within approved levels and should give program staff greater discretion over service levels per client, i.e., permitting dilution of services in order to achieve budget targets. That is NDP policy. Here is the second NDP policy: The program should give consideration to introducing measures that would serve to encourage clients to meet their needs through their own resources, e.g., user fees, waiting periods prior to receiving non-professional services, user fees during the initial period of service and limiting hours in which services are provided. End quote. NDP policy. We would like to know how much they paid for that advice.

Mr. Chomiak: I am perplexed, Mr. Chairperson. I have asked the minister for the third or fourth time about his Treasury Board document, his submission to privatize home care, a specific question about it, and the minister has refused to answer. The minister has countered with a reference to a report from 1986. I have

already told the minister that he has an implementation team for this committee. Perhaps he could aid the process by having one or two of these members appear in this committee at our next sitting and they could answer the questions. They could answer the questions that the minister is posing with respect to the Price Waterhouse report. His own committee members, his members of staff, could answer the questions for us and permit the minister to be satisfied as to what his questions are. I do not understand why the minister would not avail himself of that. If his staff members are so preoccupied on the situation, then perhaps at a later date when the matter is resolved the minister can bring in those staff members who are in fact charged with that responsibility, he can bring them in and he could answer the questions for the minister.

* (1130)

Secondly, Mr. Chairperson, I have told the minister, the former Minister of Health Don Orchard was well aware of the situation. If he would refer to Hansard debates of three years ago he would see reference to that particular question, that particular point. Now, the minister only has to check Hansard to find out, or, more directly, if the minister has a moment perhaps he could phone the former Minister of Health Don Orchard, who set up the committees that the minister now has to deal with the implementation of the Price Waterhouse report.

So, Mr. Chairperson, I think that we could certainly expedite matters in this regard if the minister were to follow these suggestions. I do not see any particular need to continue asking the same question when I am not getting a response. I guess the record will have to show that the minister was unable or unwilling to answer the question.

I guess I will have to pursue another line in questioning. Perhaps the minister is more familiar and would be more comfortable if he were to answer questions about his Treasury Board submission dated December 16, 1995, signed off by the minister and entitled Strategic Redirection of Home Care. This was the Treasury Board document that we obtained and we were able to provide to the public to allow them to debate the issue of home care, Mr. Chairperson. This document that was signed off by the minister outlines the departmental plans for the privatization of home care. I made reference to it before, particularly the reference to

the future utilization of user fees by the government in regard to home care, and that is contained in the document.

In fact I will quote from the document. It says under the title What Will Be, services to be categorized: core services, government funded; core services, government/customer share costs. I will come back to that. Then noncore services, customer funded.

Of course, Mr. Chairperson, this strongly suggests—it does not suggest, this says there will be user fees. This says that core services will have the government and the home care patient share the cost. The minister does not like using the words “user fees” except in the context of the Price Waterhouse report, but maybe there is some other explanation as to why his document, signed off by the minister, does not suggest but recommends and says what will be will be the establishment of shared costs between the customer and the government as relates, I want to reiterate, not as relates to noncore services but as relates to core services.

Now, I have made reference to that, and the minister has refused to answer the question. In fact, the minister refused to answer any questions about the document that he signed off, that was under his direction for the privatization of home care. He has refused to answer these questions but I, again, in the interests of public knowledge, in the interests of assisting in the process, in the interests of—you know, Mr. Chairperson, this Treasury Board document has been reproduced in the thousands, and thousands of Manitobans have this document. I know that because they come up to me and they say, what about this on this page and what about this on this page? They come up to me with the same questions that I am posing in this House.

So if the minister has difficulty answering my questions, perhaps he can reflect on the fact, perhaps he could recognize that these questions are being asked by Manitobans who have a copy of his document signed off by the minister calling for the privatization of home care. They have a copy of this document. In fact, the minister was asked the question that I am posing today on the core services' user fee issue. He was again unable or unwilling to answer at the forum that was attended by myself that the minister spoke at about a week and a half ago.

I guess at some point the minister is going to have to explain this policy. He has been unable and unwilling to explain why he signed off this document to privatize home care and why it is now Manitoba Health policy, and I quote: Divestiture of all service delivery, divestiture of all service delivery is Manitoba Health policy.

I would like to know where that policy came from. I would like to know; the public would like to know, where that came from. I would also like to know about the Crown corporation that is contained in this document, what is to be entailed, how it is to be set up. I would like the minister to answer questions about that because in this document, in this Treasury Board submission, it is stated that expenditures will be expended this budgetary year, the very Estimates that we are discussing, for the establishment of this Crown corporation, this government model. And it is stated in this document that the minister is going to use funds that we are talking about now in the course of these Estimates to set up this Crown corporation to privatize home care.

So I think it is very important and very significant that the minister take the time to answer these questions and take the time to inform Manitobans as to what his plans are and what the government's plans are. Further, with respect to this document, there are a myriad of questions about the provision of service.

This document states that the VON are a big loser, and that the VON are going to be eliminated from the process. I think the VON, who have done outstanding service in the community, I believe it is for 100 years—why is the government seeking to disband that organization, and why is the government seeking to eliminate the VON who have done so much to build up the program? But it is stated in the document that the VON are going to be eliminated, except they will get a chance to bid, I might add. They might get to bid on one of the contracts, but they will be eliminated from the provision and the supplying of home care in Manitoba.

In the Treasury Board document, I want to quote again from the minister's privatization: Initiate expenditures toward start-up of the new company to a maximum \$150,000 in 1995-96 and 1996-97.

So we are not just talking about airy-fairy stuff. The government has committed itself to \$150,000 in the last

budgetary year and \$150,000 this year. So I wonder if the minister might explain to us today what he intends to do in this regard on this variety of issues.

Mr. McCrae: I know this does not have the signature of the member for Kildonan because he was not a member of the Doer-Pawley government, but it must have the signature of Gary Doer, the Leader of the Opposition, because he was in the Pawley government, so I do not know, probably signed by Gary Doer.

Anyway, it says: the program should require regional program managers to manage their budgets more actively and to stay within approved levels and should give program staff greater discretion over service levels per client, i.e., permitting dilution of services in order to achieve budget targets, and the program should give consideration to introducing measures that would serve to encourage clients to meet their needs through their own resources, e.g., user fees, waiting periods prior to receiving non-professional services, user fees during the initial period of service and limiting hours in which services are provided.

We will do our own investigation, Mr. Chairman, but how much did the NDP pay for the development of this policy of theirs with respect to user fees and cutting services?

* (1140)

Mr. Chomiak: I have a further suggestion to assist the minister and hopefully assist this committee. I note the report the minister is referring to is only a photocopy of only some small recommendations. I have in my possession the full report that we pulled out of the library, and I am prepared to provide that full report to the minister, so that he can review the whole report. Maybe that will answer some of the questions that he seems to have so much difficulty dealing with. Mr. Chairperson, that is the fourth suggestion that I have now made today to help the minister deal with his difficulties with the report. You know, I am almost tempted to phone some of the officials from the Department of Health who are involved in the implementation of this report and ask them to perhaps do a memo or speak to the minister to let him know, not only that they exist—well, he is aware they exist now, because I have told him three or four times—so that they could provide

the minister with some of these answers to the question of this particular report that was produced about 10 years ago.

I guess any objective observer who has occasion to review the proceedings thus far this morning in this Estimates process will, in initial reading, think that we have not made a lot of progress. I, being an eternal optimist, suggest we have made some progress, Mr. Chairperson. Let me sum up some of the things that we have accomplished: The minister is now aware that he has an implementation committee for the Price Waterhouse report. Secondly, he is now aware of some vehicles and some information that he can obtain from his own committee members. I have given him some options and alternatives to find out answers to the pressing questions that he is posing today.

Secondly and more important, insofar as the minister has been unwilling or unable to answer the questions posed about his privatization plan, I can suggest that the minister does not want to answer questions about the privatization plan. It is fairly clear from a reading of these debates that the Minister of Health does not want to answer questions about the Crown corporation, about the costing that he was contradicted about by his leader, about the implementation of user fees on the home care program, about the recommendations in 1994 of Connie Curran with respect to restructuring. None of these questions the minister has been prepared to answer, and the minister in fact has refused to answer these questions. So I do not know what to suggest about what the minister's desire is in this regard. It is fairly clear that he is not prepared to answer questions dealing with the topics as they relate to Manitobans. He was not prepared to do it yesterday with the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux). He is clearly not prepared to answer questions today dealing with the issues that are first and foremost in the minds of Manitobans, and that is the entire question of the contracting out of service delivery and the privatization of home care in Manitoba.

Mr. Chairperson, I guess I, in the interest of moving things along in this committee, will try to move to another line of questioning in the hope that the minister will perhaps see his way clear to answering to us and through us to the public of Manitoba about some of the initiatives that they have undertaken. The minister has recently received a letter from the Manitoba Association

of Registered Nurses that is somewhat critical, to the say the least, of the government plan to privatize home care.

I wonder if the minister, in light of the fact that virtually no organization, virtually no group has endorsed the government, literally no group, no organization, no agency has endorsed the government plan to privatize, and insofar as the minister has been unable to produce a single document supporting the privatization, and insofar as the government has been unable to produce a single study endorsing or recommending or condoning the government plan to privatize, and insofar as almost every single organization in health care that I am aware of has said that they are against the minister's plans to privatize, and insofar as the minister has now received a letter from the Manitoba Association of Registered Nurses—the same organization that the minister cited time and time again both in this Chamber during the course of Question Period and during the course of last year's Estimates as the organization that the minister consults with on a regular basis before he implements policy—insofar as this organization has sent him a strongly worded letter dated April 3, 1996, criticizing the minister's plan to privatize, insofar as the minister himself has suggested time and time again the significance of this organization and their work, insofar as this organization has now come out against the minister's plan to privatize; I wonder if the minister might comment on whether or not this letter dated April 11, '96 from MARN against privatization has had any effect on him concerning the government plan to privatize.

Mr. McCrae: Mr. Chairman, we have, I think, worked fairly hard to try to extend a hand and lock arms, as a matter of fact, with the Manitoba Association of Registered Nurses and go forward with some of the changes going on in health in Manitoba. I look at the Youville Centre satellite project, for example, in St. Vital. I have been out there. I was able to officially open that nurse-managed care unit there, and I was pleased to be joined in that by representatives of the Manitoba Association of Registered Nurses.

When you have partnerships it is not like the union, Mr. Chairman, where everybody is forced to think the same way. There is a sort of a thought-police mentality that goes on at the upper echelons of the union, and if you do not agree, then you are intimidated and threatened

by your union bosses. That is not the way we partner on this side of the House. I know that is the way the New Democrats do, but it is not the way we do things. We partner in a real way. Partners do not always agree. Partners continue to work together. Partners discuss and consult, and one of the partners in this case, the government of Manitoba, has been elected by the people of Manitoba to make decisions and to govern in this province for the highest good of everyone in the province and not just the union bosses.

Indeed the president of the MARN, Marilyn Robinson, is a former interim director of our Home Care Branch, and also a member of the steering committee of the Home Care Demonstration Project. So I do not need to hear from—you see, the honourable member's way of looking at it, Mr. Chairman, is that you partner with somebody so therefore you do what they tell you. That is the approach that they take when they are in opposition, but not when they are in government.

I remember back in 1987, I think it was, reading in this House a news article from the head of the Manitoba Society of Seniors. Her name was Marguerite Chown. At that time I think it was over Pharmacare increases that the NDP were bringing in, probably as part of their macro strategy of user fees and cutting services, but I remember reading an article from, I think it was the MSOS Journal, if not that, it was one of the other newspapers. Marguerite Chown was the president of the MSOS, and she said that the members of the MSOS felt betrayed by the New Democratic Party.

* (1150)

So what is new, Mr. Chairman? Nobody is being betrayed around here, but the fact is the honourable member, by his comments today, demonstrates that he does not understand partnership. Partnership, to him, is where you just do what somebody else tells you all the time. Well, I can tell the honourable member that there are all kinds of points of view out there in our society on any one issue. In fact, on farm issues there are all kinds of points of view. One of my farm friends says if you get two farmers together in a room, you are going to get three opinions. Well, I do not know about that, but that is what my friend the farmer told me. With the NDP, of course, you are going to get lots of opinions on each and every topic and they are not always consistent. Today,

they sit in this place and they join their union-boss buddies on the picket lines and they say, oh, those awful Tories, they are going to bring in user fees and cut services, which is not the policy of this government. Yet I have this report, this NDP report, that says we should bring in user fees and cut services. You be the judge or maybe you cannot be the judge. Let the people of Manitoba be the judges.

Mr. Chomiak: Again, in a spirit of optimism I suggest we are making progress. I suggest the minister has indicated that we on this side of the House are expressing a viewpoint based on viewpoints that we have gathered and heard concerning privatization. Terrific. Now will the minister please table for us his studies, his recommendations, his documents, that justify his plan, signed off by the minister on December 16, 1995, for the privatization of home care? Will he table those documents and table those opinions, Mr. Chairperson.

Let us take the minister's argument. We have MARN opposing the privatization. We have virtually most of the home care workers opposing the government plan to privatize. We have most of the clients that I have spoken to opposing the government plan to privatize. We have the Manitoba Society of Seniors opposing the government plan to privatize. We have virtually every organization affected opposing. We have the Manitoba League of Persons with Disabilities not only opposing but taking an active part in opposing the government plan to privatize. We have David Martin and his organization, Manitoba League of the Physically Handicapped, opposing the government plan to privatize. We have Theresa Ducharme opposing the minister's decision to privatize.

So we have virtually every organization and group opposing the minister's plan to privatize. In addition, Mr. Chairperson, we know that the Connie Curran report opposes the government plan to privatize. We know that there is no cost data justifying the government's plan to privatize home care. We know the minister has refused to answer any questions about it, but we are now at a point where the minister said they have to govern and they have to make decisions, and I agree. They were elected, and I agree. The people spoke, I agree.

Now can the minister then put out, provide to us the documentation, the arguments, the studies, the data,

justifying their plan to privatize, because as I have said time and time again in this Chamber, let the public decide but give them the information first. At this point, the argument has been one-sided because the government has failed to produce any information justifying the decision. So I admit the government has had a tough time selling this. They have not been able to produce any information or any data.

Well, the minister has a chance. This is a public forum. The minister has a chance to come forward with documentation. He has a chance to come forward with studies. He has a chance to table information, studies and data justifying this plan to privatize. Then, perhaps, the court of public opinion out there can decide the issue. But until that happens, Mr. Chairperson, how can we accept the government arguments when in fact all they are a fait accompli. All we have is a Treasury Board submission signed off by the minister saying they are going to privatize. All we have is the minister's advisory committee on home care told to comment on this. All we have is a reference to a 1994 study by the minister's consultant, Connie Curran, indicating that privatization is not the way to go. That is what we have on our side of the argument and virtually all of the organizations. [interjection]

The minister makes reference to the VON. His government document says the VON is the big loser. I am quoting from the document, the Treasury Board document signed off by the minister December 16. Does the minister need a reference to the page on his document? He has it in front of him. It says the VON is a big loser in this process. We have done everything we can to try to save VON as a nonprofit organization. I have questioned the minister for years in the Estimates about the VON contract. I have sensed for some time with my home care committee, and I suggest the minister have a committee like mine of not only clients, but of all of the caregivers. I have learned much from this organization and these people. [interjection] Mr. Chairperson, I am having trouble hearing myself because of the minister.

Mr. Chairperson, I suggest the minister set up a committee that we have, that we meet with regularly, of not just home care providers, but of home care clients who advise us on this information. Perhaps the minister then will have a better appreciation of the issues

involved. The minister referred to VON, and I digressed slightly, but the minister did refer from his seat to VON and the accusation that somehow we do not support VON when we have done everything possible in this Chamber to maintain that organization as an integral part of the home care system. We have worked very, very hard to maintain that organization, and we will continue to work hard to maintain VON as a service, because what the minister fails to say in a lot of his comments is that he has privatized the whole nursing service of home care in the city of Winnipeg. He is privatizing the whole nursing service in Winnipeg. He is privatizing it and he has destroyed the VON as we know it. If these plans come to fruition, I fear for that organization as a result of the minister's plan to privatize dated December 16. His own plan said, the VON will be big losers in this process. I quote, big loser, VON.

An Honourable Member: It says that in the document. Losers, winners, losers.

Mr. Chomiak: Yes, it says that. The minister knows that. So the minister ought not to try to turn things around with respect to our comments on VON, because it is fairly clear where we stand on the VON. [interjection] No, I am just setting the record straight for the minister.

I am giving the minister an opportunity to come forward and provide us with information justifying supporting his decision to privatize home care. The minister made reference to the fact that we are captive of interest groups and we are captive of special groups. Well, all we are trying to do is represent the majority opinion at this point. All we are trying to do is represent what people tell us. You know, the minister ought to spend some time returning the kind of phone call—I do not know if the minister gets his chance to return the hundreds of calls, but he ought to spend some time returning some of the calls that I have to return every day with respect to this issue.

Will the minister table the studies, the documents, the supporting evidence as to why he has chosen in his signed off document dated December 16, 1995, to privatize home care? The minister's plan to privatize home care, will he table his studies, will he allow us to have a meaningful debate in this regard, Mr. Chairperson?

Mr. Chairperson: Order, please. The hour being 12 noon, this section of the Committee of Supply, in accordance with the rules, is recessed until 1 p.m.

The committee recessed at 12 p.m.

After Recess

The committee resumed at 1:07 p.m.

Mr. Chairperson: Before the recess, we were dealing with item 1.(b)(1). The staff can enter the Chamber if they are present.

Mr. Chomiak: Just to complete my question that I posed prior to the break, will the minister therefore table the—we know the minister has a We Care study done at Seven Oaks Hospital. It deals with a very minute portion of the population, a select group, Mr. Chairperson, but he has no recommendations, no study, no data, to justify his decision to privatize home care, his decision signed under his name December 16, 1995, to privatize home care.

Will the minister table his documentation and his information?

Mr. McCrae: Mr. Chairman, on February 2, 1995, the honourable member for Kildonan joined me and a lot of nurses and doctors and health professionals in celebrating the release of the report of the project at Seven Oaks Hospital which was a hospital-based, home-care trial project, and the honourable member was there and spoke in guarded, but glowing, shall we say, terms of the outcome of that particular project.

* (1310)

I do not think I need to table the report because the honourable member has read it and probably reread it, but I would like to refer to some of the aspects of that report, which was a report of a joint project with a private company called We Care Home Health Services, and I think it was the Winnipeg franchise. That company, by the way, has about 40 franchises. I understand there are about 4,000 people, more than that, who work for that company. You would wonder how such growth could occur if clients were not pleased with

the service. There has been growth in Drake, Medox, I understand, growth in the Olsten company, growth quite likely with the Central Health Company, as well, and other home health companies.

But here is a patient questionnaire. It is Appendix H to the report. I will read some of them, and I will not leave any out. There will be some that are not quite so positive, but certainly there will be some that are positive, too. The first one says, worked out 100 percent, replaced care I would get in the hospital. Emphasized benefit of someone (VON coming in on a regular basis). There were communication difficulties initially. The hospital would phone and say the patient was ready for discharge, and they were not ready. This happened on two occasions. I liked the program. Everything was okay. I was pleased with We Care's nurse. Excellent. The government should have done this years ago. My husband does not like the hospital. He is much more comfortable here. Thanks for all your help, Theresa—social worker with Home Care—mother is not using a walker now. Very happy to have the opportunity to go home. We Care nurses were as discreet as possible, and I really appreciated this. I was generally satisfied with the project. I had some minor concerns regarding housekeeping. I cannot do my own care in the hospital like I can at home. I think it was a worthwhile project for cost-effective purposes, getting people into a less costly setting. I was very pleased with the care on my last admission. I believe a person heals better at home. At home you have got your TV shows and the better food.

I do not know why it is but every—end of quote, does not seem to matter where you go, nobody has a good thing to say about hospital food and yet I think some of the food in the hospital is very good. I am not a regular attender, but comments I get from patients is not such that hospital food does not live up to its not-so-great reputation. I think people generally, though, are more comfortable taking their meals in their homes, so I think that is what that comment is probably about.

You should have done this years ago. I am doing quite well, and I am trying very hard to look after myself, it is better that way.

Appendix 1 is a patient questionnaire, a surveyor's comments and impressions. Daughter is stressed out but

coping with formal supports and help of her own daughter. Family satisfied in general with overall services received from the hospital. Generally satisfied with the project. Overall, I felt there was general satisfaction. There were some communication difficulties. There was some indication that they felt pressure to take the patient home before they were ready. Even though they only rated overall satisfaction as a 3, they seemed to be quite satisfied with the program and were happy that he could go home early. Definitely satisfied with services. Very positive feedback. This discharge was smoother, especially with the nurse accompanying them home. He was very positive, effusive in praise and expressions of appreciation. Quite positive but seemed vague at times. Very positive experience. Wife expressed at length her satisfaction with the program; it was difficult to terminate the interview. This patient only received services from We Care, cleaning services provided were excellent. Son was pleased with all services received from the hospital. Family found patient's admission to be a difficult time. Discharge team assisted them with their concerns for both parties. Very satisfied with service. Patient was very satisfied with services provided by the project, appreciated the discretion of staff and confidentiality. Timing for being on project was great. A very successful discharge and linkage with a support system. Patient's sister expressed a great deal of satisfaction with the project. Client was pleased with being involved with the project. As services were free, it is difficult to say what value the client might have placed on services if there was a charge. Overall, the patient is satisfied with the discharge. Patient remains in contact with Continuing Care worker. Patient stated that they were very pleased with the care on this admission. Patient carried on at length about the fact that this project should have been done a long time ago. It was difficult for a patient to evaluate services, given that she had very little to date, very pleased to be able to go home with the services, will be going to doctor's office on Friday to have central line removed.

Mr. Chairman, those were some, perhaps all, of the report on the comments made by the patients, and I tried to say that whether we do it as well as we should or not, we should always try to make the patient or the client the focus of what we do. Sometimes we allow ourselves to move away from that a little bit and maybe put the interests of other people ahead of the interests of the

client, and it is something that, it is a human nature sort of thing to do on occasion. We should always try to remind ourselves that we should maybe get away from that a little bit and remember to come back always to putting the concerns and needs of the client ahead of our own narrow interests.

The report, in the Executive Summary, says this: Historically, it has been the perception of patients and patients' families that, once admitted to hospital, discharge would take place following the total recovery of the illness, that is the convalescent period was seen as part of the hospital stay. By the way, it needs to be noted that all work by We Care Home Health Services was provided under controls, regulations and protocols used in the hospital. I am told that early in that project, before a lot of people knew that it was underway, the daily rounds that are done in the hospital to identify patients who might be candidates for this particular program was participated in by a relatively small number of people, but I understand that once others had become aware of the program, people involved—

Mr. Chairperson: Order, please. The honourable member's time has expired.

Mr. Chomiak: Yes, I am familiar with that report, and I am pleased that finally we have a recognition from the minister and the department of the need for a co-ordination and planning of discharge procedures. It has been something we have been advocating over and over again of this government and asking them to do something about home care to ensure that there is a more co-ordinated and a better approach to the system. I am appreciative that the minister actually, in reading those comments, is cognizant of the need for expanded community-based procedures.

* (1320)

I am also pleased that the minister made his comments about putting the client first, and I am glad that we are now dealing on that plane. It now makes the discussion much more relevant because now we can deal with the issues of privatization directly, now that the minister is bringing forward his arguments in favour of privatization, his arguments that were culminated in his signing off of his Treasury Board submission of December 16, 1995, wherein he recommended, and it

was agreed that the government policy would be privatization, now we have an opportunity to debate the governing issues.

Now I take it from what the minister is presenting to us, that as a result of a pilot project engaged into between We Care and Seven Oaks Hospital, approved I might add by the deputy minister of Health, and I am still not certain who paid for that but that can be determined at some point, but now that we are looking at this particular study I guess the minister is saying he has not provided any documentation whatsoever to justify a decision to privatize. I now assume that he is telling us that the government case for privatization is summed up in this one study, this one controlled study, this one experiment, Mr. Chairperson, and I guess the minister is saying, because they did this one study with a handful of patients hand-picked at an institution that that entire process and study has now led the government to completely privatize the home care system, a system that has been in operation for 22 years.

It has been a public system that has its flaws but has worked most effectively, that has been named by the minister's own report that he refers to on a regular basis in this Chamber, that the Price Waterhouse report has called the best home care system in North America. The minister is saying that his study, his We Care study is the reason that they are privatizing home care. The study undertaken by the minister with regard to We Care is the reason that they are privatizing.

Now, Mr. Chairperson, the experience of that study and of that review speaks volumes about what we should be doing in terms of better planning, better co-ordination, better utilization of resources and better care, certainly. But it does not say that completely privatizing the entire home care system is the way to achieve that. I suggest that that same kind of activity and results could be achieved if the VON was offered the opportunity under the same controlled circumstances to do the same thing, but they were not. I find it very, very interesting that the minister takes his pilot project done by We Care and that becomes the justification for the privatization of the entire system.

Mr. Chairperson, is that what the minister is saying? Is the minister saying that he has this study to talk about the need for better planning, better co-ordination? The

fact that it was done by We Care has now justified the entire transformation of the system to a private system, and the dividing up of the city of Winnipeg and four contracts, one to We Care, one to Medox, one to Central Health. Is that what the minister is saying when he refers to those documents? Or is the minister saying that he recognizes the need for planning co-ordination? Does the minister recognize the value of the present home care system as it exists with its nonfragmented service, with its co-ordination ability, with its assessment ability, with its ability to deliver a wide range of service?

Is the minister now recognizing the fact that we can achieve the same ends and the same goals by working within a pre-existing system, or is he saying he is taking the results of this study and somehow interpreting the results of that study as justification for a complete privatization of the home care system as we know it?

Mr. McCrae: No, indeed the honourable member asked me in his previous question about the Seven Oaks project, and I was giving him a bit of a report on that but, no, indeed, that is only one small, actually, dimension respecting decisions that government is making and the direction the government is going.

We have obviously—the honourable member has referred to his report, the Price Waterhouse report, the NDP one, which we do not know. I have not learned yet what we paid. It may be that \$5 million U.S. is low or high, I am not sure which, and it may be that some of the principles of Price Waterhouse are from Dallas and New York. But I do not know that for sure, and we are going to check that. The honourable member can assist on that.

There are a number of things that have been said and done and studied and reviewed and work-grouped and implemented and all the rest of it over the last number of years, but certainly the Price Waterhouse report stands out as a report which identifies the many areas where improvements could be made. It is in this area where—it is disturbing that the honourable member's policy and that of his party is to go back to the system we had in the first place when his own reputed multimillion dollar report suggests that there are things that do need to be addressed. And the honourable member stands and says, just leave everything back the way it was.

The report suggests that we permit the dilution of services. This is NDP policy. I find that somewhat strange under all the circumstances but their policy is also to impose against our senior citizens and disabled people, user fees; waiting periods prior to receiving nonprofessional services. User fees during the initial period of service and limiting hours in which services are provided. Those sorts of things would be the last things I would want to consider. In fact, we are not considering those things. The NDP wants it. We do not. We have a higher regard for the clients than that.

But that is the one report that is out there. I have produced the home care demonstration projects during committee meeting number five report. I have produced the Seven Oaks project report. I can point to a project that is underway now with respect to backup. Well, I do not know what the status is at this moment what with the home care workers being on strike at the moment, but I am sure Central Health company is involved.

I told the honourable member of a report earlier where the government people, by walking off the job, have simply turned it over to the private companies. The private companies are actively engaged in assisting clients as we try to get through this difficult period without an essential services component. The union will not even give us an essential services component to help people who desperately need these services.

There is the Central Health project which is providing backup. That was the subject of a tender, and a number of companies, profit and nonprofit, private ones though, lined up and bid and the Central company was the successful bidder. They are assisting us in providing, when we are not on strike that is, 24-hour, seven-days-a-week service; quicker response to the need to discharge people from hospital and backup service for a member of the regular staff when they are on holidays or on strike or sick time or whatever.

There is the tender that was done for St. Boniface Hospital. There again the privates all lined up and the private Victorian Order of Nurses got that contract for the home IV. Those are a few. We are presently, pursuant to all of these reports and things and recommendations, negotiating with a personal care home for the provision of home care services there.

There is the focus, the Ten Ten Sinclair. We have a contract with them. That is a private situation, where

that is a contract arrangement. The VON itself has a contract arrangement. I have made available to honourable members the report of the Continuing Care advisory committee's report along with the letter from two of its members setting their point of view forth, which says it is our understanding that this committee did not advise against contracting out a portion of present services. Pursuant to, further to the Home Care Demonstration Project, that project made a report to the Continuing Care advisory committee.

They made a presentation and, from that presentation, the Advisory Committee to the Continuing Care Program on page 25 quotes the department's work restructuring report, the one I am about to table, and says contracting out service delivery among multiple providers is not advisable due to difficulty ensuring quality of service and difficulty co-ordinating across multiple services. The only trouble with that quote, Mr. Chairman, is that there is a key word that has been mistranscribed or that word is in error, because what the report says, the home care demonstration project report said in that presentation to the advisory committee is contracting all service delivery among multiple providers is not advisable due to the difficulty, et cetera. The word in the Continuing Care advisory committee report on page 25, instead of saying contracting out, should say contracting all. It is a very, very significant and important error in transcription which, of course, the honourable member for Kildonan quotes it and says, well, this is what your own advisory committee says, except that the advisory committee report has a typing error in it, and a rather important one at that.

* (1330)

With that, Mr. Chairman, and a comment about the pagination of this report, the pagination is incorrect, but the pages are. Chronologically it is right, but there are some errors in the numbering, but the pages are in order, and I am tabling the Home Care Demonstration Project advisory committee presentation. This is the work restructuring document referred to by the chairman of the Advisory Committee to the Continuing Care Program, and I now table that in this committee.

So there is another report. But honourable members who are quick to jump on something that is a misunderstanding because of a typographical error, there

is a difference between the word "out" and "all" in this context, there is a very significant difference. Of course, that does not matter sometimes to members of the New Democratic Party. However, that is a fact and I now table that and it will be clear for honourable members to see. I will return—

Point of Order

Mr. Tim Sale (Crescentwood): Mr. Chairperson, I appreciate the minister tabling the document. I wonder if the Chair could advise whether or not it is required that when tabling is done that there be three copies provided, and the copies are available therefore to people for whom the document is being tabled. I do not believe three copies were provided either today or yesterday, and I wonder if the Chair could indicate the appropriate procedures of the house.

Mr. Chairperson: It is not required that the three copies be made, but we have taken it upon ourselves to have it photocopied. You will have your copy in a few minutes. The honourable member did not have a point of order. The honourable minister to conclude his statement.

* * *

Mr. McCrae: Mr. Chairman, I apologize to the honourable member for Crescentwood. We do have additional copies that could be made available, but I understand the Clerk's Office is doing it, but I will undertake that in future when we table we will table multiple copies.

Mr. Sale: I wonder if I might have leave to sit down with my colleague and ask questions from that position rather than up here in the high benches.

Mr. Chairperson: Does the honourable member for Crescentwood (Mr. Sale) have leave to take a seat in the front row to ask the questions?

Mr. McCrae: Yes, Mr. Chairman, he does, but I was not finished with my answer.

Mr. Chairperson: Leave has been granted for the honourable member to take his position up front. The honourable minister's time had expired.

Mr. McCrae: Oh, it had.

Mr. Chairperson: That is what I had told you.

Mr. Sale: Mr. Chairperson, referring back to the Price Waterhouse study which I think the minister will find costs somewhat less than \$100,000 and not the millions that he is putting on the record for some purposes of which I am not clear. I think he would recognize that governments of all stripes call for reports and they get good advice and they get strange advice and they get advice with which they agree and they get advice with which they do not agree. They get impractical advice and they get sound advice, and a report from an external consultant, as in the case of the Price Waterhouse report or the Connie Curran reports, are just that, they are advice. They do not constitute government policy. [interjection] I am not sure what the minister is trying to say from his seat, I did not hear him. I would simply observe and ask the minister to at least have the elementary courtesies of debate not to confuse government policy with the recommendations that are in reports from third parties.

The Price Waterhouse report indicated, as the minister knows, many significant issues that needed to be addressed in Manitoba home care. Our government was well aware that after 10 or 12 years any program that has grown as rapidly as Home Care had grown to that point, and it has grown much more since, develops some arteriosclerosis, perhaps, that needs addressing. That was precisely why the previous government commissioned an external review of that program with a view to strengthening it, to making it sufficiently flexible and adaptable that it could deal with the new realities of the situation, both the technical abilities to deliver a variety of home care that was not possible under previous technologies, but became possible in the late 1980s. I think, for example, of home dialysis. There are other programs which we began to deliver in the home which we could not do in the early days of home care for technical reasons.

So the Price Waterhouse report was an opportunity to have a thorough review of a program. Unfortunately, for reasons of history, our government was defeated, and we were not in a position to implement actions that we might wish to implement as a result of that report. Those actions may or may not have followed the detail of any

recommendations, but the purpose of the recommendations was to have before us some options.

Now, I think the first point is important to have the minister be completely forthright in his remarks that the having of recommendations from a third party does not constitute government policy. I am sure that he would not wish to have his government interpret it as having a policy of every consultant that has ever made a report to his government. Some of their advice may be useful and some of it may not, and that has always been the case and always will be the case. So he ought not to represent the views of Price Waterhouse and their staff in their report as the views of the New Democratic government because, quite specifically, they were not and are not, and he should cease from attempting to twist the record and to make it appear to people that the NDP government of Howard Pawley, for example, was in favour of user fees which we were not and are not. So I would ask the minister to be, perhaps, more circumspect in his use of the findings of reports and interpret them as interesting, useful, indicative, instructive, but not as the policy of the government in question.

What has always troubled me since the minister began to read extensively from that report is why he sees it as so relevant 10 years later. The report identified many important issues. I would have thought what might be more relevant for the minister to comment on were the actions of his government that were undertaken to address the issues raised in the Price Waterhouse report. They were important issues in many other jurisdictions, and I think of British Columbia, for example, as one that led the way in pioneering aggressive home care programs through the Royal Victoria Hospital in Victoria, B.C. They showed that it was possible to do many of the things that were shown to be useful in the limited demonstration project which was undertaken at Seven Oaks, which has nothing much to do with private or public, and everything to do with aggressive attempts to provide quality, comprehensive, continuous, appropriate home care for people who could benefit from that program.

I would like to ask the minister if he could indicate to us what actions his government undertook from 1988 to 1994 or 1995, if he chooses, to address the issues that were identified in the Price Waterhouse report instead of using the report as what he considers a tool to somehow

cast doubt on the policies or views of the previous government that commissioned that report. What did the minister do to address the real problems, or did he simply let them sit and fester and fester, and fester so that the system we have today is not in better shape than it was when he inherited it, but is in fact in worse shape? Now he proposes to solve that problem by a wholesale privatization. Let him not suggest that the word "all" is an important distinction from his government's perspective, because clearly the intention of the Treasury Board document is to privatize all of the services in Winnipeg.

* (1340)

Now, he may wish to split hairs and suggest we are going to do it slowly. The point is he is going to do it, and the slowly or quickly is only a matter of relative debate, I suppose, as to the timing. I would appreciate the minister indicating what things he and his department did from 1988 to the present time to address the issues that he is so fond of quoting from in the Price Waterhouse report and to use that report in the way that it could have been used, which was as a document to help provide guidance to strengthening what is still termed by the same company some years later as the best home care system in North America. What did he do to address all those issues which he so fondly read out in the letter that he read into the record at great length yesterday in which he raised his eyebrows and arched his brow to indicate his extreme disapproval of things that were going on? If those things were indeed going on, I disapprove of them, too. What did he do to improve and strengthen the delivery of home care during his years up until the Treasury Board submission of December 1995 when he decided to abandon ship and privatize the whole works?

Mr. McCrae: Well, Mr. Chairman, there are a lot of questions there. The honourable member is very articulate in his delivery in this House and puts the questions well, but there are some inconsistencies which need to be pointed out. He is very defensive about the Price Waterhouse report and I guess if I were him I would be, too.

The NDP were thrown out of office and that is why they could not impose the user fees on people. That is why people were saved from having massive cuts in their

home care services. The people of Manitoba were saved from waiting periods prior to receiving nonprofessional services, saved from user fees during the initial period of service and limiting hours in which services are provided, saved from all of that by Jim Walding and saved from all of that by the people of Manitoba who unceremoniously threw the NDP out of office. They have not been in office since and I dare say they are not going to be for a long, long time.

But the honourable member does make my point for me on that part of it. What I am trying to do is to show the double standard that we sometimes see around here. You cannot, on the one hand, have a report that you commissioned behind your back like this that calls for user fees and then go out and scare the clients of our home care system that somehow the present government is intent on bringing in user fees and cutting services. But there it is in the Price Waterhouse report. Now the member for Crescentwood (Mr. Sale) did not tell us how much that report cost and he knows. I do not, but he does. He was a part of that government and he knows how much the cost, he knows how many Americans were involved with Price Waterhouse. He knows who they are and he will not tell us, and I think he should.

There are lots of reports put out by lots of governments, and the honourable member does make my point. He may ultimately some day be able to convince somebody along the way that, no, it was not our intention to bring in the user fees and cut the services and dilute services and stuff like that as they have paid presumably millions to get that sort of advice for. The argument they make today is, you paid Connie Curran millions so you must be wanting to follow that advice. Well, you see, we can throw the same 4, 3.8, whatever it is—

An Honourable Member: Plus \$800,000 in expenses.

Mr. McCrae: American tax-free, do not forget, and then the fancy and expensive, expense accounts, stuff like that. Did they not stay at the dorm at St. Boniface Hospital? I think they did. In any event I hear what the honourable member for Crescentwood (Mr. Sale) is saying. I appreciate what he is saying because I know why he is saying those things. I said some of the same things myself, those being there have been a number of experiences, a number of reports, a number of improvements. I do not think anybody is going to argue

that we have got the best right here in Manitoba. I am not. The honourable member chooses and his colleagues choose to interpret from my comments that, oh, it is a terrible system. Well, it is not. Everybody agrees, we have got patients and clients who are getting very good care under the home care program, that was at least until before the strike began.

So let us cut away all the—I have a friend in Brandon who says, cut the crap, and let us get to the real issue, that no program is perfect, even though ours is very, very good. The honourable members opposite and their friends mislead you too, Mr. Chairman, by saying, well, some big master plan that everything is going to be privatized. There is no question but that a better mix can bring out better efficiencies and there ought, at some point, somehow, to have a mechanism whereby government retains control of standards and enforcement of those standards.

It was not the previous government that brought in the self-managed care, it was this government, and here again, anything good, the union leaders look very suspiciously at, and of course the New Democrats have to as well because of that organic fusion that I have mentioned in the past. Actually it was Professor Allen Mills that mentioned—and you should not plagiarize. Because of that fusion they cannot even be effusive in their support of such concepts as self-managed care. Do you know why? Because that is a privatizing, self-managed care is a privatizing of services. They have trouble here because the VON are working with an untendered contract. I do not know, was Price Waterhouse tendered? It may have been. I think the member for Crescentwood (Mr. Sale) can tell us whether it was a tendered contract or not.

We make efforts, it is not an effort overnight to fix all the problems. So we make efforts to improve our home care service, and members opposite, for whatever reason, we guess at what those reasons are, Mr. Chairman, without going beyond the borders of parliamentary nicety, for whatever their reasons, they do not want to see improvements because as long as you have got a home care that is not working as well as it should, you can criticize the Tories, and we have got plenty of that. I think any government is going to get that in the time of a program growing like ours and with the growing pains it has. So at the end of the day, the NDP, regardless of

their own reports that urge contracting out, come out with the policy statement, let us go back to the system we had in the first place.

We have got the member for Crescentwood acknowledging today—his friend next to him will not, not today at least, but he certainly did for the last few years—but today the member for Crescentwood acknowledges, yes, perfection has eluded us thus far, and there is room for improvement in even the best program in North America, and I agree. So there is not that much at the end of the day that me and the member for Crescentwood disagree about until it comes to philosophical issues. This is not a health issue. The union has made it very clear it is not a health issue, they have said so. It is totally a philosophical issue.

* (1350)

My colleagues opposite, they like to accuse Tories of having a philosophical approach to things as if they do not. I cannot quite understand that sort of thinking. It is okay for us to have our philosophical, dogmatic, blinkered mindset of a left-wing, socialist-communist approach to things, and the communism has been enunciated for us by the honourable member for Radisson (Ms. Cerilli), so we can include that in the list of isms that there are over there with the New Democrats. So this communist-socialist, whatever, approach is the one they want to urge, and then they say, oh, but we are not philosophical about it.

Mr. Chairman, give me a break. It is just not believable when you come across like that. At least the honourable member for Transcona (Mr. Reid), I respect him, I do not like his views, but I respect him because he does not even blush when he puts forward his left-wing approach. That is okay, he is entitled to that.

An Honourable Member: It is in the heart.

Mr. McCrae: Right. He feels it, he believes it, and so how can I fault him except other than to disagree with him? How can I fault him for having those views? I am critical about what it means and everything like that, but, on a personal basis, surely the honourable member is entitled to have his view, and so is the member for Crescentwood (Mr. Sale), but basically we do not really agree or disagree on a lot of the background here.

Reports come and go, they say all kinds of things and we, he and I, were elected to represent the point of view we feel is the most appropriate one to represent, and that is what we are all doing here today.

Mr. Sale: Mr. Chairperson, the minister persists in implying that the recommendations of a report prepared by a private consulting company were or are the policies of the NDP government, and I would simply put on the record one more time that this is irresponsible on the minister's part, that it does not reflect reality and it does not, certainly, forward public policy. There is no particular value in reiterating, beyond this statement, that reports of private consultants to government are just that, they are no more than the report. It is when government adopts a direction that it becomes government or party or whatever policy, public policy. This government has adopted a public policy of thorough going privatization on the basis of no data, no recommendations, no information and, in fact, in the face of strong recommendations to the contrary from its own advisory committee, from one of the world's foremost gerontologists, Evelyn Shapiro, and in the face of those members of vital consumer groups, such as the Manitoba League for Persons with Disabilities, all of which are telling him he is going down the wrong road.

Let me go to the report of the advisory committee on page 6. The advisory committee is chaired by one of Manitoba's most competent advocates in the area of home care, and she writes very well and she thinks equally well. She knows, as I would hope the minister and his staff would know, that what Price Waterhouse said 10 years ago and what Connie Curran has said and what the advisory committee have said is true, that it would be folly, that it would be dangerous, and in the words of this committee, it would be irresponsible to transfer the present program to a Home Care Agency.

Now, Mr. Chairperson, this is not even contracting out. This is just the transfer to the Crown corporation of which we have heard nothing, in spite of the fact that tenders are about to go out for privatization. This organization is not even saying that we are ready to go to a tender. They are saying, we do not even have standards and directions to tell the Crown agency how to deliver and protect the services which are now being delivered without the standards in place. He has had approaching nine years in government in which to address these

issues, and while he can have a good time reflecting back that our government should have solved these problems in the seven years between 1981 and 1988, and we should have, indeed, continued in government to make progress as we would have liked to have done, but he has had a very long time to address these issues. Can he respond to this very important challenge No. 2 put to him by his own advisory committee, which does not say that we are just concerned about this or we think you should think about this?

It says, the committee would consider it irresponsible to transfer the present program to a Home Care Agency, i.e., the Crown corporation, without first articulating clear program standards that form the basis for measuring program activities, approaches and activities in all regions. The committee goes on to reflect on a question that I asked the minister in the House, I believe it was yesterday, that is, we do not even know what the core services that are going to be funded are. We do not know what is going to comprise them, who is going to deliver them and, in fact, in looking at his Treasury Board submission, we do not even know what portion of those core services are going to be funded entirely by government and what portion are going to be funded by users.

We have asked this question a number of times, Mr. Chairperson, and I would appreciate the minister's response to the advisory committee's statement that it is irresponsible on the government's part to transfer this responsibility even to a Crown corporation, let alone to proceed with privatization of the actual delivery, without putting in place many of the pieces that his government has not put in place in their eight years in office.

Mr. McCrae: Mr. Chairman, the honourable member referred to the Advisory Committee to the Continuing Care Program response to the Strategic Redirection of Home Care, page 6 and they quoted: The advisory committee would consider it irresponsible to transfer the present program to a Home Care Agency without first articulating clear program standards that form the basis for measuring program approaches and activities in all regions.

I agree with that statement. I have never disagreed with that statement, and I agree with it today and that is the policy of our government. So I would like the

honourable member to be aware of that. We have no disagreement. This is so reminiscent of the latest election campaign where there was sound and fury daily signifying nothing with respect to the health debate because members opposite, me and to a large extent, too, the Liberal Party, were all just rhetorically all over the place, but we were all saying precisely the same things with respect to health care. So all this debate is very interesting and everything and probably useful once in a while, but we do not disagree on a lot of things. Clear away all the politics and rhetoric that happens around here, the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak), the member for Crescentwood (Mr. Sale), even the member for Transcona (Mr. Reid) and others, we all agree about wanting to have a good health care system. I mean, who wants to campaign on the platform that we want to have a bad health care system? I do not know anybody, that is for sure.

An Honourable Member: You did not dare campaign on that platform, did you?

Mr. McCrae: Well, who would? Who would?

An Honourable Member: Pharmacare, eye care, home care, hospitals.

Mr. McCrae: I believe the floor is mine right now, so when members talk, then I will try to be quiet and when I am talking, he should maybe return the favour. The point is, for the average citizen out there, no wonder they get a little cynical about politics because they say, well, you know, they are all the same. That is what a lot of people say to me when I go to the doorsteps. They say, you are all the same, you are all the same, I am voting for you, of course, but you guys are all the same, and gals.

* (1400)

So what are we spending all this time for? Because the honourable members opposite are trying to demonstrate to somebody that they care more than everybody else. Well, what a crock, with all due respect. Is that parliamentary? I think that is such a new expression it probably has not found its way into the book yet. In any event, I will choose some other word. Baloney. I think that is okay. The fact is I do not, at the end of the day, question the honourable members opposite the fact that they as individual people care

about other people, I think they do. Sometimes that belief is stretched somewhat when you see alliances formed and fusions, organic and otherwise, between members opposite and some of their friends. At the end of the day, I still think we are all decent human beings, and we all care about our fellow citizens.

What are we really doing here? There is a power struggle. The NDP cannot stand being thrown out of office in the first place and then have to stay out for two more terms after that. This is hard on New Democrats. [interjection] I look at the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) and the member for St. Boniface (Mr. Gaudry), and I say, what of them, Mr. Chairman, and what of them? Liberals have had their contribution to make over the years. One of my best advisers, unfortunately not with us any more, the late Douglas L. Campbell, one of those people I can call my friend—[interjection] He was known as a Liberal and yet there are many latter-day Liberals will say, well, he was more conservative than you are, McCrae.

Unfortunately, since the advent of the Pawley New Democrats, the left wing has kind of taken over to the everlasting consternation of the honourable Leader, present Leader of the Opposition who is just trying to be, I think, a moderate Leader in a modern society, but he has got a party full of whackos, if I may use—is that unparliamentary, Mr. Chairman? Maybe it is. He has got a caucus full of left leaning people who put their ideology—

Mr. Chairperson: Order, please. The minister, I guess, is directly asking the question of the Chair when he starts putting words on the record. It is not necessarily the words that will be chosen to be unparliamentary, it is the context in which they may be put. If they do give us a problem with decorum, they could be also ruled unparliamentary, so I would ask the minister if he could choose his words very carefully. We have had a very good day so far.

Mr. McCrae: Just so the Beauchesne people do not have to write a new edition, I will just withdraw that, Mr. Chairman, and apologize to my friends because it is really not a very nice thing to say.

But there are some tendencies amongst honourable members opposite that make life very difficult for their Leader because they pull themselves away from the

people, and the Leader of the New Democratic Party really would like to see his party closer to the people. When the lefties in the party pull everybody so far away from the people, you get into the camp of the union leaders and you get yourself out of the camp of the people of Manitoba, and you run into some problems with that. I think any party that does that usually ends up as a second or third party on a permanent basis. They do not really ever aspire again to the level where they can claim to represent the majority of the population. So, at least, they are honest. The honourable member for Tuxedo—Tuxedo, the honourable member for Transcona (Mr. Reid) is unabashed, and that is okay.

An Honourable Member: Tuxedo?

Mr. McCrae: No, the member for Transcona is unabashed.

An Honourable Member: Tuxedo? The honourable member for Tuxedo is often unabashed, I agree.

Mr. McCrae: I think it is the member for Crescentwood who is always giving me lectures about childishness, and maybe he should back off right about now.

So where was I? I was asked, Mr. Chairman, about all of what it is that I have, and I am trying to tell honourable members that I have got report after report after report, all of which I have tabled or referred to. The NDP report calls for user fees and, sorry, but I am just not going to agree with that particular report. There are things in some of my own reports that I am not going to agree with, in the same way that the member for Crescentwood said he would not agree with some of the things in his reports.

So maybe we can start from there. They are looking for some major report that comes out and says, you have to privatize everything. Well, I do not think you are going to find that anywhere. It is a means to an end. Some of the measures that we announce are a means to an end. They are not an end in and of themselves, which is what members opposite want to put across here. We have a combination private-public system of home care delivery. Some of our people are government people, some of them are private people, notably the nursing component, which is VON, private and nonprofit.

It is the introduction of any kind of profit system that members have trouble with, and yet New Democrats support it. The results and what flows from the Seven Oaks project, which was a private company and was involved with that—they supported that, albeit they had to be a little careful about that because of some of their fused friends. They had to be really careful about that.

I see the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) is really uncomfortable with this, and he is really uncomfortable with self-managed care, too. It was like, I do not know what, it was a very difficult thing to get that honourable member to say publicly: Yes, I support self-managed care. He could not say it so loud because the union friends would hear him, and this was going to be a problem for him. But those few people in Manitoba who are accessing self-managed care, which is another form of privatization, are really finding that beneficial for them.

Mr. Chairperson: Order, please. The honourable member's time has expired.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, the logical inconsistencies in the ministers last statement are numerous and, further, most of the minister's comments had nothing to do with the question as posed by the member for Crescentwood (Mr. Sale) to the minister concerning the very specific recommendations and comments of the minister's own advisory committee. Yet, again, another body and another organization does not agree with the government's policy on privatization, one of many, one of a majority, and the list goes on and on.

I think that what is happening in the province is that the government and the minister have adopted their own agenda with respect to health reform, and it is their intention to move that agenda through, regardless of the consequences. It is their intention to privatize, and it is very, very interesting, and it is sad that the minister does not understand the significance of introducing profit and privatization to a health care system that to this point in time has been largely nonprofit and largely nonprivate. The minister does not seem to recognize the benefits of a universal system that is wholly within the realm of the public sector.

Now, I know the minister likes American reports; he hired Connie Curran, Mr. Chairperson. He paid her \$3.8

million, plus \$800,000 in expenses, tax-free, U.S. Surely the minister recognizes that 33 cents on every dollar in the U.S. fragmented system goes towards administration, goes towards profits. Would that money not be better utilized in a public system? Would that money be not better utilized going toward direct patient care rather than going into the pockets of the owners of those companies, and, Mr. Chairperson—and so it is disconcerting that the minister does not recognize this.

We on this side of the House are forced with regret to move

THAT this committee condemn the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) for his failure to provide any research or recommendation to support the contracting out of home care services to private, for-profit companies for his failure to respond to the concerns of clients, organizations, workers or experts in the field about the impact of privatizing home care, and for his failure to lay out a long-term strategy for community health reform.

* (1410)

Motion presented.

Mr. Chairperson: The motion is in order. Could I ask the committee for just a five-minute recess?

Mr. Chomiak: I concur, Mr. Chairperson, under the circumstances.

Mr. Chairperson: The committee will recess for just five minutes.

The committee recessed at 2:12 p.m.

After Recess

The committee resumed at 2:25 p.m.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, it is with regret that we bring a motion of this kind into this Chamber, but it is our duty as the opposition to do everything that we can to try to improve the health care situation for all Manitobans, and the failure of the government and this minister in particular to undertake his duties leaves us no

choice but to move a motion of this kind. For days we have been questioning the minister about the decision to privatize home care. For days we have been met by stonewalling and nonanswers; today is no exception.

The minister is unable or unwilling to justify his decision made to privatize home care, and that is intolerable for the citizens of Manitoba. It is intolerable that a government would make as major a policy change and initiative as this and not have rationale and not have an analysis to justify the decision.

This is seen in government responses to the issue. It is seen in the attempts by the government to deflect attention away from their decision and try to move it on to everyone else. In this debate and in this Chamber we have seen everyone blamed in the opposition, in the union movement, the academics that question it, the committees that question it. Everyone is at fault, Mr. Chairperson, because they just do not understand. They just do not understand. How can they understand when the minister is not able to provide any evidence, any documentation, any support for his decision to privatize?

That is regretful, and, in fact, in the absence of that evidence, we are left only with several very interesting points. Firstly, the We Care company made a proposal to the government in 1993 that exactly mirrors the government decision to privatize. Secondly, we know that the only company to get a contract to do a pilot project, a hand-picked pilot project, was that same company, We Care. So we ask: Where is the initiative, where is the direction coming to this government to privatize? Where is the direction coming from? It is not coming from the community; it is not coming from the workers; it is not coming from the clients; it is not coming from academia; it is not coming from any of the studies; it is not coming from the minister's advisory group; it is not coming even from the minister's own consultant, Connie Curran, who recommends against it.

There is not a justification for this minister and this government's policy to privatize home care. Equally unfortunate is the fact that there is a lack of a long-term strategy for community health reform. We have been waiting. Do not forget there are nine years that separate the election of this government to today and only this year do we see transition. We see a transition committee and transition funds. It has taken nine years to put in

place transition to community resources. We have seen some initiatives in the community area, but virtually eight years, I correct myself, we have seen virtually no movement towards community services. Indeed, we have seen a retrenchment, and the minister can cite jurisdiction after jurisdiction after jurisdiction.

Did you ever wonder, Mr. Chairman, why health care is so controversial in the province of Manitoba? Do you ever wonder whether it may not be as a result of a lack of competence on the part of this government to deliver health care? Has it ever been considered, and I think it has been considered by Manitobans, that one of the reasons there is so much controversy is the fact that this minister and this government have been unable to adequately manage health care in the province of Manitoba and have been unable to manage health care, particularly in the area of community health reform and more particularly in the area of home care services?

* (1430)

Controversy just does not arise as a result of what we in the opposition say. It comes from more than these benches. Controversy and disquiet with what this government is doing does not emanate from these benches. It is only reflected from this side of the House, reflected from the community, reflected from our constituents, reflected from Manitobans in general. It is Manitobans who are saying that this government's health reform is poorly administered, poorly understood and, frankly, off the rails. It is not the opposition who are starting these stories; we are only reflecting them. Through our voices and through our efforts in this chamber do we reflect the view of Manitobans.

It is no better illustrated than in the government's ill-conceived plan to privatize home care. Again, one of the reasons that the public is skeptical of the government's efforts is the fact that the government has no data, no information, no studies, no justification for what they are doing. Why would they dare to completely upset a system that while it needs some change, that has always been said, does not need to be turned on its head, completely turned around, turned into a private system as the minister has proposed? Why have they chosen to do that? That is the salient question throughout these Estimates. It has been the salient question ever since the House commenced and I suspect will be the main issue

and the main question during the course of the strike and during the course of the rest of the session to come. Why have they chosen to do what they have done when they have no justification for it? And I dare say, there are many, many aspects of this issue that have yet to be answered by the government. What is the impact of the We Care company? What impact and input have they had into this decision? Why will the minister not tell us? Why will they not come forward and document it?

Again, if it is a good idea, convince us, convince Manitobans. But, Mr. Chairperson, that is not the case. What we are seeing and what has happened is the government's ideological drive to privatize has resulted in a strike action, has resulted in home care services and clients by the thousands being put in a very difficult position. The strike could end tomorrow if the minister could finally just say, no more privatization, we will go back, we will study it, we will hold public hearings, we will document all of our reasons, we will have a debate in this province, we will not privatize for sake of privatization, we will keep an open mind, we will convince you Manitobans.

If the minister would do that there would be no strike. The minister could have his staff here to answer questions, Mr. Chairperson, and most important, the patient, Manitobans whom we work for, the people for whom we sit in this Chamber and represent, those people will have restored to them the kind of quality health care in the community that they deserve, the kind of quality health care that all Manitobans expect.

But as long as the government persists in its ideological move to privatize, as long as the government persists in its wrong-headed decision, its unjustified decision to privatize, can the government be surprised, Mr. Chairperson, that there is opposition? Can the government be surprised that the clients are not happy, that the League of the Physically Handicapped is not happy, that virtually every single organization and group involved in this field has not been happy?

In condemning the actions of this minister, Mr. Chairperson, we are hoping that we are bringing to the attention of Manitobans the failures of this minister and this government to adequately deal with the home care situation, to adequately provide information, to adequately justify their decision, to adequately care for

their clients, for the patients for whom we all work, and, in any way, shape or form, to provide for an enhanced or improved community health reform, something that all members of this House are striving for, but which has been absent for eight or nine years in the policy of this government.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

Mr. McCrae: Mr. Chairperson, I am disappointed in my honourable colleagues, who tell me how disappointed they are, for bringing forward a resolution or motion like the one we have before us here in this committee today, aside altogether from whatever it is that motivates honourable members opposite that is not mentioned in the resolution. There certainly are not any facts, and that is where the folly of what they are doing, the weakness of their position, shines through very clearly.

There is no doubt, Mr. Chairman, but that change will evoke debate. It will evoke reaction, especially for those who have an interest of their own to protect. That is not surprising. When the honourable member says I should not be surprised, he is right. I am not surprised that New Democrats, their union colleagues and others will have—[interjection] Well, the honourable Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer) scoffs. He is the former head of the Manitoba Government Employees' Union. What can you expect from a union boss who sits as the Leader of the Opposition of this province? The organic fusion that has been referred to is certainly there. It is certainly there.

Again, members opposite—[interjection] It is not a term that I have coined, Mr. Chairman. It is a term coined by Professor Allen Mills. That is where the phrase comes from. It was not me. As I understand it, Professor Allen Mills knows as much about the NDP and the union movement as I do, if not more.

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): I think he knows more.

Mr. McCrae: So the Leader of the Opposition suggests he knows more and that is quite likely, and the fact is that the fusion is there. It is that fusion that was the beginning of the CCF, which became the New Democratic Party. It is not new anymore, so they may be looking at that situation too at some point, I do not

know. In any event, the resolution comes as no surprise to me because I do not think members opposite have not been particularly supportive of me all along. So where is the big surprise?

Mr. Doer: Do not take it personally.

Mr. McCrae: The honourable Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer) asks me not to take it personally, and I will not. I am saddened, of course, but that is to be expected, I would think, when people I respect feel that way about me. I often do not agree with them, but, as I was saying earlier in relation to the honourable member for Transcona (Mr. Reid), I do not agree with him, but I respect his right and I respect him when he puts forward his views. I respect him a little more than some of the others, actually, because he does not even blush when he puts across some of the things he puts across. So the man clearly has the courage of his convictions and is not afraid to be out there. Goofy as some of the positions that he may have might be, he has the courage to stand up and put them on the record. He might think my positions are goofy too, and I think that I am entitled here, and elsewhere, to put my position forward.

* (1440)

So I guess my disappointment has more to do with the unwillingness of the New Democratic Party to join the real world, the unwillingness of the New Democratic Party to get into step with what is going on in this world in the '90s, the unwillingness of the New Democratic Party to understand that the world is changing. They want everything to fit into the little box that they built for this world some 50 years ago, and it is not like that. I cannot have everything the way I might like to see it because the world may be moving a little faster than even I am able to keep up with, but I think I am doing a little better job keeping up with developments in this world than my colleagues in the New Democratic Party. That is why they are over there, and that is why we are over here.

We have recognized, Mr. Chairman, that there are changes going on in this world. There are some things that are very, very important to us that we want to preserve. We do not want to lose them, we do not want to punish future generations either, and the difference between the approach being taken by my honourable

colleagues opposite and myself is that if they have a regard for future generations, it does not show in their fiscal policy positions, it does not show in their idea of planning for the future. All it shows is that we will do what needs to be done today to elect a New Democrat or to re-elect a New Democrat or whatever, but never mind about who gets hurt along the way, never mind about the price the future generations should have to pay for what New Democrats want to impose on us.

So that is why I feel some sadness because I think that those people who forged the CCF in the first place were more visionary than the honourable ladies and gentlemen sitting opposite: the J.S. Woodsworths and the Stanley Knowleses and people like that and the Tommy Douglasses.

Mr. Doer: They all believed in nonprofit health care

Mr. McCrae: They all believed in some of the things honourable members opposite are talking about, but they also were believing those things at a time when those things were something that were more acceptable to the general population. They believed in those things at a time when governments were borrowing and taxing more than at any other period in the history of mankind. It is easy to believe in those things when you are going out on the world markets and borrowing money. It is easy to believe in those things when you are quite unabashed about taxing the people. I think it was 1987 when we experienced the greatest tax grab in the history of Manitoba. Those were different times than we have today. In those days, politicians were quite willing just to go around finding out what this group, that group, and the other group wanted, and then to go on the world markets, borrow the money, and deliver on the promises made in response to the demands of the various groups. We think that the various organizations representing consumers and providers ought to be part of the process, but there out to be some recognition on the part of everyone, Mr. Chairman, that we live in a real world today. The world is, indeed, changing. We are working in the context of living within our means.

I think that Tommy Douglas, Stanley Knowles, J. S. Woodsworth and others probably believe ultimately in living within our means. I remember hearing speeches from the olden days that said in bad times you can borrow some money and in good times you can pay back

what you borrowed. Things went a little bit funny there afterward, Mr. Chairman, because New Democratic and Liberal governments even in good times were borrowing and taxing. The history is all there.

Mr. Doer: Mulroney, Kim Campbell.

Mr. McCrae: My honourable colleague the Leader of the Opposition refers to Brian Mulroney and Kim Campbell. They served their purpose, and they served their terms and placed their record before the public, and the public made a judgment about that in the same way the public made a judgment in 1988 in the province of Manitoba. It was Jim Walding who made it possible for the people of Manitoba to make its judgment on the government of the day, the Doer-Pawley government of that era. The era is over. The people said so back in 1988. Surely honourable members opposite at least respect the principle of democracy. The people of this province said out with the New Democrats and they elected somebody else and they have done it twice since. We have to take that mandate very seriously. We have to respect the needs of the population. The population said live within your means, do a good job, provide the services that people need and do it for a long, long time. There are people who are going to need those services for a long, long time. The difference between the position put forward by honourable members opposite and the position that I represent on this side of the House is one of vision. Members opposite do not have that and members on this side do.

The honourable Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer) should remember that you just cannot do what your left-wing colleagues tell you to do. You have to listen to what the people have to say; that is what we have been attempting to do. I am the first to admit, Mr. Chairman, these are not easy times. It is not an easy time to make changes in our institutions and to try to make progress, but those things have to be done.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): I just want to put a few words on the record with respect to the motion. Over the last couple of days there has been a lot of questions that have been put forward to the minister in regard to reports. When I had the opportunity to question him specifically at the beginning of my questions, I had indicated that the information was very valuable. The response that I had received was one that

there is plenty of information that is out there, all I need to do is to sit down and possibly read that information.

Ultimately, as I argued then, Mr. Chairperson, you cannot dispute that, yes, there is a pile of information out there. If I had the time and resources, I guess, I can go from one coast to the next coast, down to the States, and so forth, compile all the research work that has been done out there; again, have our extensive research department pore through the information and somewhere, possibly, find something that the government could say, here is a reason why we need to move in this direction. That is not practical, nor is it realistic for us as an opposition party, with a very limited resource or research abilities to be able to do that. That is the reason why I specifically asked of the Minister of Health to provide very specific information that supports the need to privatize for profit home care service delivery.

The minister has tabled a couple of documents. I am not too sure where within those documents it is recommending the privatization, so as of yet to the best of my knowledge and the minister will have between now and ultimately having to vote on this if it comes to a vote motion to bring forward information that ultimately we believe is absolutely essential for government to be able to base a decision on. We are not convinced that the government has the information and for that reason, without the Minister of Health providing specific information where it concludes, if you like, that what Manitoba needs is to privatize for profit, we have to assume that the minister does not have those recommendations or does not have anything to support that.

I would request the minister, as I say, that if he does have that specific information, that he would release it to, not only opposition but through the opposition, to the public as a whole. Given the dramatic changes that are being proposed, I think that a very good, thorough discussion and debate, because as a political party we have not supported the government's move towards the privatization. We will continue to oppose it and the minister cannot even reasonably expect anything otherwise from not only a political party, but from the average person amongst the public, because he is not prepared to put forward the information in which he supposedly used to come up with this particular

recommendation. That is really all I have to say about the amendment. Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

Mr. McCrae: Mr. Chairman, I am glad that the honourable member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) got into this discussion because I heard what he was talking about and we have produced numerous, numerous reports and studies and we have been very open in that regard. I do not work in the Province of Nova Scotia, but the honourable member might be interested to know what it is that a Liberal administration in the Province of Nova Scotia would be using to justify its position on these matters.

* (1450)

I would like to read to the honourable member a news item which appeared in the Halifax Mail Star on Tuesday, April 2. As the honourable member may know, the government of Nova Scotia is moving to privatize its home care program, unlike us here in the province of Manitoba where we are not doing that. It says Home Health Care To Be Privatized, this is the Halifax Mail Star.

It says this: Health Minister Ron Stewart is about to privatize home care. By year's end, those who make meals, change bandages and administer morphine in homes across the province will have to bid for the job. We are designing a whole new system, the minister said Monday. The main issue in order to get this up and running was to maintain the tried-and-proven service deliverers in the interim period. Since the home care in Nova Scotia program began last June, most of the 13,000 people receiving health care at home have been served by established nonprofit agencies like the Victorian Order of Nurses and Northwood Home Care. That is changing. Within days the province will award the first private sector contract for personal care workers. A handful of companies and nonprofit agencies are competing. In-home nursing will follow in a matter of months. Three months would be optimistic, Mr. Stewart said, by the end of the year, certainly. The VON is feeling the pressure. The Halifax branch has already asked workers to give up 3 percent of their pay and their cars to cut costs and help hold onto the contract to care for 700 metro clients. Its nurses went on strike, and Mr. Stewart's foes from opposition MLAs to the head of the Nova Scotia nurses' union say he is putting dollars ahead

of people's health. We do not need bargain-basement health care, said nurses' union president Jean Candy. Catherine Randall who served on Mr. Stewart's blueprint committee on health reform and recommended more care in the home rather than the hospital, is also worried.

This all sounds familiar, does it not? All sounds familiar. No way did anybody sitting around that table mean that that service was to be delivered by unqualified, nonregulated personnel, she said. We are beginning the slippery slope to unqualified, nonregulated privatization for profit in the delivery of health care in this province. All this sounds so very familiar, does it not, Mr. Chairman?

The quarrel is not with private companies per se but with how those who provide home nursing and other services are regulated. Mr. Stewart favours a three-part system which relies on including a set of standards within each contract on nurses and nursing assistants living up to their own professional standards and on government checking up on those delivering care.

All this sounds so very familiar, does it not, Mr. Chairman? By the way, it is not Mr. Stewart, it is Dr. Stewart, but the paper has put him down as Mr. Stewart. It would include features such as onsite inspections, phone interviews with clients written surveys of clients, a toll-free complaint line. It all sounds so familiar, does it not? There will also be swift action if standards slip. For me, if you violate the standards of the contract, the contract is null and void, the health minister said. And that too, sounds so very familiar. All these things seem to have been said right here in Manitoba.

Margie Donovan, head of the Halifax VON's striking union local said cheaper care might be poorer care. The lowest bidder is not going to be able to maintain qualified, highly skilled people she said. You could have personal care workers going in and making choices or administering medications which they know nothing about to the clients because they are told to do it. Mr. Stewart said, that will not happen. The system of inspections and double-checks being developed will make it difficult for operators to cut corners. If they do not measure up, he said, contracts will be terminated.

That also sounds awfully familiar to me, Mr. Chairman. And here is something else that sounds very

familiar. That is just not good enough, said NDP leader Robert Chisholm. When profit margins compete with service, health care will suffer.

Tory Health critic George Moody said tough requirements should be entrenched in law.

Well, we have an opposition that does not seem to be quite so opposed as the New Democrats in Nova Scotia; the Tories in Nova Scotia are interested in having tough requirements. Dr. Stewart has given us assurances before, he said. We need legislation and regulations to protect the clients. Putting the rules for home care into law would allow government to impose fines or even seek jail terms for shoddy care.

Well, if that could be said now, I suppose it could be said at any time, but it is interesting how it seems only the players have different titles in different places, but the circumstances are basically parallel.

We do, indeed, have the best system in the country right here in Manitoba, and I do not think anybody is arguing with that. But to say that—Mr. Chairman, do not fall into the trap. I know you are not going to do this, but I want to warn you anyway: Do not fall into the trap of the New Democrats by saying, we have the best system, so, therefore, do not do anything.

I have it in Hansard the other day, in the Question Period, the honourable member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) said, go back to the system we had in the first place. By that, he means, and we know this from his performance, just do not do anything. Do not change anything. Ignore the fact that there is no money coming from Ottawa—or not enough money coming in from Ottawa. Ignore the fact that Manitobans want us to live within our means. Ignore the fact that there are areas where improvements should be made in our Home Care program.

When you are in opposition, you can do all that. When you are in opposition, you do not have to make changes. When the NDP were in government, they knew that there were some things that needed addressing, and I do not know how many millions they spent and whether the Price Waterhouse people were Americans or who they were—they probably were—but the NDP commissioned a report back then and that report pointed

out some of the weaknesses in the Home Care program. Nobody's fault, Mr. Chairman, they exist.

The honourable member for Crescentwood (Mr. Sale) made it clear earlier on that this is a program that this is growing, and growing fast, and is having—he did not call it growing pains; he called it something else—but it is the same idea, those growing pains. I mean, there are adjustments that need to be made, and that is precisely what is happening, not only in Manitoba, but elsewhere.

But let us not get lost in our own rhetoric here by saying that it is the best there is, so, therefore, do not change it, do not fix anything that is wrong with it.

The way that you remain the best is by maintaining some quality, but looking after your standards, by making sure that you achieve the standards, by enforcing standards, by making sure that the clients continue to get the best care that they can get anywhere in the country. That is what that is all about.

An Honourable Member: Why do you not get some standards?

Mr. McCrae: There are very good standards. You cannot claim that you have—.

An Honourable Member: Not according to your advisory committee. Not according to Connie Curran.

Mr. McCrae: You cannot claim that you have the best system in North America and say there are no standards. You see, you cannot always have it like that. I acknowledge that we have the best system in the country, and the reason that we have that is that we do have standards—

Mr. Chairperson: Order, please. The hour being 3 p.m., committee rise.

Call in the Speaker.

IN SESSION

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Marcel Laurendeau): The hour being 3 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. Monday.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Friday, April 19, 1996

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